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SIGNIFICANT OTHERNESS:

**Herodotos' Use of a Dominant Female Motif to Illustrate
the Superiority of the Greeks**

by



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ABSTRACT

This Thesis examines the Hellenocentric trend in Herodotos' History, and the use of a *dominant female* motif to illustrate the superiority of the Greeks. It has been pointed out that Herodotos "is an important and generally neglected witness to fifth-century assumptions and attitudes about women in society" (Dewald 1981, 91). This statement certainly holds true for much of Herodotos' ethnographic material, and he seems to escape the narrow ethnocentrism reflected in later writers. However, Herodotos was much more than an ethnographer, and therefore much more than a witness. He was primarily an artist, and undeniably influenced by Homer. His own ideas concerning limit, transgression, and *nomos* are discernible throughout his work. Free invention and manipulation of material, without distortion of facts, were, in my opinion, not only acceptable to Herodotos, but necessary to achieve the desired composition. The subjective nature of Herodotos' work can be established, and his own personal biases must therefore be considered. Two of these biases need concern us: the one towards women, and the other towards the Persians.

Herodotos certainly acknowledges the value and necessity of a reciprocity between men and women in the cultures he describes, and yet his perception undoubtedly reflects that of a fifth century Greek male. He demonstrates his own authorial bias concerning women in 1.196, where men are clearly more important than women. Here Herodotos gives his personal stamp of approval. The 'otherness' of Persia in fifth century Greek tragedy has been observed in recent years, and the theory that Persia is described as a diametrically opposed 'other' culture in Herodotos has also been suggested. It is, however, a combination of facts together with elements of 'otherness' and Herodotos' own artistic technique that make up Persian culture in the *History*.

If male supremacy was the norm in Herodotos' own culture, what would be the norm in the anti-Greek 'other' culture? The answer is a society where women seem to be in control and seem to be superior to men, and this is the Persian society we see in Herodotos.

For my daughters, Alexandra and Caia,
for all the times this work
distracted from them.

... τέλος κακῶν

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INTRODUCTION

In his commentary on the *History*¹ of Herodotos, published early in this century, J. Wells comments that Herodotos' "freedom from national prejudice shows itself in his generous estimate of the Persians."² He goes on to explain how Herodotos emphasizes Persian honesty and loyalty; and that their failure to conquer the Greeks was due to "inferiority in arms and discipline, not lack of valour."³ The theory of Hellenic superiority, explicit in later statements by medical writers such as Hippokrates,⁴ philosophers such as Aristotle,⁵ and some Athenian orators⁶ and tragedians,⁷ seems absent from the pages of Herodotos.⁸ According to Wells, Herodotos appears to be "free from the ordinary Greek contempt for barbarians."⁹

¹ Herodotos' work was of course untitled. Most translators and editors borrow the title from the first line of the work, where Herodotos defines it as the ἀπόδειξις ἱστορίας. The meaning of ἱστορίη, elsewhere in the work, is usually "verbal inquiry," but here, at the very beginning of the work, it has the sense of investigation regardless of means. See Lloyd (1975) 82-84. The most popular title among translators and editors is the *Histories*, reflecting the view that the work represents a series of investigations. I see the work as one continuous investigation and therefore prefer the singular.

² How and Wells (1928) 38.

³ *Ibid.*, referring to Herodotos 1.136.2, 138.1, regarding honesty; 3.128.4, 3.154-160, 8.118.3, regarding loyalty; 9.62.3, regarding valour.

⁴ *On Airs, Waters, and Places*, 16.

⁵ *Politiiks* 3.7.

⁶ Isokrates *Panegyrikos* 181; *Philippos* 124; and *Antidosis* 294.

⁷ Bacon (1961) 169, argues that the term βάρβαρος does not become thematic in tragedy before Euripides. Euripides, on the basis of what we know from extant sources, used barbarian characters and scenes much more than Aischylos or Sophocles. Jason, in his speech to Medea (Euripides, *Medea*, 522-575) exemplifies the Greek notion of the superiority of Hellenic culture over that of barbarians: "πρῶτον μὲν Ἑλλάδ' ἀντὶ βαρβάρου χθονὸς \ γαῖαν κατοικεῖς καὶ δίκην ἐπίστασαι \ νόμοις τε χρῆσθαι μὴ πρὸς ἰσχὺος χάριν (536-39)." Walser (1984) 7, claims that the pejorative implications of the term first appear in Sophocles' *Ajax* 1263. For the more recent view that the Greek-barbarian antithesis begins with Aischylos' *Persai*, see Hall (1989), esp. 77-100. She argues that the theme of Hellenic superiority pervades the entire *Persai*.

⁸ Bevan (1922) 53 comments that "by the fifth century BC the Greeks had come generally to take it for granted that their culture was superior to anything found outside the sphere of Hellenism." Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1987b) 44, comments that, although the Persians in Herodotos are the 'Others', they are not the specific inferiors as portrayed by later fifth-century and fourth-century Greek sources. I argue that the theme of Persian inferiority is apparent and consistently employed throughout Herodotos' work.

⁹ How and Wells (1928) 37. See also Rawlinson (1875) 121-22, Levy (1992), and Dihle (1994) 39 and 46-7. It is clear in Herodotos that Persian and barbarian are often synonymous (6.112, 6.121, 7.148, 7.211).

Herodotos also seemed φιλοβάρβαρος to Plutarch,¹⁰ supposedly on account of the historian's unforgiving treatment of Plutarch's native Boeotians,¹¹ but perhaps also simply because of the vast amount of information pertaining to barbarians within his work, combined with his apparent tolerance for barbarian customs. No other extant Classical source provides us with as much information about barbarians as does Herodotos. Although this wealth of information on barbarians and an acknowledgment on the part of Herodotos as to their ability to accomplish great deeds¹² create an element of ambiguity in Herodotos' portrait of the Persians, these observations do not overshadow the more consistent picture of the Persians throughout the *History*. This Thesis argues that Herodotos purposefully portrayed the Persians as inferior to the Greeks. He may not have been as explicit as other writers, but the theme of Persian inferiority is prevalent throughout his work. His reason for such a portrayal is found in his personal bias towards his own

7.223, 7.233, 8.53, 9.7, 9.9, 9.24, 9.59, 9.62, 9.67, 9.70, 9.102, 9.103). The root βαρβαρ appears only 24 times before 5.23, and refers to a number of different non-Greek societies, while after 5.23 the root appears 179 times, and most often designates the Persians (Levy [1992] 195, n. 1). In 7.138.3 Xerxes is referred to as both the Persian and the barbarian. Persian is a subdivision of barbarian, but there are only two types of ἄνθρωποι in Herodotos: Greeks and barbarians. Herodotos also refers to the Persians specifically as τοῖσι βαρβάροισι τοῖσι ἐντῆ Ἰασίῃ (6.58.3). The Persians are the main barbarian people in Herodotos, and certainly the most well known to his Greek audience. Hall (1989) 11, remarks that the term βάρβαρος initially referred to the Persians and that soon after the Persian Wars it acquired the fuller meaning of all non-Greeks. This Thesis is concerned with Herodotos' information concerning the Persians, the main barbarian people in his work. The thematic treatment of the more general term barbarian, however, is also included in the present research. These generalizations about non-Greeks would naturally have been associated with the Persians by a fifth century Greek audience, and therefore they contribute to the unflattering portrayal of the Persians, as will be shown below.

¹⁰ *De mal. Her.* 11 = *Mor.* 857A. Levy, *loc. cit.* analyzes the *philobarbaric* tendencies of Herodotos, concluding that Herodotos does not present an opposition between Greek and barbarian, but an "opposition entre le pouvoir personnel et les institutions politiques ... entre le monde de la cité et le despotisme royal et oriental" (244).

¹¹ The apparent prejudice against Boeotians, especially Thebans, is clear in Herodotos (7.205, 222, and 233). See How and Wells (1928) 39-40, and Evans (1991) 92 and n. 20.

¹² See proem, and below, 17-18.

culture and the common sociological theory of defining his own culture partly in terms of what it was not - the Other.

The Other is usually conceived not as a heterogenous melange of different groups whose only common characteristic is that they are not Us. It is more often seen as a single group which is the antithesis of Us, marked by weakness where We display strength, by vice where We show virtue.¹³

Modern research tends towards the "notion of the barbarian as the universal anti-Greek against whom Hellenic, especially Athenian, culture was defined."¹⁴ Hall has demonstrated this trend through her study of Athenian tragedy.¹⁵ The notion of the barbarian as 'the other' is, however, apparent in other sources, and has been studied in the case of Herodotos.¹⁶ Certainly there are elements of "otherness" in most of Herodotos' accounts of different barbarian people. What was amazing and interesting to Herodotos' audience was what was different from their own culture. But outside Herodotos, when did this Greek-barbarian antithesis begin?

Weiler¹⁷ argues that the antithesis was already present in the early Archaic period, before the completion of the *Iliad*, while Stier¹⁸ believes that the polarization was a gradual process that saw both concepts of Greek ethnic self-consciousness and the invention of the barbarian develop gradually during the Archaic period.

¹³ Browning (1989) 1. Browning's book is a collection of papers (different chapters have different fonts and individual pagination). This reference to page 1 is actually page 1 of the second chapter.

¹⁴ Hall (1989) 5.

¹⁵ Hall, *loc. cit.*, concentrates on Athenian tragedy, hence her Athenian sources. Herodotos was not Athenian, although scholars almost universally accept a period of residence at Athens for our author (see below, 36-46, and n. 154). If one accepts that Herodotos spent time at Athens, then it is possible that he was influenced by earlier and contemporary Athenian sources.

¹⁶ Cartledge (1990) discusses the 'otherness' of the Persians in Herodotos. See Hartog (1988) esp. 209-381, who has largely defined the aspect of 'otherness' in Herodotos. See also Laurot (1981).

¹⁷ Weiler (1968) 21-29. See also Murray (1934) 144-5. Weiler's "early Archaic period" corresponds to a date of around 775 BC. Weiler obviously supports the generally accepted date of around 750 BC for the completion of the *Iliad's* composition. However, it is possible that the *Iliad* was completed late in the ninth century. See Bengtson (1977) 392, n. 44.

¹⁸ Stier (1970) 21. See also Snell (1952) 7-8.

Schwabl,¹⁹ on the other hand, argued that the Greek-barbarian antithesis was a direct result of the Persian wars. He maintained that a Panhellenic identity, as well as the notion that the barbarian was the universal anti-Greek, emerged simultaneously at this time. All these theories, as Hall has pointed out,²⁰ presuppose the notion that Greek ethnic self-consciousness could not exist without the developed idea of what barbarian signified.

However, the diffusion of Greeks all around the Mediterranean and around the Black Sea during the great colonization period of the eighth and seventh centuries, the ties between colony and founding polis, as well as the institution of Panhellenic games (arguably before the fifth-century), point towards a Greek ethnic self-consciousness developing during the seventh and sixth centuries. A fourth theory has therefore gained popular support among scholars. It states that the Greeks developed a common ethnicity during the Archaic period (c. 775 - 479 BC), without inventing the concept of the barbarian. The sense of hostility towards non-Greeks and the concept of the barbarian are, according to this fourth view, a direct result of the Persian Wars. The difference between the third and fourth theories is perhaps not important in the case of Herodotos' portrayal of the Persians. Since he was writing after the Persian

¹⁹ Schwabl (1962) 3-23.

²⁰ Hall (1989) 6 and n. 18. See also Jüthner (1923) 3; Ehrenberg (1935) 44-62, 127-39; Bengtson (1954) 27-28; Oliver (1960) 142; Diller (1962); Baslez (1986) 89; Cartledge (1993) 38-39 and 188.

²¹ Οἱ Ἕλληνες, denoting the Greeks in general, appears over 500 times in Herodotos (see Powell [1938] s.v.). The term Ἕλληνικός, ἡ, ὄν, also occurs 48 times, *ibid.* The latter is sometimes used in connection with ἔθνος (1.56.2; 9.106.3) or γένος (1.143.2) to denote the Greek people collectively, but the term also appears as a substantive in the same sense (1.4.4 (twice), 58, 60.3; 7.139.5, 145.2; 8.13, and 144.2). The labels οἱ Ἕλληνες and οἱ Ἕλληνικοί are customarily used in the fifth century to

wars, both the concepts of a Panhellenic identity²¹ and the pejorative implications of the term barbarian²² are apparent in his work.

Before embarking on a discussion of Herodotos' portrayal of the Persians, however, it is necessary to comment on Herodotos' work as a whole. Modern scholarship continues to investigate the very nature of Herodotos' work. A survey of recent scholarship is therefore in place.

The subjective nature of Herodotos' work requires that we gather as much information as possible about the author himself. Little has changed over the centuries in respect of the personal information on Herodotos, and the only truly reliable facts come from the *History* itself; nevertheless, a summary of the author's personal life is necessary. More importantly, we must attempt to establish Herodotos' beliefs as best we can. He was a very personal writer, who often stated his own opinions. These personal interjections are glimpses into Herodotos' own beliefs.

In addition to personal information about Herodotos, it is important to understand and attempt to identify with Herodotos' audience. There is a strong tradition on the popularity of Herodotos,²³ and this popularity surely suggests, at least in part, that he was saying what his audience wanted to hear. He therefore

denote the whole Greek speaking world from Sicily to the Black Sea, including the islands and the free eastern cities of Asia Minor (Hall [1989] 11).

²²Most visible in Pausanias' remark about defiling Mardonios' body (9.78.2), as well as in the comment which follows Xerxes' lashing of the Hellespont (7.35.2), and in the words of Harmokydes to the Phokians (9.17.4).

²³Reflected in the parodies of Herodotos in Aristophanes, listed in How and Wells (1928) 55. Fornara (1971b) disagrees with most of the Aristophanic parodies (25-28), except that of the *Birds* (28-29). He also adds a passage in Euripides *Electra* (1280-1283), which depends on the parody in the *Birds* and ultimately on the audience's familiarity with Herodotos (30-31). Hauvette (1894) 65-76, lists Thucydides' criticisms of, and divergence from, Herodotos, implying again familiarity on the part of Thucydides' readers with the work of Herodotos. See also How and Wells (1928) 36-37.

no doubt reflected the ideas of his Greek contemporaries. For this reason, the general atmosphere of Greece at the time of Herodotos should be discussed.

Our concern in this research is not necessarily whether Herodotos' information was true or false. We find that the importance of the recorded information lies in the fact that it was recorded by Herodotos. Whether the information is true or not remains important, and it will find its way into this discussion on many occasions. It is, however, secondary to the fact that Herodotos chose to include the material in his *History*. An understanding of who Herodotos was, as well as for whom he was writing and the nature of his work helps us to understand why he may have chosen the material that he did, and why he presented it in the form that we have it. The first chapter of this Thesis therefore examines Herodotos himself and his audience, as well as his work in general.

The second chapter defines the difference, according to Herodotos, between being Greek and being barbarian. It will be shown that barbarians are able to become Greek, and that therefore the opposite phenomenon must also have been true: Greeks can slip into barbarism. Being Greek, for Herodotos, was something that could be achieved and could be lost. Herodotos leaves his audience with the impression that his Persians could have tried to become Greek, but they chose a different path. They adopted and followed a

νόμος of expansion and aggression,²⁴ but the gods also clearly had a part in that choice.²⁵

Herodotos' Persians therefore start out as a 'noble savage' people (1.125-6; 9.122), who gradually become more barbarian and shift into decadence. We shall argue that the Persians are manipulated into the pattern of rise and fall²⁶ so common in Attic tragedy, but also apparent within the *History*, and that by the end of his work, Herodotos' audience is left with the impression that Xerxes is finished, and therefore so is the Persian empire.²⁷

Herodotos develops the theme of Persian inferiority in a number of ways. The three main flaws in the barbarian (Persian) psychology are visible in Aischylos' *Persai*: hierarchism, immoderate luxury, and unrestrained emotionalism.²⁸ These negative 'other' characteristics of Persian society also surface throughout the *History*.²⁹ The wise advisor motif is also a part of the theme of Persian inferiority. The barbarian mind is not able to understand

²⁴As Xerxes explains in 7.8.

²⁵Often human actions result from a purely human interpretation and reaction to a divine sign. This is certainly not the case, however, in 7.12-17. Xerxes is specifically told what to do, and threatened by the god if he chooses otherwise.

²⁶See Immerwahr (1966) 75-78 for the prominence of the pattern of the rise and fall of a ruler. Evidence from Herodotos' drawing from tragedy has been pointed out by Macan (1908), vol. 1, xlvii-xlviii. For elements attributed to Attic tragedy by Aristotle, but actually stemming from epic, see Rutherford (1982) and Gould (1983). Murray (1987) 107, rightly argues that the pattern of the *History* does follow many Delphic and East Greek traditions, but that the "overall pattern of the story of the Persian Wars is Herodotos' own creation." Herodotos sets the pattern early in his work, stating that he will write "... ὁμοίως σμικρὰ καὶ μεγάλα ἄστεα ἀνθρώπων ἐπεξιών. τὰ γὰρ τὸ πάλαι μεγάλα ἦν, τὰ πολλὰ αὐτῶν σμικρὰ γέγονε. τὰ δὲ ἐπ' ἐμεῦ ἦν μεγάλα, πρότερον ἦν σμικρὰ. τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην ὦν ἐπιστάμενος εὐδαιμονίην οὐδαμὰ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ μένουσαν ἐπιμνήσομαι ἀμφοτέρων ὁμοίως. 1.5.3-4.

²⁷Immerwahr (1966) 78 and n. 86.

²⁸Hall (1989) 57, remarks that "all three [flaws] find correlative virtues, however briefly implied, in the idealization of the egalitarian, austere, and self-disciplined Greek character, and therefore contain more truth about Greeks' view of themselves than about the Persian temperament."

²⁹The hierarchism is most evident in Xerxes' speech to Demaratos, where he explains to the Spartan exile how men fighting under compulsion and fear of their leader will fight better than a multitude of free men (7.103); see also 7.96, 135 and 8.65. Immoderate luxury is most visible in Pausanias' remarks concerning Xerxes' "accessories" after the Persian defeat at Plataia (9.82). Xerxes, in his failure to control his emotions, is outdone only by Kambyses (7.35, 39, 43, 45, 238 and 8.118); for Kambyses, see generally 3.27-38.

Greek oracles,³⁰ or choose properly between alternatives. For these reasons Herodotos often has a Greek advisor present with the Persian kings to explain an oracle, or to clarify the alternatives when a choice must be made. The wise advisor's counsel is usually ignored by barbarians.³¹ It is also common in Herodotos for barbarians to misunderstand or ignore oracles.³²

Herodotos also associates with the Persians certain taboos that distinctly mark off Greek from barbarian.³³ Subjects such as incest,³⁴ murder of kin,³⁵ and cannibalism,³⁶ are common in myths from the Greeks' past. They exist in the world of myth, a time

³⁰Georges (1994) 128, quotes Herakleitos: "the god who possesses the oracle at Delphi neither speaks nor conceals, but gives a sign (22 B 93 DK)." Persians, in Herodotos, are unable to interpret this sign. For examples of good advice ignored by barbarians in the *History*, see 1.8. 32; 4.83; 7.10. 102-4, 209; 8.68; 9.22.

³¹Lattimore (1939).

³²Kroisos, when he asks the oracle at Delphi whether he should attack Kyros, misinterprets the response that "if he did attack Kyros, a great empire would be destroyed " (1.53). Gyges is informed by the oracle at Delphi that there will be retribution for the murder of Kandaules in the fifth generation of Gyges' descendants, but the Mermnad dynasty ignores the oracle. Xerxes also fails to understand portents (7.57) and ignores the advice of Demaratos (7.209).

³³Georges (1994) 123.

³⁴All evidence from Classical and pre-Classical Greece indicates that sexual relations between parents and children were forbidden. There is also no record of marriages between full brothers and sisters before the Hellenistic era. See Brosius (1996) 35-41. Oedipus was by far the most popular Greek example of the unholy act of incest. See especially Sophokles, *Oedipus Tyrannos*, *Oedipus Coloneus*, and also *Antigone* 49-54; Aischylos, *Seven Against Thebes*, 742 - 791; and Homer, *Odyssey*, 11.271 - 80. For a list of all Classical references to Oedipus, see Grimal (1951) 500. Other examples of incestuous relationships in Classical Greek mythology include Myrrha (or Smyrna) and her father Theias (or Kinyas) (Grimal, *op.cit.*, 12-3 and 471), as well as Thyestes and his daughter Pelopia (*ibid.*, 454 and 513). Hesiod's creation myth also relates the incestuous unions of Gaia and her son Ouranos (*Theogony* 126-36), Kronos and his sister Rhea (453-8), and, most notably, Zeus and his sisters Hera (915-6) and Demeter (912-13). Although the details of incestuous relationships do not surface in Homer, the fact that both Hera and Zeus were children of Kronos is acknowledged and therefore the tradition of a brother/sister marriage between Zeus and Hera was no doubt accepted by Homer.

³⁵By murder of kin, we mean especially the murder of one's mother, father or children. Medea stands out in Greek mythology as the murderess of her children (not to mention her brother!), but Medea was clearly not Greek. Again, Oedipus was the most famous example of a Greek murderer of kin (see above n. 34), but Orestes (who kills his mother), Herakles (who kills his children), and Alkmaeon (who kills his mother) were also well known examples. For the story of Orestes, see Aischylos' *Oresteia*; Sophokles' *Elektra*; and Euripides' *Orestes* and *Elektra*. See Grimal, *op. cit.*, 501, for a list of Classical references. For Herakles' murder of his children, see Euripides' *Herakles*. See also Grimal, *op. cit.*, 487-488, for Classical sources on Herakles. For Alkmaeon, see Grimal, *ibid.*, 473.

³⁶Lykaion, Tantalos and Atreus all supposedly served human flesh to unknowing diners. For ancient references to Lykaion, see Grimal, *op. cit.*, 494; for Tantalos, *ibid.*, 511; and for Atreus, *ibid.*, 475.

before Greeks were distinguished from barbarians.³⁷ These subjects were widely explored in contemporary Athenian tragedy, and they are also observable among the barbarians in the *History*.³⁸ In Herodotos, tyrants are also subject to barbarian stereotypical behaviour and exhibit similar transgressions.³⁹ The important factor, if we keep in mind the context of Herodotos, is that these taboos were no longer part of fifth century Greek life.

The feminization of men and the masculine empowerment of women is also a feature of Greek tragedy. Again, it is a realm that could only be imagined by a fifth century Greek male.⁴⁰ It is an 'other' world. Herodotos is also portraying an 'other' world. The description of Persian culture in 1.131-140 is meant to be contrasted with Greek culture.⁴¹ For example, the Greeks build altars, use fire, and pour libations, while the Persians incorporate none of these practices into their sacrifices (1.32.1); the Greeks are monogamous, while the Persians are polygamous (1.135.2); no

³⁷ Thucydides also acknowledges similarities between ancient Greeks and contemporary barbarians: ...πολλὰ δ' ἄν καὶ ἄλλα τις ἀποδείξειε τὸ παλαιὸν ἑλληνικὸν ὁμοίωτροπα τῷ νῦν βαρβαρικῷ διαιτώμενον. (1.6.6)

³⁸ For cannibalism, see Harpagos (1.119) and Kyaxares (1.73); for incest, see Kambyses (3.31.1-2); for murder of kin, see Kambyses' slaying of his brother Smerdis (3.30) and of his sister (3.32); Astyages also tries to kill his grandson, Kyros (1.108.2-4). Murder of kin, I argue below (143-146), would have also been associated with Xerxes and his son, Dareios.

³⁹ Periander kills his own wife (3.50) and also defiles her dead body (5.92).

⁴⁰ The theory that women were not present at the dramatic festivals of Athens has not been entirely rejected. Henderson (1991) argues that they did attend these festivals. Blundell (1995) 172, notes that, given the important role that women played in religious events, it is difficult to imagine that they would have been barred from the theatrical events. The Athenian dramas were, however, produced by male playwrights for a predominantly male audience. For the relevant passages from antiquity used as evidence for or against the presence of women in the audience at Athens, see Blundell, *op. cit.*, 208 n. 15:1. Judging by the evidence we have concerning Greek women for the middle to late fifth century (below, 30-35), I argue a similar scenario for Herodotos. His *History* was written for a predominantly Greek male audience: "the education of Athenian women was probably limited, and most were probably illiterate" (Foley [1981b] 131).

⁴¹ Cartledge (1990). Although Herodotos was working with a preconceived notion of what the Persians were not, he also recorded actual cultural traits. Rossellini and Saïd (1978) establish that Herodotos' representations of women reveal more about barbarian otherness than they do about actual women. They caution, however, that among Herodotos' ethnographical description of barbarian culture "les choses ne sont pas si simples, la norme ne joue pas comme un endroit dont la barbarie serait simplement l'envers" (1004).

Persian has ever killed his mother or father (1.137.2), while Greek mythology frequently depicted such acts; to a Persian, lying is the basest act (1.138.1), while the Sophistic Greek rhetoric of Herodotos' time was more concerned with skill in speaking than in truth.

In Athenian writers, the most emphasized differences between barbarians and Greeks are political.⁴² The Greeks are democratic and egalitarian, while the Persians are tyrannical and hierarchical. Herodotos also stresses political differences, especially in the last books, but the contrast between Hellenic and Persian cultures pervades his entire work.⁴³ It is in the cultural realm that Herodotos creates the following scenario: if men in control is the norm in Greek society, then the situation among the Persians, the 'other', must be the opposite. Herodotos was not, however, merely a writer of fiction. He could not simply invent a matriarchal Persian society as the antithesis to his own patriarchal Greek one. On the other hand, his work was highly subjective, and the diversity of his sources did allow him a degree of freedom as to which accounts to emphasize, which to disagree with, and even which to ignore.⁴⁴ Fehling notes that "sometimes an element that is unimportant for the main story has an obvious compositional function, usually as a means of affecting a transition to other material."⁴⁵ He cites two examples of Persian kings who make detours in order that they

⁴²Hall (1989) 2.

⁴³Bury (1958) 44.

⁴⁴There are a number of passages in Herodotos that bear witness to the author's siding with or against sources. In 3.1-3, Herodotos details three different versions of Kambyzes' motive for invading Egypt. He supports the Persian version (3.1.5); he claims the Egyptian version to be untrue (3.2.1); and he expresses his disbelief in the third version (3.1.1). For Herodotos ignoring, or not selecting particular versions of a story see below, 19-23.

⁴⁵Fehling (1989) 184.

come into contact with something that Herodotos wished to include in his *History*. Dareios makes a detour to the Black Sea (4.85-7) and Xerxes travels to the river Peneios (7.128-30). Both excursus have been questioned by modern scholarship,⁴⁶ yet their inclusion by Herodotos does not alter the outcome of either king's campaign.

Herodotos, it may be argued, uses the dominant female motif in a similar fashion. For example, whether an oriental king is manipulated by a woman into a course of action, or whether the decision is made solely by the king, it does not alter the facts about the story or its outcome.⁴⁷ By means of the Persian kings' relations with women, Herodotos is able to expose what he believed or imagined to be a fatal flaw in Persian society. The Greek world of politics and war, to which every Greek citizen devoted a large portion of his time, was exclusive to males. Herodotos, in his depiction of an antithetical society, describes scenes where women frequently appear in both realms. It is their success in these realms, and the failure of the Persian men, that create the impression that Persian men are inferior to women, and therefore inferior to Greek men. The importance of the theme is indicated by its prominence in two principal stories in Herodotos: one at the beginning of his narrative, and the other at the end.⁴⁸

In our second chapter this 'dominant female motif' is defined. Its function in the anti-Greek other culture is also explained and several examples are discussed. A dominant female motif also necessitates a review of scholarship pertaining to women in

⁴⁶*Ibid.* See also Legrand (1966) vol. 1, 64-5, and Jacoby (1913) 390.

⁴⁷Kambyzes' manipulation by Nitetis (3.1.4-5), and that of Dareios by Atossa (3.134), are discussed below.

⁴⁸The stories of Gyges and the wife of Kandaules (1.8-12) and of Xerxes and the wife of Masistes (9.108-13).

Herodotos, as well as an examination of women in Persian society on the evidence of sources other than Greek writers. These two topics are therefore also included in the second chapter.

Chapter 2 concludes with the Kandaules/Gyges episode, since it is the first principal occurrence of the dominant female motif in Herodotos. The events and actions described by Herodotos set the tone for the role that women will fulfill among barbarians. It forms the beginning of the ring composition that is mirrored and finds its closure in the final chapters on Xerxes (9.113-117).

Chapter 3 discusses the dominant female motif in the portrayals of Kyros, Kambyses, Smerdis and Dareios, and its effect on these portrayals. It will be shown that the dominant female motif occurs in all the royal portraits, and that the effect created by the motif is one of inferiority on the part of these kings, and on the part of Persians in general.

Chapter 4 deals specifically with Xerxes. He is the principal Persian character in the *History*. He also represents the Persian empire at the time of the invasion of Greece and its defeat at the hands of the Greeks. Xerxes is the personification of Persia at the end of the war, and his downfall is meant to represent the downfall of the Persian empire. At the close of Herodotos' *History*, the audience is left with the impression that both the Persian empire and Xerxes are finished.⁴⁹ The reality of the condition of the Persian empire in the years following the successful defense by the Greeks is quite different,⁵⁰ and Xerxes himself survived the conflict by

⁴⁹See above, 7 n. 27.

⁵⁰Although it has been estimated that Persia may have lost one third of her military strength during the wars with Greece (Olmstead [1948] 261), it is generally agreed that her possessions in the East remained stable.

approximately fifteen years. Herodotos, it can be argued, manipulates his information in order to depict the Persians with respect to his underlying theme of their inferiority to Greeks. The consistent employment of this dominant female motif, and the atmosphere of female dominance that it generates among the Persians, must have created an impression of weakness for Herodotos' predominantly Greek patriarchal audience.⁵¹

⁵¹Herodotos' audience is discussed below, 30-31.

CHAPTER 1: HERODOTOS, HIS WORK, AND HIS AUDIENCE

1.1 THE WORK OF HERODOTOS

1.1. A. Herodotos and the truth

The veracity of Herodotos has been questioned since antiquity,⁵² and has recently once more come under attack.⁵³ Fehling⁵⁴ is perhaps the most extreme. He argues that source-citations, those that he sees as demonstrably false, lead to the obvious conclusion that the passages involved are Herodotean fiction. He has raised many questions,⁵⁵ influenced other scholars⁵⁶ and caused a great deal of controversy, but his main thesis I cannot accept for the following reasons.⁵⁷

In the first place, one of Fehling's principal arguments concerning Herodotos' sources is that they are always, without exception, from the closest-located people.⁵⁸ That is to say that, if a story concerns οἱ Κορινθίοι, or is most closely linked to Corinthians, then Herodotos always acknowledges Corinthians as sources for such stories. Fehling believes this is simply too good to

⁵² Plutarch *De mal. Her.* Momigliano (1966) traces the unfavourable reputation of Herodotos from Classical times to the sixteenth century.

⁵³ The main proponents of Herodotos' untruthfulness are: Armayor (1978a), (1980a), (1980b), and (1985); Fehling (1971); Hartog (1980); and West (1985 and 1991). Against Armayor, see Pritchett (1982) 234-285, who defends Herodotos as a reliable source in areas where he can be verified through archaeological evidence. For arguments against Fehling, see Hornblower (1987) 13-25; Marincola (1987) 26-32; Gould (1989) 136-137, n. 16; Moles (1993) 91 n. 5; and, most recently, Pritchett (1993) 10-143. Pritchett addresses all of Fehling's main examples ("crucial cases") of false source citation and exposes the weaknesses of his arguments, often referring to modern scholarship in support. In the same volume he includes detailed arguments against West (143-191) and Hartog (191-226).

⁵⁴ Fehling (1989).

⁵⁵ Most works published since Fehling (1979) have found it necessary to comment on Fehling's work. See above, n. 53 and below, n. 57.

⁵⁶ West, in her review of Lateiner (1989). See Pritchett (1993) 1-4.

⁵⁷ Most of the scholars listed above, n. 53, reject Fehling's general thesis, but acknowledge the problems in Herodotos' source citations and the need for further research.

⁵⁸ Fehling (1989) 12-17.

be true, too regimented. Some very popular figures, such as Arion, would have had stories about them in various cities, especially the larger cities; still, Herodotos always uses the closest sources to the story.

Herodotos, in his few statements about his methodology, does not discuss the nature of a good or a bad source.⁵⁹ But who is to say what fifth century Greeks found most trustworthy as a source? It is certainly possible that Herodotos followed the principle that those most closely linked and involved in a story were the most logical sources for that story, and that he followed this rule without exception.

The other two rules that Fehling claims Herodotos follows are the preservation of believability⁶⁰ and the preservation of partisan viewpoints.⁶¹ The rule concerning the preservation of believability simply states that Herodotos always cites sources in an indirect way when dealing with things that would strain his credibility. He uses terms such as λέγεται. Marincola, however, has pointed out that Herodotos, in all likelihood, had his own conception of the world and merely distinguished between what he thought could be known with certainty, and what could not.⁶²

The rule concerning the preservation of partisan viewpoints refers to the fact that no element in Herodotos is attributed to a

⁵⁹ He mentions in 1.214.5 that he is choosing between different sources, and he specifies similar choosing in 1.95.1 His criterion in the first example is the source that is ὁ πιθανώτατος. For the second example, he states that he follows those Persians who do not wish to make miracles of everything concerning Kyros. For a discussion of these passages and others defining Herodotos' methodology, see below, 19-23.

⁶⁰ Fehling (1989) 96-104.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 105-108.

⁶² Marincola's critique of Fehling is found in Dewald and Marincola (1987), 27-33.

source that would contradict a partisan standpoint. Athenian sources always defend Athens, Corinthians, Corinth, and so on.

As to this third rule proposed by Fehling, Marincola speculates that the importance of the defeat of the Persians and the strong local traditions of individual communities are responsible for the strong partisanship present in Herodotos' source-citations.

A rejection of Fehling's central thesis, however, need not imply the absence of fiction in Herodotos. Fehling's words concerning Herodotos' literary genre are relevant here:

As for the pious assumptions of modern scholars that the man who first thought of writing history must, if he had so much as an average sense of moral responsibility, have pursued an ideal of strictly truthful narrative, that appears anything but natural to me. On the contrary it seems much more natural to me that historiography should begin as a mixture of truth and poetry and should use the resources of poetry to present the truth. And in the hands of Herodotus the two are combined in a thoroughly methodical way.⁶³

By "resources of poetry" Fehling obviously means primarily fiction. Although scholars generally agree that there are fictitious elements in Herodotos, Fehling finds little support among modern scholars for the degree of fiction that he sees in Herodotos.

1.1. B. The literary genre of Herodotos

Herodotos' debts to contemporary Greek literary genres are generally accepted by modern scholars, especially in the case of epic. Homer is regarded as by far the main influence on Herodotos.⁶⁴ He emulates the epic poet in his use of "dramatic

⁶³ Fehling (1989) 253.

⁶⁴ See Strasburger (1972) for the importance of Homer's epics for all later Greek writing. The ancient opinion that Herodotos was Ὀμηρικώτατος (Longinus, *On the Sublime* 13.3, cf also Dionysios of Halikarnassos *Letter to Gnaeus Pompeius*, 3.) is generally not disputed. See Jacoby (1913) 502-504;

speeches, leading personalities as decision-making actors, ideas of causality, and perhaps most importantly, mimesis, the attempt to depict events as happening before the mind's eye of the audience."⁶⁵

Herodotos begins his work in the following way:⁶⁶

Ἡροδότου Ἀλικαρνησέος ἱστορίας ἀπόδειξις ἦδε, ὡς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται, μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, τὰ μὲν Ἕλλησι, τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα, ἀκλεᾶ γένηται.⁶⁷ τὰ τε ἄλλα καὶ δι' ἣν αἰτίην ἐπολέμησαν ἀλλήλοισι.

The literal translation is as follows:

This is the display of the research of Herodotos of Halikarnassos, in order that things achieved by human beings neither become forgotten through time, nor the great and wondrous deeds accomplished, on the one hand, by the Greeks, and on the other, by the barbarians, not become inglorious. And with these other things, the reason they went to war against each other.⁶⁸

The proem of Herodotos has received a great deal of scholarly attention because it defines the subject of his work.⁶⁹ His subject is in stark contrast to Thucydides, who defines his precisely as the war,⁷⁰ and confines himself to land and naval operations as well as

Pearson (1939) 1-16; Gomme (1954) esp. 73-94; Cobet (1986) 1-3, and Murray (1987) 107-8. For the importance of poetry (especially Homer) in Greek society, see Plato, *Republic* 362E-393A (in general) and 606E, *Hipparchos* 228B, *Protagoras*, and *Ion*. See also Aristophanes' *Frogs* 1035 and Isokrates *Pan.* 159.

⁶⁵ Dewald and Marincola (1987) 13.

⁶⁶ All Greek passages from Herodotos are taken from Hude (1927) unless otherwise stated. For a thorough discussion of the textual tradition of Herodotos, see McNeal (1986) vii-xxviii.

⁶⁷ Hude, as most other editors, places a comma after γένηται. I follow McNeal (1986) 105 n. 4, who explains that the medieval punctuation is better because it separates τὰ τε ἄλλα... from the previous clause.

⁶⁸ All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated. Grene (1987) 14, argues for the more general meaning of κλέος, and translates ἀκλεᾶ γένηται as "not go unrecorded." Κλέος, however, is an epic word. Homeric poetry refers to itself as κλέος (*Iliad* 2.485 and 9.227). Also, Achilles desires to be "glorified" forever (9.413). See below, n. 69.

⁶⁹ Krischer (1965) 159-167, argues that Herodotos' proem is an imitation of the Homeric model, and that this fact is of prime importance for a proper reading of the *History*. See also Erbse (1956) 210-212; Nagy (1987) 183-184; and Moles (1993) 93-95.

⁷⁰ Θουκυδίδης Ἀθηναῖος ξυνέγραψε τὸν πόλεμον... 1.1.1

the politics involved with them.⁷¹ Herodotos allows himself much more scope. His subject is not the war, but the accomplishments of those on both sides of the war,⁷² and even people not involved in the war,⁷³ as well as the reason they did go to war. The accomplishments of both Greeks and barbarians are straightforward enough, but the reason they fought each other is a different matter.

1.1. C. Causation in Herodotos

Herodotos has been called a poor source for the real causation of events.⁷⁴ In Herodotos events are always linked to the motivations of individuals, and he is criticized for not reaching down to the actual cause through his *ἱστορίη*. He also often links the cause to some divinity.⁷⁵ Gould writes the following concerning causation in Herodotos:

Herodotus' use of revenge as a mode of historical explanation is thus grounded not only in the craft of the storyteller but also in the model of reciprocal action which is built into his sense of the world. Narrative and explanation are one in the sense that by virtue of its sheer sweep and complexity Herodotean narrative gives a quite new depth to our sense of why, in this instance, things happened.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Gomme (1945) 89, and 25-29.

⁷² Hence Godolphin, in his "updated" edition of Rawlinson's 1875 translation (see Rawlinson [1942]), misses the mark in giving his edition the title: *The Persian Wars*. De Selincourt (1962) 31, states that Herodotos' aim was to record the war and Athenian accomplishments in that war.

⁷³ Such as those barbarians not conquered by the Persians: Massagetae, Scythians, and "long-lived" Ethiopians.

⁷⁴ Again, the argument goes back to Plutarch, *De Mal. Her.* 21.

⁷⁵ Bischoff (1932) 20-25, lists passages in Herodotos where causation is due to chance. Immerwahr (1956) 280, insists that Bischoff's list is misleading, for it does not separate those passages that involve some other cause, along with chance, from those that mention chance alone.

⁷⁶ Gould (1989) 85. See 63-85 for his discussion of causation. Immerwahr (1956) 264, summarizes three types of causes for historical action: immediate causes (usually vengeance); permanently operative causes (primarily expansion); and metaphysical causes (necessity or fate). The first two causes have human factors, the third divine. Often a divine element motivates human action, but the choice of the action is not governed by the divine. Such is the case with the dreams of Astyages (1.107), Kyros (1.209), and Kambyses (3.30). All three examples demonstrate strictly human actions based on human interpretations of a divine sign. See also more generally, Immerwahr (1956) 241-264, and Cobet (1986) 8-11. For a specific bibliography on causation in Herodotos, see Waters (1985) 184-185.

Gould therefore soberly links “empirical cause and effect” with “supernatural causation,” insisting that the divine element does not override the natural.⁷⁷ Throughout his *History*, however, Herodotos exhibits a faith in a divine plan that often seems naive.⁷⁸ I would argue that as a general rule concerning causation Gould is correct, but that in certain passages where Herodotos personally attests a divine will,⁷⁹ this divine causation would seem to overshadow the natural. Since Herodotos tells us how Xerxes is basically forced by a god into attacking Greece,⁸⁰ one of the reasons that Greeks and barbarians went to war with each other, if not the main reason for Herodotos, is certainly divine.

1.1. D. Methodology of Herodotos

The explication of Herodotos’ methodology is a difficult task, and in many ways it is a subject too vast to be covered fully in the present research.⁸¹ Herodotos did not explain his methodology, nor did any other ancient historian before Polybios.⁸² He did, however, make several remarks within his work concerning his methodology, and these statements deserve our attention.⁸³

⁷⁷ Gould (1989) 71.

⁷⁸ “The history of nations is but the grand stage on which may be seen the workings of Divine Providence,” How and Wells (1928) 48. The existence of the gods and their part in human affairs is not questioned by Herodotos. See especially 8.77.

⁷⁹ 6.84, 7.137, 8.13, 8.129, and 9.65.

⁸⁰ 7.14 and, generally, 12-18. See also 9.16, and above, 7, n. 25.

⁸¹ Marincola (Dewald and Marincola [1987] 35-40) offers an overview of modern scholarship concerning Herodotos’ methodology. To his list I would add Lateiner (1989).

⁸² Dewald and Marincola (1987) 35. That is to say that, in cases where only fragments remain, no such passages have survived. Thucydides (1.20-22) is perhaps the exception, but that historian’s self-defined methodology (esp. ch. 22) has created as many questions as it has provided answers. See Gomme (1945) esp. 140-150.

⁸³ The passages are: 1.95, 214.5; 2.99.1, 123.1; 4.30.1, 195.2; 7.152.3, and 171.1.

Our first two examples occur in the account of Kyros. At 1.95.1, Herodotos states that ὡς ὧν Περσέων μετεξέτεροι λέγουσι οἱ μὴ βουλόμενοι σεμνοῦν τὰ περὶ Κῦρον, ἀλλὰ τὸν ἐόντα λέγειν λόγον, κατὰ ταῦτα γράψω, ἐπιστάμενος περὶ Κύρου καὶ τριφασίας ἄλλας λόγων ὁδοῦς φῆναι. Later in the work, after describing Kyros' death, and the defeat of the Persian army at the hands of Tomyris and the Massegetai, Herodotos writes: τὰ μὲν δὴ κατὰ τὴν Κύρου τελευτὴν τοῦ βίου πολλῶν λόγων λεγομένων ὅδε μοι ὁ πιθανώτατος εἶρηται (1.214.5). Although Herodotos is, in the latter case, dealing specifically with the death of Kyros, the statement is important for our understanding of his role as narrator. He makes it perfectly clear how subjective his work is, and how his own perception of the information influences the end result. The reader is told nothing of the other versions of Kyros' death. Herodotos makes the decision for them. He obviously deems himself capable of making such a choice. The act of choosing is necessary and therefore acceptable. Choosing is an integral part of his research. He must make decisions, as does every historian, as to which information to include, and which to ignore; which to emphasize, and which to mention in passing.⁸⁴ Of the "three other versions of the story of Kyros", only Kyros' suckling by a bitch is mentioned by Herodotos. No other alternatives to the main story line on Kyros are offered by Herodotos.

⁸⁴ The two passages in question (1.95.1 and 1.214.5) have been labeled as exceptions to the general rule. See Murray (1987). He states that "...he [*Herodotos*] at least appears to represent each tradition separately: he does not seem to seek systematically to contaminate or to rationalize his sources"(101). Gomme (1945) 142, also notes the exceptional nature of these two passages in Herodotos. He remarks that "he [Hdt] is the most objective of historians, relying so often on the reports of others; his weakness, if any, is that he is not subjective enough, that he does *not* exercise his own judgment in selecting and comparing reports."

In 2.99.1 Herodotos states that μέχρι μὲν τούτου ὄψις τε ἐμὴ καὶ γνώμη καὶ ἱστορίη ταῦτα λέγουσά ἐστι. The statement clearly separates what Herodotos observes himself, from what he learns from his Egyptian sources,⁸⁵ and although he is specifically referring to the Egyptian logos, the statement has a far reaching effect. Again, he emphasizes the subjective nature of his work by telling us that his own judgment and the result of his inquiry combine with what he sees to form his written work.

In 2.123.1, Herodotos states that ἐμοὶ δὲ παρὰ πάντα [τὸν] λόγον ὑπόκειται ὅτι τὰ λεγόμενα ὑπ' ἐκάστων ἀκοῆ γράφω. Lloyd comments that this is "one of H.'s periodic statements of policy (...), doubtless in this case elicited by the intrinsic improbabilities of the preceding narrative."⁸⁶ Herodotos has just finished describing how Rhampsinitus descended alive into Hades, played dice with Demeter, and returned to the living, with a golden napkin from Demeter (2.122). That he should have reservations concerning the veracity of the story is not surprising. The interesting element of his statement is the sweeping effect that he gives it by writing παρὰ πάντα [τὸν] λόγον. Herodotos uses logos to refer to individual portions of his work, such as the Egyptian logos, but it can also represent his entire work.⁸⁷ The implication here is that Herodotos is referring to his work as a whole. Therefore, it is an underlying principle, a rule, that throughout his *History* he writes down what is said to him, and that which he hears, from each of the societies that he investigates. For Herodotos, the importance lies, not in the

⁸⁵ Lloyd (1975) 88.

⁸⁶ Lloyd (1988) 59.

⁸⁷ How and Wells (1928) vol. 1, 28 and n. 2.

validity of a particular event, but rather in the beliefs of a society.⁸⁸ Herodotos is not necessarily contradicting himself. He does not state that he must write down all that he hears. If there is more than one version of a particular story, as is the case with 1.95 and 1.214, then Herodotos uses his own judgment to present the version most appropriate for his *History*.

Herodotos' next comment concerning the methodology used in composing his work occurs at 4.30.1: προσθήκα γὰρ δὴ μοι ὁ λόγος ἐξ ἀρχῆ ἐδίζητο. It is an aside, inserted to explain why he is jumping from Scythia to Elis, but again, as in the previous example, it is given a more sweeping effect. His *History*, therefore, from the beginning, seeks out the supplemental or additional. This jumping from one story, into another, only to return later to the original story is extremely common in Herodotos. It is a characteristic of oral tradition, and although Herodotos was literate, fifth-century Greek society in general was in a transitional state from oral traditions to written sources.⁸⁹ Stories within other stories have often been labeled "digressions" in Herodotos, but it is clear from his statement that there are no digressions in his work. As stated above, Herodotos is not writing about the Persian War.⁹⁰ He is investigating what is equivalent to the known world. A digression implies a deviation from the main subject, and Herodotos' professed subject is simply too vast.

⁸⁸ Grene (1987) 184-5, n. 45

⁸⁹ Thomas (1988) 56 and n. 13. Moles (1993) 115, also sees Herodotos as the product of an essentially oral culture. Sealey (1976) 4, writes that Herodotos had no written sources, and Immerwahr (1966) 6, believed that Herodotos even manipulated written sources to make them appear as though they were based on oral ones.

⁹⁰ See above, 17-8.

In 4.195.2, Herodotos makes another comment concerning the validity of the information he records: ταῦτα εἰ μὲν ἔστι ἀληθῆως οὐκ οἶδα, τὰ δὲ λέγεται γράφω. He is referring to girls drawing up gold dust out of the mud of a lake, using bird feathers smeared with pitch. He does not necessarily expand this statement beyond its immediate application, but it is nevertheless similar to his other more general statements suggesting the importance of the belief in a tradition, as opposed to the reality of such a tradition.

In 7.152.3,⁹¹ again Herodotos uses the validity of a particular story to make a comment about his *History* as a whole: ἐγὼ δὲ ὀφείλω λέγειν τὰ λεγόμενα, πείθεσθαί γε μὲν οὐ παντάπασιν ὀφείλω, καί μοι τοῦτο τὸ ἔπος ἐχέτω ἐς πάντα λόγον. He is speaking of the Argives specifically, and their involvement with the Persians before the Wars. He seems to forgive the Argives, although he does not even admit that he knows for certain that they did anything wrong. In such a specific instance as this, Herodotos may simply not have been able to establish the actual facts of the story. The statement in general, however, is expanded by Herodotos to encompass his entire work (καί μοι τοῦτο τὸ ἔπος ἐχέτω ἐς πάντα λόγον). Again, the remark emphasizes the same principle as those earlier statements already discussed. What people believe, and what is said, are more important to Herodotos than the actual fact.

⁹¹The only other statement by Herodotos concerning his methodology is at 7.171.1: ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν κατὰ Ῥηγίνοὺς τε καὶ Ταραντίνους τοῦ λόγου μοι παρενθήκη γέγονε. He simply states that the stories involving these two cities are additions to his *History*.

1.2. HERODOTOS' PERSONAL LIFE

Little is known about our author apart from what he himself tells us within his work, but because of Herodotos' fondness for authorial comments, it is possible to arrive at a number of acceptable conclusions. These conclusions, drawn from his own work, can then be combined with information from later sources, and judged accordingly.

1.2. A. Biography of Herodotos obtainable from the History

Herodotos opens his work by describing himself as Ἀλικαρνησέος.⁹² Halikarnassos, modern Bodrum, is located along the coast in south-west Asia Minor.⁹³ Herodotos emphasizes the fact that it is a Dorian city (1.144, 2.178, 7.99). It passed under the control of Persia shortly after the middle of the sixth century,⁹⁴ when it became part of the Lydian satrapy of Sardis. Herodotos, then, was presumably born a Persian subject, since his birth is generally agreed to have taken place shortly before 480.⁹⁵ Halikarnassos was

⁹²Duris *FGrH* 76 F has Θουρίου, as does Aristotle *Rhetoric* 3.9, and this seems to have been the fourth century reading. Legrand (1932) edits his text accordingly. All post Alexandrian sources, however, and all the MSS of Herodotos read Halikarnassian. There is also a second century BC inscription from Pergamon that identifies Herodotos as Halikarnassian. See McNeal (1986), 105; Brown (1983) 5-16; How and Wells (1928), 53; and Jacoby (1913) 205-213.

⁹³ Herodotos refers to this region as Karia. For the history of this region see Hornblower (1982) 1-34.

⁹⁴ Herodotos 1.174.1 See Hornblower (1982) 18.

⁹⁵ Jacoby (1913) 230-1. Dionysios of Halikarnassos, *On Thucydides* 5.4 "γενόμενος ὀλίγω πρότερον Περσικῶν". See also Aul. Gell. *Noctes Atticae* 15.23.

never truly independent during Herodotos' lifetime, appearing on the Athenian Tribute Lists for 454, but very likely having joined the Delian League at its inception.⁹⁶

From his work, then, we know that Herodotos was a Greek⁹⁷ from the Dorian city of Halikarnassos. An analysis of his *History*, and the personal remarks within it, can also provide information concerning the personal life of Herodotos.

Relying on Herodotos' statements about himself in order to form a better picture of who the man was presupposes the veracity of those same statements. This "faith" in Herodotos' truthfulness concerning his personal remarks does not correspond to a blind faith in everything that Herodotos records. It simply means that, if Herodotos states a personal opinion concerning the reason a certain incident took place, or if he comments in a positive or negative way on information he is relating, then it can be said that he is honestly reflecting his own personal belief. In these instances, the truth of the reported incident is secondary. For the purpose of establishing Herodotos' own beliefs and personality, the importance of the personal comment lies in how he tells us he feels about the incident.⁹⁸ His reactions to, and his comments about, the

⁹⁶ Hornblower (1982) 25. Halikarnassos may have even been obliged to pay tribute to both Athens and Persia (4).

⁹⁷ Herodotos' own Greek ethnicity has never been questioned. He does refer to himself as a Greek in 4.53.5.

⁹⁸The personal comments of Herodotos have been studied by Dewald (1987). She claims that the continual appearances of first-person interventions are reminders to his audience of the human factor involved in his work, as well as the subsequent difficulties and fallibility involved with research on such a scale as his. Marincola (1987) has also studied the autobiographical remarks in Herodotos. He claims that the eyewitness remark is the most frequent, and that two in Book 2 are certainly disapprovals of Hekataios, and that, similarly, most remarks of this type surface when Herodotos is disproving earlier material (131). Both studies are very informative, but I am more interested in the information that Herodotos' personal judgments can provide about his own beliefs, and how the establishment of his beliefs can help us better understand his work, since, as stated above (20-21), this work was highly subjective. Plutarch (*De Mal. Her.* 35 = *Mor.* 868E) uses Herodotos' first person comment in a similar manner in order to establish the author's (as opposed to his source's) personal prejudice against the Phokians (8.3).

information he is conveying, assist the modern reader in establishing the historian's personality. Knowing the personality of Herodotos, as best we can, is an integral part of understanding a work as subjective as the *History*.

For example, Herodotos tells the story of how Nikolaos, the son of Bulis, and Aneristos, the son of Sperthisas, were captured and killed by the Athenians many years after the Persian wars (7.133-137). Herodotos finds it natural that justice was fulfilled, but since the punishment fell on the sons of the two heralds that Xerxes refused to kill, he adds his personal comment that δῆλον ὧν μοι ὅτι θεῖον ἐγένετο τὸ πρῆγμα (7.137.2). Our examination of the personal comment in this passage is not concerned with the truth of the event reported by Herodotos,⁹⁹ but with his statement about faith in the divine element involved. A general atmosphere of divine retribution is clearly apparent throughout the *History*, but this particular statement, combined with other similar comments by Herodotos,¹⁰⁰ confirms his own personal faith in the divine.¹⁰¹

An acceptance of the truthfulness of Herodotos' first person statements allows us to accept that he traveled widely.¹⁰² It also seems clear that Herodotos was well educated in respect of earlier Greek writers, quoting at least twelve authors, and mentioning at

⁹⁹ In this particular incident, the passage in Herodotos is confirmed by Thucydides (2.67).

¹⁰⁰ 8.13, 8.129, 9.65.

¹⁰¹ Herodotos' piety and trust in oracles is clear throughout the *History*. He declares his personal faith in oracles in 8.77, "Χρησμοῖσι δὲ οὐκ ἔχω ἀντιλέγειν ὡς οὐκ εἰσὶ ἀληθεῖς, οὐ βουλόμενος ἐναργέως λέγοντας πειρᾶσθαι καταβάλλειν. ... ἐς τοιαῦτα μὲν καὶ οὕτω ἐναργέως λέγοντι Βάκιδι ἀντιλογίας χρησμῶν περὶ οὔτε αὐτὸς λέγειν τολμέω οὔτε παρ' ἄλλων ἐνδέκομαι. See Georges (1994) 126 and n. 51.

¹⁰² Although Herodotos writes about most of the world known in the fifth-century, he does not often specify where he has been. The most notable exceptions are Elephantine (2.29.1), Tyre (2.44.1), and the Egyptian-Arabian border (2.75.1). For Herodotos' travels see Jacoby (1913) 247-280, and How and Wells (1928) 18-20. For the arguments against Herodotos' professed travels, see Armayor (1978a, 1980a, 1980b, and 1985).

least three more.¹⁰³ From the erroneous generalizations concerning the endings of Persian names,¹⁰⁴ it can also be suggested that Herodotos did not know Persian.¹⁰⁵

For more information on Herodotos' personal life, we must look to later sources.

1.2. B. The life of Herodotos from later sources

The principal source for Herodotos' personal life is the Suda lexicon.¹⁰⁶ Although the Suda certainly contains material from Classical sources, it also contains information from as late as the 11th century and must be judged accordingly. The entry on Herodotos runs as follows:

Herodotos, son of Lyxes and Dryo¹⁰⁷, of Halikarnassos, born of illustrious parents, and having a brother Theodoros. He moved to Samos on account of Lygdamis who after Artemisia became the third tyrant of Halikarnassos. For Pisindelic was the son of Artemisia, and Lygdamis the son of Pisindelic. On Samos, then, he practiced the Ionic dialect and wrote a history in 9 books, beginning from Kyros the Persian and Kandaules king of the Lydians. After going to Halikarnassos and driving out the tyrant, when later he saw himself begrudged by the citizens, he voluntarily went to Thourioi which was being colonized by the Athenians, and, dying there, he was buried in the Agora. But some say he died at Pella. His books bear the names of the Muses.

The confusion over Herodotos' mother's name need not detain us.¹⁰⁸ His father's name is interesting because, on the one hand, it is confirmed by the epitaph preserved in Stephanos,¹⁰⁹ and, on the

¹⁰³ How and Wells (1928) 21 and n. 2.

¹⁰⁴ 1.139 and 6.98.3. See Kent (1953) 25-40.

¹⁰⁵ Georges (1994) 53.

¹⁰⁶ Adler (1967) s.v. Ἡρόδοτος.

¹⁰⁷ Under the heading Πανύασις, the Suda gives Herodotos' mother as Rhoeo, and states that Herodotos was cousin or nephew to the epic poet Panyasis. Stephanos also lists Lyxes as our author's father. Step. Byz. s.v. Θούριοι. See How and Wells (1928) 3.

¹⁰⁸ Rawlinson (1875) 4, n. 3 argues in favour of Rhoeo (because of the prominence of the pomegranate (ρόιη) in the mythology of that region. See also Hornblower (1982) 6.

¹⁰⁹ See above, n. 107.

other, because it is a Karian name.¹¹⁰ Since, according to the extant evidence, Herodotos could not have become a citizen of Halikarnassos had his father not been a Greek citizen, Lyxes was certainly not Karian. His name, however, does suggest strong ties to the Karian community.¹¹¹ Herodotos' reported blood relation to Panyasis¹¹² is also important, for that name also is Karian.¹¹³ These presumed Karian ties, along with some exaggerations as to the contributions of Karians in realms of armour and hoplite tactics,¹¹⁴ suggest strong ties between Herodotos and the Karians of Halikarnassos.¹¹⁵ It is certainly possible that his ancestors took indigenous Karians as wives.

Whether or not Herodotos actually dwelt on Samos for a period of time is difficult to ascertain and perhaps not relevant to the present discussion.¹¹⁶ Suffice it to say that there is no valid argument to discredit the tradition that associates Herodotos with Samos. What disturbs scholars is the statement in the *Suda* pertaining to his writing the *History* while on Samos. The Ionian element at Halikarnassos cannot be disputed,¹¹⁷ nor can the fact that Ionic was the established literary prose medium of the mid- to late fifth century. Therefore, it is highly improbable that Herodotos

¹¹⁰ Georges (1994) 138.

¹¹¹ The large number of Karian names in the earliest inscriptions from Halikarnassos suggests a strong mixture of Karians and Greeks, as well as a degree of intermarrying. See Georges (1994) 138 and n. 90.

¹¹² See above, n. 107.

¹¹³ Hornblower (1982) 24.

¹¹⁴ Herodotos. 1.171. Snodgrass (1964) 106-118, and Cartledge (1977) 18 n. 57, discount Herodotos' claim concerning these Karian innovations. Hornblower (1982) 16 and n. 84, attributes the claim to his local pride. See however Thucydides, 1.8.

¹¹⁵ Cartledge (1993) 37, goes as far as to saying that "Herodotos himself was of mixed, not purely Hellenic, origins." Levy (1992) 194, also refers to Herodotos' ancestry as "d'origine mixte."

¹¹⁶ For modern views on Herodotos and Samos see Cole (1912); Mitchell (1975); and Tölle-Kastenbein (1976).

¹¹⁷ Hornblower (1982) 10 n. 48 and 49 n. 69; Cartledge (1993) 38.

“learned the Ionic dialect” on Samos, as Wells rightly states.¹¹⁸ However, the Suda does not say that Herodotos “learned” the dialect there, merely that he practiced it (ἠσκήθη) and wrote his *History* (ἔγραψε) there. These statements may be inferences from Herodotos’ own work, but they are not “demonstrably incorrect”.¹¹⁹

It is also accepted that the Suda’s statement concerning the work’s division into 9 books is a late entry, since the division was probably introduced by the Alexandrian librarians,¹²⁰ and not by Herodotos. Since this information is of a later date and is an incorrect assumption based on a post-Alexandrian text of Herodotos, other information concerning facts that we cannot prove, such as Herodotos’ part in the expulsion of Lygdamis, should be judged accordingly. Herodotos clearly demonstrates a dislike for tyrants in his work,¹²¹ but there is no hard evidence to prove that he had any part in driving out Lygdamis.¹²² The statement may be a later inference from Herodotos’ work, or it may reflect historical fact.

For Herodotos’ residence in Thourioi and his death there, the tradition is quite strong, and generally accepted by scholars.¹²³ The reference to Pella has found no support.

To conclude our look at the Suda passage, we may note that it supplements what we know of our author from the *History* in two

¹¹⁸How and Wells (1928) 2.

¹¹⁹*Loc. cit.*

¹²⁰McNeal (1986) x. Scholars agree on this point. See above p. 19 and n. 70. Herodotos refers to his work both as singular λόγος and to parts of it as plural λόγοι. See Macan (1895) lxxv, and (1908) lxxi.

¹²¹How and Wells (1928), vol. 2, 338-47.

¹²²The only evidence independent of the Suda, put forth to substantiate Herodotos’ participation, is an inscription from Halikarnassos. The inscription mentions Panyasis, and records an agreement between Lygdamis and his subjects. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 3-4.

¹²³Stephanos records Herodotos’ epitaph from a tomb in Thourioi. See above, 27, n. 107.

ways. Firstly, it establishes the likeliness of Herodotos' strong native Karian ties, and, secondly, it offers an explanation as to the prominence of Θουρίου in Classical sources quoting Herodotos' proem.¹²⁴

1.3. HERODOTOS' AUDIENCE

Herodotos' audience, be they listeners or readers, may have spanned more than a quarter of a century. His date of birth being generally accepted as approximately 484 BC,¹²⁵ and his travels in Egypt being no earlier than 460 BC¹²⁶ (and in all likelihood at least ten years later),¹²⁷ lead us to suppose that Herodotos began displaying portions of his *History* no earlier than the middle of the fifth century.¹²⁸ There is no valid reason to disregard the ancient opinion that Herodotos recited portions of his work publicly (or even privately).¹²⁹ These oral presentation could have started at this early date.

The publication date of the *History*, that is to say a date after which no more revisions were made by Herodotos, must be later

¹²⁴For more interpretive and speculative biographies, see Legrand (1966) vol. 1, 5-37; de Selincourt (1962) 28-33; and Jacoby (1913) 205-29.

¹²⁵See above, 24, n. 95.

¹²⁶Herodotos tells us in 3.12 that he personally viewed the remains of the dead from the battle at Papremis (Egypt). See also 3.15 and 7.7; Thucydides 1.104; Ktesias FgrH 688 F14; and Diodoros 11.71, 74-5, and 77. The battle is dated c. 460 BC (Bengtson [1988] 460 n. 64, states that 460 BC is the decisive date, while Lloyd [1975] 41-2, argues for 459 BC. The date depends on Thucydides 1.110.1, where the Egyptian war is said to last ἕξ ἔτη. See Gomme [1945] 392-6), but the elapsed time between Herodotos' visit and the battle itself is unknown. Scholars date Herodotos in Egypt as early as 460 BC, and as late as 431 BC (How and Wells [1928] 411). The information in the *History* provides us with a *terminus post quem* only for Herodotos' travels in Egypt.

¹²⁷A combination of the established date of 460 BC, and the situation in the Aegean and Egypt proper would place Herodotos in Egypt most likely between 449 and c. 430 BC. See Lloyd (1975) 61-68.

¹²⁸Myres (1953) 3, for example, has Herodotos "flourishing" around 444 BC.

¹²⁹The practice of public readings is recorded by Lucian, *Herodotus* 1-2, and Plutarch, *De Mal. Her.* 862B. See Waters (1966) 161, note 14.

than 429 BC.¹³⁰ Some scholars argue for a date as late as 414,¹³¹ but Jacoby's date of 424 BC for the appearance of the *History* in written form is still generally accepted as the *terminus ante quem*.¹³² We are therefore dealing mainly with a Greek audience of the third quarter of the fifth century.

Some characteristics of Greek society at this time are relevant to our discussion. Perhaps the most important for the present research is the status of women among Greeks of this era. The roles that women have in the *History* are extremely important when discussing aspects of "otherness" in Herodotos. The status of Greek women in general must therefore be established. Several other subjects that deserve mention when discussing Herodotos' audience are the prominence of Athens during Herodotos' lifetime, Herodotos' estimate of Athens itself, as discernible from his work, the continued threat of Persia, and the Greeks' knowledge of their own past.

1.3. A.1 Women in fifth century Greece

The study of women in Classical antiquity is a controversial subject and an ever-growing discipline.¹³³ To a large degree, the

¹³⁰ The *terminus post quem* of 429 BC for the publication of the *History* is attested by 7.137 (cf Thucydides 2.67).

¹³¹ See especially Fornara (1971a and 1981).

¹³² Internal evidence suggests that Herodotos may have revised his work as late as 427 BC, and a *terminus ante quem* of 424 BC for the publication date is generally agreed. See Evans (1989) and (1979). Both articles defend Jacoby's original dating (1913, 233). See also Cobet (1979). Lloyd (1975) 63-68, does not commit to a date, but well illustrates the problems involved in reaching a precise date.

¹³³ McClure (1997) 259, notes that 59% of all Classics programs which responded to a survey by the APA's Committee on the Status of Women and of Minority Groups offer at least one course in the area of women in antiquity, sexuality, or minorities in the ancient world. For a recent bibliography on women in antiquity see McClure, *loc. cit.*, n. 2, and Pomeroy (1984) 317-372. There is also the newly established web site, Diotima (<http://www.uky.edu/ArtsSciences/Classics/gender.html>), where bibliographies, course materials and syllabi, all pertaining to the study of women in the ancient world, may be accessed. For the controversial aspects of the subject of women in antiquity, and the progress of the research from 1975 to 1995 see G. Clark in her introduction to McAuslan and Walcot (1996).

subject is beyond the scope of this research. A number of important factors, however, must be addressed before investigating portrayals of women in Herodotos.

In the first place, almost all of our evidence for women in Classical Greece comes from Athenian sources.¹³⁴ What is more, these Athenian sources are all male. An element of otherness is certainly apparent in male writers who discuss women, and therefore the nature of the source must always be borne in mind.¹³⁵

The use of Athenian sources in order to draw conclusions concerning Classical Greek women in general poses a number of fundamental problems. The idiosyncratic nature of Athens, compared to other Greek states, in terms of her prosperity, number of slaves and metics, and government,¹³⁶ suggests that this city was indeed unique, and therefore may not accurately represent women in other Greek cities. Also, the information that we have from Gortyn and Sparta does seem to differ greatly from that of Athens.¹³⁷

If Athens was indeed unique, should the information derived from Athenian sources be used without reservation when studying women in the *History*? We should remember that Herodotos was not

¹³⁴ Sparta and Gortyn are the only other Greek states that provide us with detailed information on the role of women in those societies. The information from Gortyn is restricted to the legal framework of that society and is preserved in a large number of inscriptions making up the fullest law-code to have survived from Classical times. See Willets (1967); Sealey (1990) 50-81; and Blundell (1995) 158-9. The only Classical source for Spartan women is Xenophon, but there are numerous references in post Classical writers such as Plutarch and Pausanias. See Fantham, Foley, Kampen, Pomeroy and Shapiro (1994) 56-67; Blundell (1995) 150-58; and Sealey (1990) 83-88.

¹³⁵ Blundell (1995) 95, comments that "the perceived antithesis between 'Greek' and 'barbarian', which was paralleled in some contexts by the male/female antithesis, coloured much of Greek thought in the Classical Age." See Cartledge (1993) 63-89. This antithetical treatment of women is most apparent in the Hippocratic writings and the zoological and biological treatises of Aristotle. See Blundell, *op. cit.*, 98-112, and Dean-Jones (1991 and 1994).

¹³⁶ Blundell (1995) 113, argues that although Athens' democratic constitution was not unique among Greek states, it was probably more radical and innovative. Sealey (1990) 6-8, discusses the idiosyncrasies of Athens compared to all other Greek cities.

¹³⁷ Specific areas where Sparta or Gortyn (or both) present information different from Athens will be discussed below.

Athenian. If we accept, as most scholars do,¹³⁸ that Herodotos did spend time at Athens, was his portrayal of women coloured by what he witnessed there? Comparisons have been drawn between leading female characters in the *History*, and some women in Attic tragedy.¹³⁹ The use of Athenian sources to discuss fifth century Greek women in general, however, need not depend on whether Herodotos was influenced while at Athens. The use of these Athenian sources relies on the notion that the status of women in Athens was most likely similar to that of women in other Greek cities. Although it is possible that the conditions for women in other Greek cities were not as extreme as they seem to have been at Athens,¹⁴⁰ the theory that the status of Greek women in general was similar to that of Athenian women is generally accepted. Therefore, by extension, the status of women at Athens can be used to establish the status of women in Herodotos' surroundings.

1.3. A.2. Women in fifth century Athens

The position of women in Classical Athens has been compared to that of male children.¹⁴¹ Indeed, in marriage, the relationship would have appeared as such in its beginnings, since men generally

¹³⁸See above, 30, n. 124, and below, 36 and n. 154.

¹³⁹Stahl (1968). For the influences of tragedy on Herodotos, see Macan (1908), 1: xlvii-xlviii, and 2: 125. See also Myres (1958) 50 and 78; Grene (1961); Waters (1966); and Nagy (1987).

¹⁴⁰Information on women in Sparta is sometimes obscured by the treatment of Sparta as the antithesis of Athens in Greek literature, and this tradition should be considered when examining specific sources on Spartan women (Fantham *et. al.* [1994] 63). If the position of women in other Greek states is somewhere between that of women in Athens and that of women in Sparta, then it can be argued that this position is closer to that of Athenian women than it is to Spartan. See for example Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lakedaimonians* 1.2, where Greek women in general are discussed in contrast to Spartan women.

¹⁴¹I follow Blundell (1995) 113-149 and Fantham *et. al.* (1994) 68-127 in the main. Kilmer (1993) 159-168, points out that much of the information assumed about Athenian women is based on late fifth-century and fourth century Classical sources, and that they may not reflect the status of Athenian women early in the fifth century (or earlier).

married around the age of 30, while wives were usually in their early to mid teens.¹⁴² There is little evidence that women had any choice in choosing a husband. Herodotos is certainly presenting a rare occurrence when he writes that Kallias allowed his three daughters to choose their own husbands from among any men in Athens.¹⁴³ Blundell suggests that this pairing of a much older male with a young female helped to foster the notion of the inferiority of the female among Greek men.¹⁴⁴ Male children grew to adulthood and were then permitted to participate in the civic life that was denied them in their youth. Women, however, were barred from any such participation for life. In fact nowhere in Classical Greece, to our knowledge, were women ever enfranchised.¹⁴⁵

Although an Athenian woman could inherit land in her own right, she was prevented from disposing of such property.¹⁴⁶ Athenian law is quite clear as to the primacy of transmitting the οἶκος through patrilineal male descendants.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² The evidence from Gortyn may point to a similar arrangement (Blundell [1995] 158). The evidence from Sparta, however, suggests that women may have been between 18 and 25 (*ibid.*, 153).

¹⁴³ 6.122.2. Most editors consider this passage to be corrupt. Hude brackets the entire chapter. Grene (1987) 457 n. 61, comments that several word forms are not fifth-century Greek. That Spartan women also had little choice choosing their husbands is supported by Herodotos 6.57.4.

¹⁴⁴ Blundell (1995) 120. Nor is there any evidence to suggest that girls received any education outside the home (132). This is in vivid contrast to the public education and athletics of women at Sparta. See Xen. *Const. of the Lak.* 12.4 and Plutarch *Lyk.* 14.2.

¹⁴⁵ While an Athenian boy became a πολίτης, an Athenian woman became an ἀσθή. Although ἀσθή is usually translated as "citizen", it should be noted that this status entitled a woman to protection under the law, and a share in the religious and economic order of Athens, but no share in the government or military (unlike all citizen males). Also, "protection under law" was subject to magistrates and a jury consisting only of men, and therefore subject to an unequivocal male point of view. In the case of economic activities, Athenian women required male supervision to conduct any important financial transactions (according to Isaios 10.10, any transaction beyond the value of one μέδιμνος. A μέδιμνος was roughly equivalent to the amount of barley required to sustain a family for five to six days. See Kuenen-Janssens [1941] 199).

¹⁴⁶ Inheritance of property by an Athenian woman was very rare (Blundell [1995] 116). Spartan women, however, could inherit whole estates and sell them, (*Ibid.* 155-6).

¹⁴⁷ For Athenian law concerning a woman's inheritance, see MacDowell (1982) 56-66, and Sealey (1990) 156-157.

To conclude our review of the status of Athenian women, it is sufficient to say that their position seems to have been one of inferiority and restricted action. The primary role of a woman seems to have been to provide her husband with a male heir. Although Spartan information indicates a much less restrictive environment for women, at least in terms of economics and property,¹⁴⁸ it is nevertheless reasonable to assume that women in Greece in general occupied a secondary status to Greek men. They had no part in war or politics, and they were envisioned by Greek men to be physically, and often mentally, inferior.

1.3. B.1. Athens in the fifth century

An interesting phenomenon during most of Herodotos' life is the growth of Athens.¹⁴⁹ One of the greatest changes in the Greek world during the second and third quarters of the fifth century is certainly the growth of Athens' power. How this must have affected Herodotos, who was himself a subject of the Athenian empire,¹⁵⁰ will be discussed below. As concerns his audience, it is not possible to determine their individual thoughts concerning Athenian imperialism. It is sufficient to note that Athens was certainly the most renowned (in the positive or the negative sense) Greek city in the third quarter of the century, and that Greeks, in general, were

¹⁴⁸ Cohen (1989), while acknowledging all the restrictions on Athenian women, lists a number of activities that would have required their attention outside the house (138-9).

¹⁴⁹Thucydides 1.89-117 (see also Diodoros 11.39-12.38). One of Thucydides' aims, however, is expressly to show the rise of the power of Athens (Bengtson [1988] 449). See also Gomme (1945) 361-413. For the fifty-year period in general, see Bengtson (1988) 112-130, 448-452, 663-668

¹⁵⁰ Meiggs (1972) 375. See above, 24-5. Meiggs notes that Herodotos does not comment directly on Athenian imperialism.

certainly aware of her external policies and her actions around the Aegean.

1.3. B.2. Herodotos and Athens

It has been suggested that Herodotos was an admirer of Periklean Athens and that such a sentiment carried over into his historical writings.¹⁵¹ Jacoby writes that Herodotos wrote from Athenian sources and an Athenian point of view.¹⁵² He also suggests that Athens was the one great factor that allowed Herodotos to write his work.¹⁵³ The prominence of Athens as the intellectual and artistic Mecca of the Greek world during Herodotos' lifetime could be used to support Jacoby's claim. It is only natural to assume that a Greek male in Herodotos' position, that is, a traveler and an artist, would have frequented one of the cultural centres of the Greek world.¹⁵⁴ If Herodotos did spend time at Athens, this need not imply any fondness or dislike for that city. An analysis of the relevant passages concerning Athens in the *History* reveals at most an ambivalence, on the part of Herodotos, towards that city.¹⁵⁵ It can,

¹⁵¹ See especially Jacoby (1913) 237-243; de Selincourt (1962) 30-31; and Legrand (1966) vol. 1a. 30-33.

¹⁵²*Op. cit.*, 242. He also argues towards Alkmeonid sources for Athenian information, but see Fornara (1971a) 53-57, where the author discusses the ambiguity of the Alkmeonid references.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 355. De Selincourt (1962) states that Herodotos' "plan was to tell the story of the Persian wars, and in the course of the story to celebrate the decisive contribution of Athens to their successful outcome" (31).

¹⁵⁴ Herodotos never claims to have been at Athens, but as stated above (26, n. 102), he rarely specifies where he has been. The only ancient reports that we have referring to Herodotos being in Athens are the statements by Syncellus the chronologer, and Plutarch, *de mal. Her.* 26 (quoting the fourth century historian Diyllos). See How and Wells (1928) vol. 1, 6-7. See also Jacoby (1913) 237-243 and Legrand (1966) 27-31; the latter postulates a time between 447 and 443 BC for Herodotos' "séjour athénien" (30). See Immerwahr (1966) 217 and n. 77. Scholars in general almost universally accept that Herodotos spent time at Athens. Most would place him there sometime in the middle of the fifth century, before his reputed participation in the colonization of Thourioi. Podlecki (1977) argues that Herodotos need not have frequented the city of Athens at all, and that all the information concerning that city could have been amassed at Thourioi.

¹⁵⁵ The principal passages concerning Athens are 5.78, 97.2; 7.139; 8.3, 17; 9.114. Immerwahr (1966) 217, includes 8.40-82 (preliminaries to the battle of Salamis); 8.136-9.11 (negotiations between Athens and Mardonios); and, more generally, the "last section of the work, where we see Athens pursuing the war

therefore, equally be argued that Herodotos was in fact not a supporter or admirer of contemporary Athens, as Jacoby has argued. In order to establish Herodotos' opinions concerning Athens, it is necessary to look at Athens' portrayal throughout the *History*, as well as at the individual passages singled out by scholars as evidence for Herodotos' alleged Athenian bias. By this method it will be shown that Herodotos presents contemporary Athens (or Athens directly after the successful defense of Greece) in less than favourable terms.

The most renowned passage, used in support of a pro-Athenian Herodotos, is 7.139.1 & 5:

ἐνθαῦτα ἀναγκαίη ἐξέρομαι γνώμην ἀποδέξασθαι ἐπίφθονον μὲν πρὸς τῶν πλεόνων ἀνθρώπων. ὅμως δέ, τῇ γέ μοι φαίνεται εἶναι ἀληθές, οὐκ ἐπισχῆσω. εἰ Ἄθηναῖοι καταρρωδήσαντες τὸν ἐπιόντα κίνδυνον ἐξέλιπον τὴν σφετέρην, ἢ καὶ μὴ ἐκλιπόντες ἀλλὰ μείναντες ἔδοσαν σφέας αὐτοῦς Ξέρξη, κατὰ τὴν θάλασσαν οὐδαμοὶ ἂν ἐπειρώντο ἀντιεύμενοι βασιλείῃ ... νῦν δὲ Ἄθηναῖους ἂν τις λέγων σωτήρας γενέσθαι τῆς Ἑλλάδος οὐκ ἂν ἀμαρτάνοι τἀληθές· οὗτοι γὰρ ἐπὶ ὀκότερα τῶν πρηγμάτων ἐτράποντο, ταῦτα ῥέψειν ἔμελλε· ἐλόμενοι δὲ τὴν Ἑλλάδα περιεῖναι ἐλευθέρην. [τούτο] τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν πᾶν τὸ λοιπὸν, ὅσον μὴ ἐμήδισε, αὐτοὶ οὗτοι ἦσαν οἱ ἐπεγείραντες καὶ βασιλέα μετὰ γε θεοῦς ἀνωσάμενοι.

As stated above, I place much value in Herodotos' personal interjections, such as contained in this passage. Herodotos writes that "it appears to him to be true (μοι φαίνεται εἶναι ἀληθές)" that Athens was responsible for saving Greece during the Persian Wars. Herodotos is obviously praising Athens in this passage, but it is specifically the Athens of 480/479 BC, and not the Athens of his day. If Athens' character had remained the same during the

against the wishes of the Spartans." Fornara (1971a) 53-58, also includes the "Alkmeonid" passages when establishing Herodotos' views towards Athens. He therefore considers other passages such as 5.69 (Kleisthenes' reforms); 6.121-130 (the defense of the Alkmeonids at Marathon, the greatness of the family, the wedding of Agariste and the birth of Perikles); 9.114 (Xanthippos' actions after Mykale). On the ambiguities of Herodotos' representation of Athens see Georges (1993) 131 and note 69, Fornara (1971a) 37-91, Immerwahr (1966) 217-225, and Strasburger (1955).

Pentekontaetia, then one could argue for Herodotos' praise applying also to contemporary Athens. However, even though contemporary Athens shared a number of significant characteristics with the Athens of 479 BC, such as the democratic nature of her government, important changes had taken place. The Athens of 479 was already powerful, but it is an indisputable fact that the fifty-year period following the Persian Wars was largely characterized by Athens' growth. The Athens of 480/479 was fighting a defensive war on Greek soil. The Athens of Herodotos' time was aggressively fighting barbarians (and Greeks) in foreign lands, as well as other Greeks in Greek lands.¹⁵⁶ Even within the *History*, immediately after the victories at Salamis and Plataia, the role of Athens changes. She becomes the aggressor when, after the victory at Mykale, she takes over the rule of the allies and continues the campaign against the Persians in Asia Minor.¹⁵⁷

The willingness of the Athenians to allow the Spartans to control the allied forces, as well as their eagerness to accept the decision of the Spartans concerning the ordering of the troops at Plataia in 9.27, present Athens quite favourably. However, aside from the fact that it is again specifically the Athens of 479 BC that Herodotos is portraying, the passage also vividly contrasts the statement in 8.3, where Herodotos claims that the ὕβρις of Pausanias was only a pretext, and that the Athenians were simply waiting for

¹⁵⁶ It seems clear that Herodotos conceived of Europe and Asia as two entirely separate places, with the Hellespont as the natural boundary between the two (see especially 4.145 and 4.198). The theme that Greeks belong in Europe, and the Persians belong in Asia, is repeated in Herodotos. The Persians clearly express such a belief in 1.4.4. Herodotos, judging from his personal comment (χρησιμωτάτην) on Bias' proposal to remove all Ionians from Asia Minor, appears to concur (1.170.1). The Spartans also express a desire to relocate the Ionians to mainland Greece (9.106.2-3).

¹⁵⁷ Thuc. 1.95-96, and Hdt. 8.3 and 9.114.

the right moment to seize the rule of the allies from the Spartans.¹⁵⁸ Also, in 9.114, Herodotos states that one of the main reasons that the Greeks proceeded from Mykale to the Hellespont, was to destroy the bridges linking Asia and Europe. Finding these bridges already destroyed, the Peloponnesians resolved to return to Greece, while the Athenians, under the command of Xanthippos, remained and attacked the Chersonese.

Herodotos frames his *History* around the rise of Persia and the expansion of its empire. This empire, as depicted by Herodotos, falls at the end of the *History*.¹⁵⁹ It is a symbolic downfall only, as there is no indication that Persia's failure in Greece significantly weakened her Asian rule.¹⁶⁰ Nevertheless, Herodotos saw fit to present the setback in Greece as a resounding defeat on the part of the Persians and a decisive historical event.

Within the context of the rise and fall of Persia, the rise and fall of individual kings parallel each other as well as the larger cycle, as each of the Persian kings crosses a natural boundary and

¹⁵⁸...ὥς γὰρ διωσάμενοι τὸν Πέρσῃν περὶ τῆς ἐκείνου ἤδη τὸν ἀγῶνα ἐποιεῦντο, πρόφασιν τὴν Πausanίῳ ὕβριν προϊσχύμενοι ἀπέιλοντο τὴν ἡγεμονίην τοῦς Λακεδαιμονίους. (8.3.3)

¹⁵⁹Immerwahr (1966) 78; Briant (1996) 531-535. Aischylos also presents Xerxes' defeat as decisive (*Persians*, esp. 550 and 585-595). Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1983) 31 remarks that "the real downfall did not take place until 150 years after Salamis." She also argues that Herodotos does not comment or hint at a decline setting in during the reign of Xerxes. Although Herodotos does not discuss such a decline, there are a number of passages that hint at the decline of Xerxes and, symbolically, Persia itself. See below, 122-149.

¹⁶⁰Greek sources, such as Herodotos, Diodoros and Plutarch (esp. *Themistokles*, *Arstides* and *Kimón*) treat almost exclusively the Mediterranean side of the Persian Empire (Briant, *op.cit.*, 532). Archaeological evidence seems to indicate that Persia's rule in the Eastern parts of her Empire remained stable, although references in Classical authors to numerous rebellions after a change of monarch seem justified. The Daiva inscription (Kent [1953] 150-2), supporting written sources on rebellions under Xerxes, and the Behistun inscription (*ibid.*, 116-34), for revolts under Dareios, are the best known examples, but there is other inscriptional evidence, especially from Babylon and Egypt. On the Hellenocentric picture of a decaying Persian Empire from Xerxes onwards, see Baslez (1986), Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1987), and Briant (1987) and (1996) 531-534, and Brosius (1996) 1-3.

unsuccessfully battles a “noble savage” people.¹⁶¹ Kyros crosses the Araxes river (1.205), east, to engage the Massagetae, is defeated, and killed. Kambyses tries to cross the desert (3.25) into Ethiopia, but he is unsuccessful in his attempt to expand the Empire further south. Dareios attempts to conquer the Skythians to the north, crossing both the Bosphoros (4.87-88) and the Ister (4.97), but he also fails. Finally, Xerxes crosses the Hellespont (7.54-56), in order to expand to the west and conquer the Greeks. The Spartans, it can be argued, much more than the Athenians or the Greeks in general, exhibit the features of a noble savage people.¹⁶² Like the Massagetae and the Skythians, the Spartans fight a defensive war and limit the expansion of the Persians. They do not pursue the Persians outside of their own territories.¹⁶³ Athens, as Herodotos clearly states, is largely responsible for the Greek victory over the Persians. But Athens, as Herodotos knew, did not content herself with a defensive victory.¹⁶⁴ She does not break from the cycle in the *History* in the manner that the Massagetae or Skythians do. Nor, it can be argued,

¹⁶¹Noble savage people refers to people who are simple, free, and natural. They are somewhat primitive in their lack of luxury. They greatly value their own νομοί and appear to resist change. The Massagetae (1.201, 205-8, 212, 216), the Ethiopians (3.20-24), the Skythians (4.59-82 and 4.127) and the Spartans (5.49, 63; 7.102, 104, 219-20; 8.26; 9.82) all demonstrate the qualities of a noble savage people. For the importance of natural boundaries (especially rivers) to limit aggressive expansion in Herodotos see Immerwahr (1966) 189 and 306, and Lateiner (1989) 127-135.

¹⁶²See above, n. 161. See also 5.49, 63 and 9.82. See also Immerwahr (1966) 294.

¹⁶³The Spartans do enter barbarian land after Plataia, and they do engage the Persians, but, upon discovering that the bridges spanning the Hellespont have already been destroyed, they return home. They do so because the threat of the Persians invading their homeland no longer exists, and the natural boundary between Europe and Asia, between Greeks and barbarians, has been reestablished. See also Sparta's refusal to help Aristagoras and the Ionians during their revolt from Dareios (5.49-55).

¹⁶⁴See above, 34, n. 149. Herodotos, in the main, remains within his established chronological parameters (events no later than 479/8 BC). He therefore says little concerning Athens after the Persian Wars. The imperialistic tendencies of Athens, however, are demonstrated after Marathon (6.132-6), as well as after Artemisium (8.11-2), and Plataia (9.106 and 114-21). See also 1.68-71, 73-8, 139-44; 2.38-47, 2.60-65; 3.37. The notion that the Athens of Herodotos' day had changed (in a negative way) is also apparent in Thucydides, 2.64; 3.37; 5.84-116.

as the Spartans do.¹⁶⁵ The Persians themselves are a noble savage people before they successfully win a defensive battle against Kroisos,¹⁶⁶ but after the victory they change and begin to rise on the cycle. Herodotos states that the Persians have nothing before they defeat the Lydians,¹⁶⁷ but that upon their victory, they begin an aggressive and expansionist policy.¹⁶⁸ Athens, it can be argued, follows a similar pattern. At the close of the *History*, she is on the rise in the cycle of rise and fall. The cycle is explained by Herodotos early in his work,¹⁶⁹ and it is elaborated in the Kroisos logos.¹⁷⁰ The inevitability of Kroisos' fall is made clear several times in the Kroisos logos.¹⁷¹ The fall of Kroisos and Lydia is important as the prologue to the rise of Persia. Lydia is the luxurious nation which is defeated by the strength of the poor, proud Persians.¹⁷² The fall of Lydia is also significant in that it balances the rise of Athens at the end of the *History*.¹⁷³

The other passage often referred to when attempting to establish a pro-Athenian Herodotos is 5.78:

¹⁶⁵The Ethiopians are omitted because they do not actually battle Kambyses' army. They are presented as Noble Savages by Herodotos, but Kambyses' army is not successful in reaching the land of the Ethiopians, therefore he never engages their army (3.21-6).

¹⁶⁶The Persians, as described in 1.71, and in retrospect in 9.122, display the qualities of a Noble Savage people.

¹⁶⁷Herodotos informs us that, with regards to customs, the Persians are the most eclectic people that he knows: "ξεινικὰ δὲ νόμια Πέρσαι προσίενται ἀνδρῶν μάλιστα" (1.135.1). The act of adopting foreign customs suggested a neglect of one's own customs. This neglect for Persian customs is exploited in the portrait of Xerxes, as will be shown below (122-149, in order to create the effect of a falling hero.

¹⁶⁸Xerxes comments that the Persians have never been at rest: "ὥς γὰρ ἐγὼ πυνθάνομαι τῶν πρεσβυτέρων, οὐδαμὰ κω ἡτρεμίσαμεν, ἐπεῖτε παρελάβομεν τὴν ἡγεμονίην τήνδε παρὰ Μηδῶν. Κύρου κατελόντος Ἀστυάγεα" (7.8.1). See also 9.16-8. The words of Kyros, however, at the close of the work, contradict such an expansionist policy (9.122).

¹⁶⁹1.5 and above, 7, n. 26.

¹⁷⁰The Kroisos logos is an encapsulation of the theme of the rise and fall of a ruler, at the heart of which is a reversal of fortune (Immerwahr [1966] 75-76). Herodotos initiates the theme in the Kroisos logos and this pattern of rise and fall becomes central to his entire work. See above, 7, n. 26.

¹⁷¹1.13,30-32, 34-45, 70, 71, 75, 77, 78, 83.

¹⁷²See above, n. 166.

¹⁷³See Immerwahr (1966) 145-7.

δηλοῖ δὲ οὐ κατ' ἓν μόνον· ἀλλὰ πανταχῇ ἡ ἰσηγορίη ὡς ἐστὶ χρῆμα σπουδαῖον, εἰ καὶ Ἄθηναῖοι τυραννεύμενοι μὲν οὐδαμῶν τῶν σφέας περιοικεόντων ἦσαν τὰ πολέμια ἀμείνους, ἀπαλλαχθέντες δὲ τυράννων μακρῶ πρώτοι ἐγένοντο. δηλοῖ ὦν ταῦτα ὅτι κατεχόμενοι μὲν ἐθελοκάκεον ὡς δεσπότη ἐργαζόμενοι, ἐλευθερωθέντων δὲ αὐτὸς ἕκαστος ἐωυτῷ προεθυμέετο κατεργάζεσθαι.

In the above passage, Herodotos compares the Athenians' skill in war while under a tyrant's rule, to their later excellence as free men. As Fornara has pointed out, the comparison in this passage is between freedom (ἰσηγορίη) and tyranny, and not democracy and tyranny. The Spartans, although not democratic, were free. Spartan freedom was a more moderate freedom, as Demaratos explains:¹⁷⁴

ἐλεύθεροι γὰρ ἐόντες οὐ πάντα ἐλεύθεροί εἰσι· ἔπεσι γὰρ σφι δεσπότης νόμος, τὸν ὑποδειμαίνουσι πολλῶ ἔτι μᾶλλον ἢ οἱ σοὶ σέ.

This moderate freedom was one that Herodotos seems to have approved of. In fact, it can be argued that Herodotos' "admiration for the Spartan government was even more intense than any feelings he evinced for Athenian democracy."¹⁷⁵

Herodotos, on more than one occasion, demonstrates the negative side of the rule of the many. In 5.97, he tells how Aristagoras, the leader of Miletus, was not able to convince Kleomenes, the king of Sparta, to send ships to Ionia to battle the Persians. This same person, however, was able to convince the Athenian demos to send their ships to Asia. Herodotos tells us that these ships were the beginning of all evils for the Greeks.¹⁷⁶ He concludes the passage by stating that it is easier to fool many, than to fool one.

¹⁷⁴7.104.4.

¹⁷⁵ Fornara (1971) 49.

¹⁷⁶ ἀρχὴ κακῶν (5.97.3). Homer uses the same words to describe Paris' ships at Sparta (*Iliad*, 5.62 and 11.604). See also Thucydides 2.12.3.

The Athenian demos is also presented unfavourably in the story of Pisistratos' second seizure of power (1.60). Herodotos relates how Pisistratos, accompanied by a fully armed woman posing as Athena, rode up to the Acropolis in a chariot and successfully gained the tyranny of Athens. He adds the personal comment (ὡς ἐγὼ εὐρίσκω) that, even though the Greeks excelled over barbarians in terms of cleverness, and even though the Athenians were first among Greeks in terms of wisdom, they nevertheless fell for this most absurd trick (πρῆγμα εὐηθέστατον).

The leading men of Athens themselves also do not seem to trust the judgment of the Athenian demos. When Lykides suggests to the other council members that Mardonios' proposition of alliance between Persia and Athens be submitted to the Ekklesia (the demos), he is stoned to death by his fellow councilors (9.5).

Freedom, in Herodotos, is an essential part of being Greek. The antithesis between freedom and slavery pervades his entire work. However, Herodotos emphasizes the importance of νομός. He adds his personal comment, agreeing with Pindar, that "νομός is king of all."¹⁷⁷ The Spartans are free, but as Demaratos explains, they are ruled by νομός (7.104.4).

The general sentiments towards Athens at Herodotos' time should also be acknowledged when considering Herodotos' treatment of Athens within his *History*. The sentiment expressed by Herodotos in 7.139 suggests a lack of support for Athens during Herodotos' era. He precludes his praise of Athens by stating that his words are going to be "disliked by most people (ἐξέργομαι γνώμην

¹⁷⁷καὶ ὀρθῶς μοι δοκεῖ Πίνδαρος ποιῆσαι νόμον πάντων βασιλέα φήσας εἶναι (3.38).

ἀποδέξασθαι ἐπίφθονον μὲν πρὸς τῶν πλεόνων ἀνθρώπων).¹⁷⁸ It is perhaps predictable that "most people" would dislike the Athenians being declared the "saviours of Greece." Unless Herodotos was addressing a specifically Athenian audience, or producing his work primarily for Athenians, his audience would most likely be made up of more non-Athenians than Athenians. The statement could, however, also reflect a general atmosphere of dislike for the Athenian empire during Herodotos' time.

Another important factor when considering Herodotos' opinions concerning Athens is the fact that he was Dorian. Athens was Ionian, and Herodotos' work demonstrates anti-Ionian sentiments.¹⁷⁹ Also, the animosity between Ionian and Dorian was certainly increased at the time of the Peloponnesian War.¹⁸⁰

The recurrent theme that the Greeks do not belong in Asia Minor is also important in relation to Athens' representation in the *History*.¹⁸¹ Towards the end of the work, Herodotos depicts the Peloponnesians with a desire not to desert the Ionians, but rather to re-establish firm Asian-European boundaries, with the Greeks in Europe and barbarians in Asia (9.106). The Athenians, on the other hand, are depicted refusing to consider such an idea. They insist on the continuation of aggression against Asia. The Athenian motive for aiding the Ionians (by fighting in Asia) is hypocritical. They had

¹⁷⁸1.139.1.

¹⁷⁹ 1.170, where Herodotos describes Ionia as the most beautiful place he knows of should not be taken favourably (compare 9.122, where Kyros explains the Greek sentiment that soft lands breed soft men). See also Homer, *Odyssey* 9.25-9.27; Hippokrates *On Airs, Waters, and Places* 12.16,23-24; Aristotle, *Politics* 1327b. Herodotos states in 3.106 that Greece has the best mixture of climates. Other passages implying an anti-Ionian sentiment are 1.173, 4.142, 6.12 and 7.10, where Herodotos writes that Histiaeos could have put an end to the Persian Empire if he had only acted. See Jacoby (1913) 357; Immerwahr (1966) 239-40; Georges (1994) 39-40.

¹⁸⁰Georges (1994) 130 and n. 63.

¹⁸¹1.4,170, and 9.101. See also above, 38, n. 156.

already pledged earlier help to the Ionians (5.97), and had abandoned them shortly after (5.103). It can be argued that Herodotos believed the only aid to be given to the Ionians was their removal from Asia. Asia belongs to the Persians, and as long as the Ionians inhabit that land they will remain Persian subjects.

This final passage concerning Athens in the *Histories* (9.114-21) is also significant for other reasons. The reference to Perikles' father, Xanthippos, need not draw any special attention, since it was standard practice for Herodotos to name individual Greek generals in war campaigns. The important factors are the decision of the masses and Xanthippos to kill Artayktes, and the method employed by them to do so. Artayktes, the Persian satrap, had injured the Sestians by desecrating the shrine of the Trojan hero Protesilaos. When captured by the Athenians, he offered to pay a large fine for his sins. Herodotos tells us, however, that the masses, and Xanthippos himself, desired greatly to see the man dead, so the Athenian general refused to accept the offer (9.120.4).

The method of Artayktes' death, perpetrated by the Athenians, is crucifixion (ἀνασκολπίζω).¹⁸² Crucifixion of an enemy is an act which appears to be abhorred by Herodotos, one which is more natural to the savagery of barbarians than to the moderation of Greeks. Indeed the butchering or burning of the human body is presented as a characteristic of barbarian culture.¹⁸³ It is a revenge which is out of proportion to the magnitude of any crime. Xerxes mutilated the body of the dead Leonidas, cutting off his head and

¹⁸²9.78.3.

¹⁸³Hartog (1988) 142-62 and 332-4; Georges (1994) 182.

mounting it on a pole (7.238).¹⁸⁴ Yet Pausanias, the Spartan general, refused to exact vengeance for this barbarism and personal injury to the Spartans when it was open to him to do so after Plataia. Lampon, an Aiginetan, counseled him to crucify (ἀνασκολπίζω) the body of the Persian general, Mardonios, but the Spartan answers that such actions are more fit for barbarians than Greeks and that he would never abase himself to nothingness by mutilating the body.¹⁸⁵ Desecrating the human body is clearly unholy (ἀνόσιον). The Spartans, who were far more injured by Mardonios and the Persian war party than were the Athenians by Arktaiktes, refuse to exact such a vengeance.

The Athenians, under Xanthippos, father of Perikles, do exact vengeance. It can be argued that Herodotos is depicting the Athenians' behaviour as barbaric. Just as the Athenians are rising on the cycle of fortune, so they are also slipping into barbarism. Herodotos specifies that being Greek is a way of life, and not simply a birth right. Barbarians could become Greek, and therefore Greeks could slip into barbarism.¹⁸⁶

One final note on Herodotos' attitude towards Athens should be acknowledged. He seems to have shared a special relationship with the island of Samos, and Athens crushed Samos shortly after the revolt of 441 BC.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴See also the similar mutilations by Xerxes (8.38-39) and Dareios (4.84).
¹⁸⁵9.79.1

¹⁸⁶Georges (1994) 124. See also below, 49-54.

¹⁸⁷For the revolt of Samos and the Athenian suppression see Thucydides 1.115-117. See also Bengtson (1988) 129 and 462 n. 93. For Herodotos and Samos see above, 28 and n. 116.

1.3. C. The Persian threat

The victory of the Athenians over the Persians at Eurymedon may have stopped the threat of another Persian attack on Athens herself, but these same Persians remained the “official national enemy” of the Athenians.¹⁸⁸ Athenian imperialism depended upon enmity to Persia, even after the so called Peace of Kallias.¹⁸⁹ An actual threat to the allies, or an alleged one propagated by the Athenians, must have continued to exist into the third quarter of the fifth century. This threat of Persia was certainly revived, at least at Athens, at the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. It is visible in the treatment of the Spartan envoys who were intercepted on their way to Artaxerxes. They are killed without trial, and their bodies denied burial.¹⁹⁰

1.3. D. Fifth-century Greeks and the past

Concerning Herodotos' audience, one other subject deserves our attention: the Greeks' personal knowledge of their own past. It is difficult to side with those scholars who see fiction, on the part of Herodotos, in areas dealing with the relatively recent Greek past.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸As shown in the prayers of the Ekklesia in Aristophanes *Thesm.* 337 and Isokrates *Pan.* 157, cf. Georges (1994) 117-118. Miller (1997) 243-58 discusses Athens' apparent receptivity to Persian culture as a means of diffusing the Persian threat.

¹⁸⁹Perikles justifies the spending of Athenian allies' money on beautifying Athens as long as she in return continues to protect the allies from the Persians (Plut. *Per.* 1-3). The authenticity of a formal peace between Athens and Persia towards the middle of the fifth-century, the Peace of Kallias, has been both accepted and rejected as historical fact since the fourth-century. No fifth-century source speaks specifically of a formal peace between Athens and Persia, and yet an overwhelming number of scholars accept the Peace as authentic (Badian [1987] 1, n. 5). For arguments against the Peace see esp. Meister (1982), Mattingly (1965), Stockton (1959), and Sealey (1954). Scholars who accept the Peace debate whether such a peace was formalized after Eurymedon, around 464 BC, or in 449 BC. For the earlier date, see esp. Badian (1987). The traditional date of 449 BC remains most convincing. See Wade-Gery (1940) and Meiggs (1972) 129-151 & 487-95. For a recent refutation of Badian and the earlier date for the Peace, see Bloedow (1993). For a full bibliography see Bengtson (1962) n. 152, and (1988) 461-2, n. 81

¹⁹⁰Thuc. 2.67. cf. Georges (1993) 142.

¹⁹¹Pritchett (1993) 328-353 addresses the ramifications of the claims, primarily by Fehling and West, of fiction in Greek stories.

Not only were there quite possibly listeners with first hand information concerning the stories that he told (survivors from the Persian Wars), but also descendants who had been told stories from their ancestors. To accuse Herodotos of fictionalizing events concerning the Near East is perhaps understandable. Who was there to challenge him? But to accuse him of deliberately fictionalizing Greek stories greatly underestimates the Greeks' knowledge, collectively especially, but also individually, of their own past.¹⁹²

¹⁹² Pritchett, *op.cit.*, 330: "On the one hand, they allege that Herodotos is purposely lying about people to whom his history is addressed—people who know that he is lying. On the other hand, they allege that by using such devices as citing various sources as his authority, his intent is to deceive these same people into believing that what he narrates is the truth." Murray (1987) 100, however, writes that "their [*the Greeks*] interest in the past was scarcely more than average."

CHAPTER 2: BARBARISM, WOMEN, AND THE DOMINANT FEMALE MOTIF

2.1 TO BE GREEK, OR NOT TO BE GREEK

Herodotos makes it very clear in the proem of his work, that there are only two types of ἄνθρωποι: Greeks and non-Greeks. Both are capable of ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, but the two groups are vastly different and entirely separate in Herodotos. These two categories appear to be mutually exclusive, and yet Herodotos explains that barbarians can become Greek¹⁹³, and therefore we must assume that the opposite is also possible. Greeks, then, can become barbarian. But this degeneration of a Greek people into barbarism is nowhere explicit in Herodotos. It would certainly have been viewed as the worst of evils by his Greek audience. Before discussing Greek and barbarian any further, it is necessary to consider the relevant passages in Herodotos.

There are two principal passages where the characteristics that make a person or people Greek are discussed.¹⁹⁴ A thorough examination of both passages is necessary when attempting to answer the question: "Whom did Herodotos consider to be Greek?"

The renowned passage in 8.144.2 has often been interpreted as an indication of Herodotos' personal views concerning

¹⁹³ 1.56-58, as we shall see below. See also 8.44. Isokrates, *Eva*. 66, also comments that barbarians were able to change into Greeks. Thucydides implies a similar sentiment when he remarks that there are many similarities between ancient Greeks and contemporary barbarians (1.6.6).

¹⁹⁴ These two passages are 8.144 and 1.56-58. See also 1.4, 1.60, 7.139, and 7.145. Georges (1994) 298 n. 66, in his list of similar passages includes 8.12. This reference must be a misprint: 8.12 contains no relevant information concerning Greekness. He is perhaps referring to 8.44, where Herodotos discusses the earlier names of Athenians, starting at a time when Pelasgians (barbarians) held all of Greece. At this time the Athenians were Pelasgians and were called Kranaoi (Κραναοί).

Greekness.¹⁹⁵ Herein an Athenian envoy explains to the Spartan envoys why Athens will not come to terms with Persia and enslave Greece:

πολλά τε γὰρ καὶ μεγάλα ἐστὶ τὰ διακωλύοντα ταῦτα μὴ ποιέειν μηδ' ἦν ἐθέλωμεν, πρῶτα μὲν καὶ μέγιστα τῶν θεῶν τὰ ἀγάλματα καὶ τὰ οἰκήματα ἐμπεπρησμένα τε καὶ συγκεχωσμένα, τοῖσι ἡμέας ἀναγκαίως ἔχει τιμωρέειν ἐς τὰ μέγιστα μᾶλλον ἢ περ ὁμολογέειν τῷ ταῦτα ἐργασαμένῳ, αὐτίς δὲ τὸ Ἑλληνικόν, ἐὸν ὁμαιμόν τε καὶ ὁμόγλωσσον, καὶ θεῶν ἰδρύματά τε κοινὰ καὶ θυσίαι ἤθεά τε ὁμότροπα, τῶν προδότας γενέσθαι Ἀθηναίους οὐκ ἂν εὖ ἔχοι.

The passage seems clear. Hellenic unity consists of consanguinity, as well as a common language, religion and customs. The Greeks in Italy¹⁹⁶ and Asia Minor did retain their Greek language and religion. Their ways of life seem to have been similar also. As for the question of blood, the case is more complicated. It is a well known fact that when the Greeks colonized widely in the 8th and 7th centuries, they usually conquered and removed the indigenous people where they settled. However, often the founding of the Greek city was more peaceful, and a mixture of Greeks and locals took place in the following generations. Even if the foundation of the new city was extremely violent, a certain amount of interbreeding can still be expected (1.146). Since Greek patriarchal society practically ignored the blood of the mother,¹⁹⁷ Greek settlers

¹⁹⁵ Cartledge (1993) 3, for example.

¹⁹⁶ Herodotos refers to Gelon as a Greek, and to Syracuse as Greek city (7.145). As stated above, 4, n. 21, the label οἱ Ἑλληνικοί in the fifth century is regularly used to denote the whole Greek speaking world from Sicily to the Black Sea.

¹⁹⁷ An example from Athenian tragedy is *Eumenides* 657-66, concerning which Peradotto, 1984, 2 writes: "Apollo justifies Orestes' slaying of his mother, Clytemnestra, by what could only be called sexist biology: the male-oriented polis is more important than blood ties, but even if blood is important, then the son is really the blood-relative only of the father, the mother being merely the receptacle for the bearing of the child." Aristotle (*Gen. De Anim.* 716a, 727a-729b, 765b) supports Aischylos in the main, but he states that the woman supplies matter as well as space. This matter is, according to Aristotle, only passive and does not give life to the embryo. Blundell (1995) 107, using examples from the Hippocratic writers as well as Alcmaeon, Parmenides, Empedocles, Anaxagoras and Epicurus, argues that "theorists who discount women's role in the reproduction do not appear to have been the majority." It is, however, safe to assume that although the woman's role in reproduction should not be discounted, it is clear that it was certainly seen as secondary to the male's role, at least to fifth century Greek males.

were able to take indigenous non-Greek wives and still produce, in their opinion, Greek children. As mentioned above, Herodotos may very well have had such a lineage.¹⁹⁸

The problem with this passage lies not in its content, but its context. It is spoken by an Athenian and delivered at a specific moment in time and should not be removed from its context.¹⁹⁹ It is an Athenian rhetor's speech, designed and delivered to the Spartans with the sole intention of inciting them to immediate action. Political institutions, which were vastly different at Athens and Sparta, are ignored.²⁰⁰ The differences between the two races (γένεα), the one Ionian and the other Dorian, are left out, and the differences in their dialects are obscured by the ambiguous reference to "one tongue." It is a general statement that on the surface might have been acceptable to the Spartan listeners of 479 BC. Differences between Greek dialects and the idiosyncratic ways of individual Greek πόλεις were by no means as great as the differences between Greeks and barbarians. Also, the sense of Panhellenic unity was certainly at its height with the Persians occupying Boeotia and preparing to move further south.

If, however, the passage is taken out of the literary context, and placed in the appropriate time frame of its public

¹⁹⁸ 27-8 and ns. 107-12.

¹⁹⁹ The setting is Athens early in the summer of 479 BC.

²⁰⁰ Walbank (1985b) discusses the "unity" of the Greeks. He remarks that "despite such alliances of convenience as marked the Persian Wars in Greece proper, (...) the Greek cities everywhere remained separate and divided, each with its own laws, without rights of intermarriage, with different calendars and currencies, and (...) with different scripts and alphabets." (8). See also Hall (1989) 8-9 and Finley (1986) 120-33.

presentation,²⁰¹ then the passage becomes very ironic.²⁰² The Athenians pledge that they would never turn traitor and enslave the Greeks (μηδίσαντες καταδουλώσαι τὴν Ἑλλάδα), but in the decades following the repulse of the Persians, Athens enslaved many other Greeks.²⁰³ The fifty years between the Persian Wars and the Peloponnesian War are largely characterized by the growth of Athens. She also most likely concluded a formal peace with Persia and celebrated this fact in the Periklean building program on the Acropolis.²⁰⁴

No matter what interpretation one might have concerning this particular passage, the fact remains that it is a political speech spoken by an Athenian. It should not be used to carelessly indicate Herodotos' own views towards being Greek.

In 1.56-58,²⁰⁵ however, the case is quite different. Here Herodotos appears distant at first (no speaker is identified), but by the beginning of chapter 57, he changes to the first person narrative and lets his authorial presence be known. It can be argued that here we are dealing with his personal opinion, as indeed he states in 1.58.²⁰⁶

²⁰¹As stated above, 30 and n. 129, there is no reason to doubt the ancient opinion that Herodotos gave oral presentations of parts of his *History*. For the dates of Herodotos' displays, see above, 29-31.

²⁰²How the passage is ironic to Herodotos' audience, we shall see below, but the irony of the passage within Herodotos' works becomes clear in 9.11, where the Athenians tell the Spartans that they will Medize to save themselves. Although to the modern reader this passage is in a different book, it should be remembered that the division is not Herodotos', and the two passages were not as separate as they appear at present. See above, 29 and n. 120. On the irony of these passages, see Fornara (1971a) 84-86 and Georges (1994) 131.

²⁰³See Thuc. 1.89-117 and Diod. 11.39-12.38. See also above, 35 n. 149.

²⁰⁴Cartledge (1993) 51, obviously supporting the authenticity of the Peace of Kallias and its later date. See above, 47 n.189.

²⁰⁵The text is problematic, especially 1.56.2. I follow McNeal (1986) 130-132. He also discusses the textual difficulties of these passages in more detail in McNeal (1981 and 1985).

²⁰⁶ὡς ἐμοὶ καταφαίνεται εἶναι. For the importance of Herodotos' personal comments see above, 25-27 and n. 98.

In 1.56.2 Herodotos begins with Kroisos receiving information concerning those of the Greeks who are most powerful. He learns that the Athenians and the Spartans are the most powerful of the Greeks. The Athenians are of the Ionic race (γένος) and were once Pelasgians (ἔθνος),²⁰⁷ while the Spartans are of the Doric race and were Hellenic. The Hellenic people wandered exceedingly before settling in Peloponnesos, while the Pelasgians dwelt in Attica and were autochthonous. He then investigates the language of the Pelasgians, concluding that they spoke a non-Greek language, and that the Attic race, being Pelasgian, must have changed to the Greek language when it Hellenized.²⁰⁸ But the Greek part (of those Pelasgians who Hellenized)²⁰⁹ always used the Greek language (presumably since it split from those Attic Pelasgians who did not Hellenize). He goes on to say that this Greek part was weak when it split from the Pelasgian, but that it grew by the accretion of barbarians (especially Pelasgians). He then states that the Pelasgians never grew great anywhere speaking a non-Greek language. They grew great once they adopted Greek.

²⁰⁷ For the use of γένος and ἔθνος in Herodotos see Jones (1996). "Herodotos' use of the two terms is taxonomic or hierarchical, and at the same time inconsistent: an ἔθνος is sometimes a subdivision of the γένος, and sometimes the contrary" (315). Here we are dealing with the latter. Just (1989) remarks that ἔθνος does not refer to a political structure. The term is often translated as nation, but it carries the sense of nation-people, and not nation-state (72-3).

²⁰⁸ Herodotos is extremely vague concerning how the Athenians "Hellenized." Gomme (1959) 96, remarks that here we are probably dealing with Herodotos' own theory and that "he does not ask himself how this hellenization of the autochthonous and unconquered Athenians (and therefore of the Ionians of Asia, and so of Homer himself) took place. Also, in 2.51, Herodotos describes Pelasgians coming to settle with the Athenians (who had already Hellenized!). He does not explain it, but this must be a later influx of Pelasgians, after a portion of the original Attic Pelasgians had already Hellenized. For other passages in Herodotos concerning Pelasgians see 1.146; 2.52, 52, 56, 171; 4.145; 5.26, 64; 6.137-140; 7.95; 8.44. See also Thucydides 1.3; 2.17 (Πελαργικόν); 4.109. Concerning the Pelasgi in general, see Gomme (1959) 94-98, and How and Wells (1928) 442-446.

²⁰⁹ McNeal (1985) 17-19 argues that τὸ ἑλληνικόν here cannot refer to all Greeks, but those Attic Pelasgians who became Greeks and split from those Pelasgians who did not Hellenize.

Herodotos implies that, in his opinion,²¹⁰ the Greek language is most important in changing from barbarian to Greek.²¹¹ Indeed he gives no other details concerning this transformation of Pelasgians into Greeks.

Although Herodotos may appear to contradict himself in other passages when discussing the Hellenization of Greece,²¹² one fact is indisputably clear. Ionians (including Athenians) were barbarian in origin, while the Dorians (including Spartans) were Hellenic from the beginning and are given no barbarian ties.

This conclusion should come as no surprise. Herodotos, a Dorian Greek, explains to his audience that the only "true" Greeks are Dorian Greeks. Ionians, to whom he is less than sympathetic throughout his *History*,²¹³ were originally barbarians.

2.2 THE DOMINANT FEMALE MOTIF

The dominant female motif, in its most apparent and obvious form, is a gender statement reflecting the attitude that female is inferior to male. This attitude appears frequently among barbarians as well as Greeks.²¹⁴ The motif itself, however, is also more complex. It can also be comprised of a statement of the type just mentioned above, and the ensuing actions that in some way contradict that

²¹⁰1.58 Herodotos includes his personal comment: ἔμοιγε δοκέει.

²¹¹ Hall (1989) 4-5, states that the original criterion of Hellenic ethnicity was their language. See also Bologna (1978) 305-17, for the importance of the Greek language to the Greeks collectively.

²¹²In 2.52, for example, Pelasgians of Thesprotia speak Greek at the time the oracle of Dodona is founded, *five generations* before the coming of the Dorians. For this inconsistency, and others in Herodotos, see Georges (1994) 133-134.

²¹³ See above, 44, n. 179.

²¹⁴ 1.189, 207; 7.11, 8.68, 88, 93; 9.20, 107.

statement.²¹⁵ In fact, it is often merely interactions between male and female that, when interpreted through the eyes of a fifth century Greek male, contribute to an atmosphere of Persian male inferiority.²¹⁶ If we bear in mind that “παρὰ δὲ τοῖσι Πέρσησι γυναικὸς κακίῳ ἀκούσαι δέννος μέγιστός ἐστι,” (9.107.3), the motif becomes much more emphatic. The interesting part about these contradictions between barbarian men’s beliefs in a superiority over women, and actions in the *History* that suggest an opposite situation, is that they appear only among these barbarians. Nowhere in the *History* does Herodotos portray a Greek male uttering any type of statement concerning or even implying female inferiority, only to be later proven wrong.²¹⁷ The statements are there, but no actions ensue to contradict such statements. Greek men in the *History*, it can be argued, present women as they are expected to be, in the eyes of a Greek audience.²¹⁸ For the purpose of this research, the dominant female motif is not merely the stated observations of Herodotos or his characters concerning the relation of male to female as much as it is the stories and events that are narrated with these statements in mind. The natural superiority of male to female, attested by Greeks as well as barbarians, is simply

²¹⁵ 1.189.2 with 1.214; and 8.68.3 with 8.88.

²¹⁶ 1.8-13, 187; 3.1, 134; 5.18-21; and 7.3.

²¹⁷ In 8.93, the Athenians are said to have offered a prize of ten thousand drachmas for the capture of Artemisia “...γάρ τι ἐποιεῦντο γυναῖκα ἐπὶ τὰς Ἀθήνας στρατεύεσθαι.” (8.93.2) The passage reflects the Greek (and Persian) attitude that women have no place in war, but since Herodotos is here describing Greek sentiments, the occurrence is not contradicted by any actions on the part of Artemisia. In fact she leaves the battle shortly after and returns to Persia (8.107). It can be argued that Euelthon is proven wrong in his refusal to supply Pheretima with an army (4.162), since she is later successful in battle (202). However, the manner in which Pheretima successfully obtains an army, the supplier of that army (167), Pheretima’s ultimate fate (205), and the manner in which Herodotos tells the story, all point towards the failure of Persian men to recognize the proper place of women (from a fifth-century Greek male point of view!). Pheretima is discussed more fully below, 129-130.

²¹⁸ As will be shown in the case of Pheretima (esp. 4.162; see below, 129-131) and Artemisia (esp. 8.87; see below, 127-134).

not present among the Persians in Herodotos. In fact, our author depicts scenes that suggest an antithetical situation among the Persians.

2.2. A. The victory monuments of Sesostris

An example of the obvious type of statements about the inferiority of the female among barbarians is 2.102.5. Herein the Egyptian king Sesostris is said to have erected pillars in the lands that he conquered. Herodotos adds that if the indigenous people put up no resistance, Sesostris had female genitalia drawn on these victory pillars to symbolize the cowardly nature of these conquered people. As with many of the other examples of this dominant female motif, the context is one of war.²¹⁹ The implication is that the female is naturally servile and accepts being conquered without even a fight. The Egyptians did set up victory monuments, and the existence of pillars set up by Sesostris is not at question,²²⁰ although the particular pillar that Herodotos viewed in Ionia 2.106.5 was most likely Hittite, and not Egyptian.²²¹ The genitalia drawings on the Egyptian pillars, on the other hand, are intriguing because it is believed that they never existed.²²² The Egyptians, to the best of our

²¹⁹ See 1.207; 7.11; 8.64, 88; 9.20, 107.

²²⁰ The monument that Herodotos saw in Syria (2.106) most likely belonged to Ramses II (Rawlinson [1875] vol. 2:145 n. 9. See also Lloyd (1988) 20-21.

²²¹ Lloyd, *loc.cit.* relates the scenario of Hittite ideograms mistakenly identified as female genitalia. Diodoros 1.55.8 also mentions the Egyptian pillars and the female genitalia. He adds that if the indigenous people were warlike (τοις μαχιμοις), then the Egyptian pharaoh had male genitalia drawn on the pillars. See also How and Wells (1928) vol. 1:217-18.

²²² How and Wells state that the addition of sexual emblems is a Greek invention (*Ibid.*, 218). Hall (1963) 161-2 translates a pillar set up at Semneh by Senusret III (identified by him as the Sesostris of Herodotos, but see above, n.168) remarking that it exhibits much scorn and is reminiscent of Herodotos 2.102. There is, however, no gender representation.

knowledge, never used the symbol for female genitalia to signify the cowardice of an enemy.²²³

The representations are therefore a product of Herodotos himself, or his Greek sources. That Greeks in general believed this “natural” superiority of male over female has already been discussed,²²⁴ and Herodotos does not provide us with any material that suggests he felt differently.²²⁵ With this Greek male bias in mind, a large number of passages where women among the Persians seem to have the upper hand point towards the inferiority of the Persian men in relation to their women, and, consequently, the inferiority of Persians to Greeks. How can men who cannot control their women possibly subjugate the men of Greece?

2.2. B. Xerxes’ portents on the eve of the invasion

Xerxes receives the following oracle at the Hellespont on the eve of the invasion of Greece (7.57.2) ἡμίονος γὰρ ἔτεκε ἡμίονον διξὰ ἔχουσαν αἰδοῖα. τὰ μὲν ἔρσηνος, τὰ δὲ θηλέης· κατύπερθε δὲ ἦν τὰ τοῦ ἔρσηνος. It is the second of two great portents. In the first, a mare gives birth to a hare. Herodotos explains the significance of the first omen: that Xerxes would enter Greece in a glorious way, but would leave running for his life (7.57.1).²²⁶

²²³ Lloyd, *op.cit.*, 20. If these representations were, for example, painted on these pillars, nothing would have survived.

²²⁴ See above, 33-35.

²²⁵ Dewald suggests that statements reflecting the subordinate nature and the physical inferiority of women in Herodotos are always placed in the mouths of individual characters; therefore they do not reflect Herodotos’ own personal opinion. Dewald’s observation holds true for most of the passages discussed in this Thesis (1.189, 207; 7.11; 8.64, 88, 93; 9.20, 107.); however, in 1.196, the situation is very different, as will be shown below, 69-71.

²²⁶ How and Wells list several passages that echo the same imagery: the inevitability of defeat (8.74.1, 102.3, 140.a4; and 9.37.2).

For the second phenomenon, Herodotos offers no explanation. Mules, almost without exception, are sterile animals. The emphasis for Herodotos in this passage, however, is surely the dual nature of the genitalia, and the fact that he comments that the male is above the female.²²⁷ The portent certainly relates to Xerxes' invasion, and just as with the first portent, this one must also point to Xerxes' defeat. The term καθύπερθε (Ionic κατύπερθε) not only carries the sense of above,²²⁸ but it is also used in the sense of dominating or having the upper hand over someone else.²²⁹ It is unlikely that the important feature of the portent is merely the two genitalia. Aristotle comments that although it is uncommon, animals (even humans) may be born with both male and female genitalia.²³⁰ The key to the omen must lie in the fact that male is above female.²³¹

This second portent, it can be argued, contributes to the underlying theme of male inferiority among the Persians. The omen is part of the irony that Herodotos creates concerning barbarian men's thoughts and beliefs about women, in contrast to the reality of their predicament. It is a motif that Herodotos inserts frequently in order to achieve the impression of inferiority among the Persians. He ironically portrays Persian men throughout the *History* with male

²²⁷ Rawlinson (1875) vol. 4:43, translates the passage as "a mule dropped a foal, neither male nor female." Although not a literal translation of the Greek, Rawlinson conveys the meaning of the passage. Persian men are not simply the opposite of Greek men, they are not women. They are not, however, men either (when compared to Greek men!). Herodotos expresses a similar view when, concerning the Persians (precisely the Medes, but on the Greek confounding of Medes and Persians, see Graf [1984]) at Thermopylae, he comments "...ὅτι πολλοὶ μὲν ἄνθρωποι εἶεν, ὀλίγοι δὲ ἄνδρες" (7.210.2).

²²⁸ Powell, s.v. κατύπερθε. The term occurs fifty times in Herodotos, both as an adverb (17) and as a preposition (33). Usually (36 times) it is used in the geographic sense, i.e. "further inland, upstream".

²²⁹ *Ibid.* Herodotos uses the term in this sense in 8.60.3 and 8.136.3

²³⁰ De gen. anim. 770b.33-35.

²³¹ As M. Kilmer has pointed out to me, in both portents, laws of nature are broken: a mare brings forth the wrong species, and a mule (normally sterile) gives birth to a bisexed foal. What Xerxes proposes to do - crossing the Hellespont, and that combined with his hybridic 'punishment' of it - is against nature and cannot succeed. Although I concur with Kilmer's interpretation, I am not convinced of the otherwise insignificance of the bisexed foal, and the fact that the male was 'above' the female.

biased attitudes, only to be habitually proven wrong by women. This tragic flaw among Persian men is reinforced at the close of the *History*, where Herodotos explains that it was the worst offense for a Persian man to be reputed worse than a woman (9.107.3). This omen was most likely quite clear to Herodotos' Greek audience, and required no further commentary by Herodotos in order that its meaning be conveyed.²³² The omen is a clear and understandable sign to Herodotos' Greek audience, but not to barbarians. At the same time, it contributes to the theme of female dominance within Persian society. Herodotos, in my opinion, is using the dominant female motif in this passage. Men are above women in Greek society.²³³ They have the upper hand. The situation is not the same for the Persians, according to Herodotos. In the stories that he tells, the Persians do not have the upper hand over women. If the Persians cross the Hellespont to fight the Greeks they will lose. Just as it is predicted that they will flee like a hare, so it is foretold that male will remain above female. This interpretation does not necessarily equate Persian men to women. Herodotos does however portray disturbing instances of male inferiority that would have shocked, amazed, and interested his Greek audience. The effeminate nature of Persian society becomes a standard feature of fourth century portraits of the Persians,²³⁴ and the beginning of such a theme is certainly visible in Herodotos.²³⁵ but in the above passage

²³² Herodotos comments that Xerxes judged the portents as of no account, even though their meaning was easy to understand (καίπερ εὐσύμβλητον ἔόν·) 7.57.1.

²³³ See above, 33-35.

²³⁴ Exemplified by Ktesias' *Persika*. See Briant (1989). Plato, *Laws* 3.695a-c, lists the education of Persian children by women and eunuchs (starting as early as Kyros' rule) as one of the main factors for the "softness" of Persians.

²³⁵ Especially in the words of Kyros at the end of the work (9.122).

Herodotos is commenting on the two different societies. In Greek society male is above female. The hierarchical relationship between husband and wife in Greek society is well attested. Herodotos himself implies that a woman's life is subordinate to that of a man.²³⁶ Persian men speak as though the situation between men and women is the same in Persia, but stories and actions throughout the *History* indicate otherwise. This omen therefore signals defeat for Xerxes because women in his culture, as depicted by Herodotos, are not subordinate to men.

The nature of the dominant female motif, and its importance in creating the atmosphere of Persian inferiority necessitates a review of recent scholarship pertaining to women in Herodotos as well as Herodotos' own views concerning women.

2.3 GREEK AND PERSIAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN

In general, evidence suggests that Athenian playwrights (all male) presented women as they imagined they could be, while philosophers (also all male) discussed how they thought women should be. Thucydides, as mentioned above, confined his work almost entirely to the Peloponnesian War, and the political events surrounding that war.²³⁷ Since women in Greece had no part in either of these realms, Thucydides mentioned women sparingly.²³⁸

²³⁶ Herodotos' personal opinion concerning the relationship between men and women is discussed below, 69-71.

²³⁷ See above, 18, ns. 70-1.

²³⁸ Cartledge (1993) 70-4 and 190. Cartledge writes that one of the main reasons that women are mentioned so little in Thucydides is because "Thucydides was consciously staking his claim to difference from Herodotos by excluding women from his frame." (71)

Herodotos, on the other hand, had a much wider scope, and therefore women find their way frequently into his discussion. In fact, women can even be found in both the realms of politics and war.

2.3. A. Women in Herodotos

A number of articles have addressed a variety of individual aspects of women in Herodotos.²³⁹ Dewald²⁴⁰ addressed the treatment of women in Herodotos in a most general manner, "in the belief that he [Herodotos] is an important and generally neglected witness to fifth-century assumptions and attitudes about women in society."²⁴¹ She insists that Herodotos attempted to describe women as they truly appeared to him or as he believed them to be. She remarks that women are mentioned 375 times in the *History*, and that she bases her analysis on the majority of the evidence, insisting that one or two or ten striking examples will not "reveal Herodotos' habitual assumptions about women."²⁴²

She also writes that Herodotos' "portrait of women reflects not the narrow anxieties or controversies of a particular state at a given moment, but a composite oral tradition with some claim to

²³⁹Rossellini and Saïd (1978) and Dewald (1981) are two of the most comprehensive investigations. Tourraix (1976) focuses on the link between women and power, while Weil (1974) and Munson (1988) concentrate on the figure of Artemisia. Gray (1995) studies the otherness of a number of passages involving women in Herodotos. See also Flory (1987) 29-48.

²⁴⁰Dewald (1983).

²⁴¹*Ibid.*, 91. That Herodotos was neglected as an important source for women in society is reflected in the introduction to Pomeroy (1975) xi, where the author insists that both Herodotos and Thucydides are poor sources for the lives of women. Cartledge (1993) 65, cautions that "in a predominantly sex-segregated society, as the world of Classical Greece was, it remains a question whether and how far a man can experience or sympathetically represent the reality of women's lives, particularly when his 'addressee' is also male."

²⁴²Dewald, *op.cit.*, 92. I argue that a number of "striking examples" of stories about women do reveal Herodotos' attitude towards women and point to a motif inserted throughout the *History* to reinforce a theme of Persian/barbarian inferiority.

representing underlying and broadly Greek beliefs."²⁴³ Dewald divides her study of women in the *History* into two categories: women who do not act, and women who do act. She further categorizes *women who act* into the following groups: groups of women who act within the context of a *polis*; women described as part of an ethnography; individual women who act in the public sphere; and priestesses.²⁴⁴

She concludes that Herodotos depicts a Persian inability to acknowledge and accept "the notion of balance and reciprocity between the sexes, the separation of the marital and the political spheres, and, finally, the distinction between one's own territory and the territory that belongs to others."²⁴⁵ She also states that Herodotos saw women as an essential element of culture and society, and that the Persians' failure to recognize this fact led to their defeat. This Thesis supports Dewald's conclusions to a large degree, but her "notion of balance and reciprocity between the sexes" merits further discussion. Herodotos certainly acknowledges a reciprocity between men and women, as well as the essential nature of a woman's part in society. Kambyses represents the extreme example of a Persian male failing to understand the essential element of women in society when he kills his pregnant wife (who is also his sister) and consequently dies heirless.²⁴⁶ The failure to separate the marital sphere (i.e. women) from politics is also apparent in the *History*.²⁴⁷ The difficulty with Dewald's

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 91.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 97.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 113

²⁴⁶ 3.32

²⁴⁷ 3.1 and 134.

statement is one of interpretation. She sees women as representatives (and even enforcers) of the notion of balance in societies, especially, but not exclusively, barbarian societies. Women like Tomyris and the wife of Kandaules remind the audience that these males have overstepped certain boundaries and must therefore suffer the consequences. The fact that these consequences are administered by women is precisely the nature of the dominant female motif. Similar actions by fifth century Greek women, inflicted upon Greek men, would simply not have been credible or acceptable to Herodotos' Greek audience.²⁴⁸ Dewald's statement that "Herodotos' portrait of women emphasizes their full partnership with men in establishing and maintaining social order" is misleading. The hierarchical relationship between Greek men and women does not suggest a full partnership. A partnership certainly existed, but it was one of complete advantage for the male. The success of women like Tomyris and the wife of Kandaules is part of the otherness of barbarian, and especially Persian, society. These women therefore find success in realms not even accessible to Greek women. It can be argued that it is not the Persians' lack of full partnership with women that points towards their defeat, but rather their failure to implement a similar hierarchical relationship between women and men.²⁴⁹ Persian men allow women into the realms of politics and war. Not only do women act in these realms,

²⁴⁸ Euryxo and Pheretime both seem to have success against Greek males. They are discussed below. 129-130.

²⁴⁹ As mentioned above, 54-56, Persian men in the *History* acknowledge a predominantly Greek attitude towards women in war and politics. It is in their actions that Herodotos displays their weakness.

but it will be shown that they also prove to be superior to barbarian men.

Another difficulty with Dewald's conclusion is her statement that the Persians' ultimate defeat was caused by their attempt to subordinate "everything, male and female, foreign and Persian, to a single structure of absolute royal authority."²⁵⁰ As stated above, contemporary evidence from Greece itself, as well as Herodotos' own views concerning women, tend to support the notion of female as subordinate.²⁵¹ I argue therefore that, according to Herodotos, Persian failure was caused not by Persian men attempting to subordinate women, but by their failure to do so.

Rosellini and Saïd²⁵² also analyze Herodotos' treatment of women among the barbarians. They compare Herodotos' reports with other ancient sources and draw analogies to modern social customs. Their article argues that Herodotos' ethnographies seem to depict women in terms of otherness more than they reveal how women in these societies actually were.

Tourraix²⁵³ concentrates his study on women in Herodotos and the link between women and power. He proposes over fifty examples where the motif of women and power can be seen. He does not, however, consider a motive or reason for the motif. As J. Annequin has pointed out,²⁵⁴ Tourraix's examples seem simply to be thrown together, and lack a common theme. A number of

²⁵⁰113

²⁵¹See above, 33-35, and below, 69-71.

²⁵²Rosellini and Saïd (1978). The authors focus on the ethnographic information about women in Herodotos and subsequently sparingly mention the key female figures discussed in this Thesis.

²⁵³Tourraix (1976).

²⁵⁴Annequin (1976).

Tourraix's examples, however, do share a common theme, as will be shown, and therefore find their way into the present discussion.²⁵⁵

Gray²⁵⁶ studies an aspect of women much more closely related to this Thesis. She concludes that the otherness exhibited by women in Herodotos is part of a much larger otherness, namely, of an oppressive and barbarian political system.²⁵⁷ She points out deficiencies when comparing individual aspects of two stories to establish a particular motif. For example, she argues against the Kandaules/wife of Kandaules and the Xerxes/Amestris stories as programmatic because a comparison of the two tales in isolation fails to consider other accounts in the *History* that exhibit similar patterns.²⁵⁸ Since this Thesis supports the comparison, similarity and linking of the two stories in question, Gray's arguments are discussed in the section below.²⁵⁹

2.3. B. Non-Greek Evidence for Women in Persia

Herodotos' Persian men seem to consider women to be physically weaker, to have no place in military campaigns, and to be generally inferior to men.²⁶⁰ Persian men's true attitudes towards women, as derived from non-Greek sources, are perhaps impossible to establish. In fact the role and position of women in Persian society is extremely difficult to determine due to the lack of Iranian

²⁵⁵The following examples, discussed in this Thesis, are among Tourraix's fifty examples: Kandaules and Gyges (1.7-14); the birth of Kyros (1.91); Nitokris (1.185); Tomyris (1.201-16); Monuments of Sesostris (2.102); Roxanne (3.31-32); Atossa and Demokedes (3.133-4); Alexander and the Persian envoys (5.18-21); Atossa and the succession of Xerxes (7.2-4); the portents before the invasion (7.57); and Amestris (9.108-112).

²⁵⁶Gray (1995).

²⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 210.

²⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 188

²⁵⁹See below, 71-84.

²⁶⁰1.189, 207; 7.11; 8.68, 88; 9.107.

sources. What sources there are almost never mention women. Indeed, the royal inscriptions never mention mortal women.²⁶¹ Even the so called Harem inscription, which describes Xerxes' accession to the throne, fails to mention Atossa.²⁶² According to Herodotos, the king's mother was the main reason that Xerxes was chosen as the legitimate successor (7.3), yet there is no mention of her in the Persian text.

Women are also entirely absent from the palace reliefs of Persepolis. Even all the animals being brought as gifts to the king are male with the exception of one lioness. The presence of the lioness is explained by the need for her two accompanying male cubs to suckle.²⁶³

The lack of women in Persian sculpture, and their absence from royal inscriptions, can certainly be misleading when discussing Persian women.²⁶⁴ In the first place, many of the Persian sculptures and inscriptions are military in nature, and Persian women had no part in the military. Also, Persian sculptural scenes seem to have developed from earlier Assyrian traditions.²⁶⁵ The lack of representations of women may in part be due to these earlier traditions.

Only recently has the subject of Persian women received a large scale scholarly investigation.²⁶⁶ The Persepolis Fortification

²⁶¹ Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1983) 22.

²⁶² The Harem Inscription = Xpf (Kent [1950] 117). See Kent, *ibid.*, 149-50 for text and translation. Atossa's name is also absent from the text of Aischylos' *Persai*. Her name only appears in the list of characters and may have been added there at a later date (Sancisi-Weerdenburg, *op.cit.*, 24).

²⁶³ Sancisi-Weerdenburg, *op.cit.*, 22-3.

²⁶⁴ See Brosius (1996) 84-7 and Sancisi-Weerdenburg, *op.cit.*, 23, for depictions of women in other art forms.

²⁶⁵ Boyce (1982) 2:99 and n. 53. Boyce also notes influences from Elam and Urartu.

²⁶⁶ Brosius (1996). Her book is based on 3 assumptions (195): the first assumption is that Greek historiography of Persia was influenced and even created by the antagonism between Greece and Persia, and

texts²⁶⁷ are our main non-Greek textual source for Persian women, and in the case of non-royal Persian women, they are our only source.

Brosius has demonstrated that royal women were identified by their relationship to the king, as was the custom in the earlier Neo-Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian cultures.²⁶⁸ She concludes that the mother of the king (μήτηρ βασιλέως) was the head of the female members of the royal family, and that although she had no formal political power, she seems to have had a degree of economic independence. She controlled estates, villages, and even towns.²⁶⁹ The king's wife (γυνή του βασιλέως) followed the king's mother in the hierarchy of royal Persian women. She also controlled various geographic (and economic) areas of the empire. She evidently had no say in political matters. Her title, Brosius states, was determined by the appointment of a legitimate heir.²⁷⁰ A wife of the Persian king became *the wife* of the king only if and when her son was chosen to be the legitimate heir. Brosius also concludes that there is no

is therefore highly selective (see above, 3-5); the second factor involves cultural context, and how even first hand contact with Persians was bound not to be fully understood by Greeks, simply on account of the manifestly different Persian culture; the third factor deals with the phenomenon of a decaying Persian empire and a decadent king, as portrayed by Greek writers (see above, 39, n. 160).

²⁶⁷ **Fortification texts** refer to the Elamite texts excavated at Persepolis: 2,087 texts were published by Hallock (1969) and (1978), and Brosius herself (*op.cit.*) accessed and makes reference to Hallock's unpublished manuscripts relating to another 2,586 texts. The texts date between 509 and 494 BC. **Treasury texts** refer to those texts discovered in the treasury of Persepolis. Cameron (1948), (1958) 161-76, and (1965) 170-82, published 110 of these texts. They are dated between 492 and 458 BC. See Brosius, *op.cit.*, 10.

²⁶⁸ Brosius, *op.cit.*, 21-31, 183-5.

²⁶⁹ *ibid.*, 187.

²⁷⁰ *Loc.cit.*

evidence to support the ancient opinions that Persian royal women were confined to the palace.²⁷¹

Concerning royal Persian daughters, Brosius has found no indication that they married non-Persian men.²⁷² She also concludes that, the term *παλλακή*, used by Greek writers to describe a relationship between the King of Persia and certain women, is misleading. She points out that the term *παλλακή* (concubine) in fifth century Greek culture carried negative connotations. It represented a relationship out of wedlock, such as that between master and slave, or Greek and barbarian. Brosius declares that these *παλλακαί* at the Persian court were foreign wives to the king. Although they could not bear legitimate heirs, they seem to have held a high status at the court.²⁷³

Brosius also establishes a hierarchy among non-royal Persian female workers. The most prominent of these workers seems to have been the *arassara pasabena*, and she is identified in many texts by her name, but also, in cases where she is not named, by her very large rations.²⁷⁴ There is evidence that both male and female skilled labourers could have held identical professions and received equal payment, but that lesser professions seem to reflect an unequal payment system based on sex.

²⁷¹ *ibid.*, 83-93. Brosius refers to authors later than Herodotos, and it can be argued that Herodotos had little or no experience of such seclusion. Herodotos, however, implies such a state of seclusion in 3.68.

²⁷² *ibid.*, 189-90.

²⁷³ *ibid.*, 31-4.

²⁷⁴ *ibid.*, 146-63.

It is also clear from the Fortification tablets that women who bore male babies received portions twice as large as mothers who bore female babies.²⁷⁵

Brosius' conclusions suggest that the Persian sources do not support the negative portrait of Persian women reflected by most Greek sources, and that the stories told about Persian women were mainly developed from the Greek male imagination. Concerning women among the Persians in Herodotos, I argue a similar phenomenon.

2.3. C. Herodotos and Women

The importance of Herodotos' personal comments has already been discussed.²⁷⁶ These comments are also significant in the case of his own attitude towards women. As Dewald has stated, if woman is compared unfavourably to man, the context of the passage usually makes it clear that Herodotos is expressing a character's opinion, and not his own.²⁷⁷ The situation is quite different, however, in 1.196. Here Herodotos describes the Assyrian custom of auctioning young women. Once a year, all the girls that are at the age to be married are gathered together. An auctioneer then sells them off, one by one, to the highest bidder. He begins with the most beautiful,²⁷⁸ who obtains the highest price, and then he sells the girl who is next in beauty. After selling all the most beautiful girls to all the rich upper class men of Babylon, the auctioneer then displays

²⁷⁵ Hallock (1985) 606.

²⁷⁶ See above, 25-27 and n. 98.

²⁷⁷ Dewald (1981) 114, n. 3.

²⁷⁸ εὐειδαστάτην, literally, the "most well shaped" or "most pleasing to the eye." See the discussion of this passage in McNeal (1988) 54-71.

the least beautiful²⁷⁹ girls. In the case of these girls, however, the money gathered from the sale of the most beautiful girls is used to pay men to live with the least beautiful girls. In this passage, women are clearly treated as objects and dispersed evenly for the good of the society. The society as a whole might benefit from such a custom, but it does so at the expense of any rights or freedom on the part of the woman. The custom does not necessarily reflect the otherness of a barbarian society. Evidence from Classical Greece suggests that women had little say in whom they would marry.²⁸⁰ This Assyrian custom is more extreme in its treatment of women as property.

Amidst the description of this Assyrian custom, Herodotos includes the personal interjection that *ὁ μὲν σοφώτατος ὅδε κατὰ γνώμην τὴν ἡμετέραν* (1.196.1). His personal remark here is important, for in no other passage concerning women can an authorial bias be firmly established. In all the other relevant passages, the bias can be blamed on the character speaking, or on the source. For the purpose of establishing Herodotos' personal opinion concerning women, the importance of this passage lies in how Herodotos tells us he feels about the custom. He not only calls it a "most wise custom" at the outset of his description, but he also refers to it as a *κάλλιστος νόμος* (1.196.5) at the end of the description.

²⁷⁹ ἀμοφειστάτην, literally, the "most misshapen."

²⁸⁰ See above, 34.

Herodotos' opinion of women seems clear.²⁸¹ It is perhaps the opinion of the average fifth century Greek aristocrat. It is a bias that should be taken into account when reading stories of Persian men being outdone by women. As will be shown below, it is not usually the case of a superior woman, but that of an inferior male.

2.4. THE WIFE OF KANDAULES, KANDAULES, AND GYGES

The story of the rise of Gyges and the fall of Kandaules is the first story in the *History* that Herodotos narrates in detail.²⁸² After briefly recapitulating Greek mythological stories about abductions of women,²⁸³ Herodotos shifts from these vague references to the Greeks' distant past, to a detailed narrative revolving around individual historical figures.²⁸⁴ He states that he will begin with Kroisos, τὸν δὲ οἶδα αὐτὸς πρῶτον ὑπάρξαντα ἀδίκων ἔργων ἐς τοὺς Ἕλληνας (1.5.3) and τοὺς φίλους προσεποιήσατο of others (1.6.2),²⁸⁵

²⁸¹ Towards the end of 1.196.5, the text is considered to be corrupt. The description of the custom, and Herodotos' opinions, however, come before this corruption. There are no textual problems or controversies in the relevant section (1.196.1 - the beginning of 1.196.5).

²⁸² 1.8-12.

²⁸³ In 1.1-5, Herodotos briefly narrates the stories of Io (1.1), Europa (1.2.1), Medea (1.2.1-3), and Helen (1.3-4). He claims that the versions he tells are Persian (οἱ λόγοι Περσέων, 1.1.1; Πέρσαι λέγουσι, 1.2.1; Πέρσαι λέγουσι, 1.5.1). He stresses that the Greek version of the story of Io is different from that of the Persians (1.2.1), and that the Phoenicians disagree with the Persian version (1.5.2).

²⁸⁴ Gyges and Kroisos are historical figures. Gyges ruled Lydia during the second quarter of the seventh century BC, and Kroisos was in power from approximately 560 to 546 BC. See Wells (1923) 19-26. Gyges' name among the Archaic and Classical Greeks seems to have been a proverb for wealth (Smith [1902] 262, n. 3). Herodotos does not offer any chronological information concerning the abductions of women, but he does suggest an order to the events and these events culminate with the abduction of Helen. Since Herodotos places Homer in the middle of the ninth century BC (2.53.1 and above, 30-31 and ns. 126-32), we have a *terminus ante quem* (from Herodotos' point of view) of the early ninth century BC for the abduction of Helen and the ensuing Trojan War. He therefore establishes a span of at least two hundred years, and most likely much more, between the first historical figure that he knows of, and the earlier stories of the Phoenicians and Persians (1.5.3).

²⁸⁵ Kroisos began unjust acts (and demanded tribute) from some Greeks, and he befriended other Greeks (1.5.3-6.2).

but he immediately travels back in time to the ancestor of Kroisos. He journeys back five generations, to the time of Gyges.

The importance of the Kroisos logos, especially in its presentation of and elaboration on the theme of the rise and fall of individual oriental monarchs, has already been discussed.²⁸⁶ This tragic cycle of rise and fall is also noticeable in the Kandaules logos.²⁸⁷ In fact the Kandaules/Gyges logos is introduced as the first example of the pattern of rise and fall in the *History*. Just as Herodotos initiates the pattern of rise and fall within the Kandaules/Gyges logos, so he initiates his theme of male inferiority among the barbarians.

Herodotos creates this theme by inserting the dominant female motif at various places in his *History*. Indeed the motif is apparent, although not developed, in the earliest chapters of the *History*. After narrating the abductions of Io, Europa, Medea, and Helen, Herodotos writes that μέχρι ὧν τούτου ἀρπαγὰς μούνας εἶναι παρ' ἀλλήλων (1.4.1). He then explains that Persians consider the Greeks μέγαν αἰτίους γενέσθαι after the abduction of Helen because they invaded Asia on account of a woman. The Persians themselves, on the other hand, explain that although it is the work of unjust men to abduct women in the first place, it is the work of fools to avenge these women (1.4.2). The Persians declare that they made no account of the women that were abducted from Asia. This attitude of γυναικῶν λόγον οὐδένα ποιήσασθαι will haunt the Persians later in the *History*. Ironically, Herodotos will depict Persian men

²⁸⁶See above, 41, n. 170.

²⁸⁷Pomeroy (1975) compares the wife of Kandaules to prominent female figures in fifth century tragedy (95). See also Smith (1920) 23; Myres (1953) 137-8; Stahl (1968).

taking account of women, and subsequently going to war,²⁸⁸ as well as Persian men not taking account of women, when indeed it turns out that they should have.²⁸⁹

The importance of the dominant female motif is indicated by its prominence in the Gyges tale, and the fact that it is mirrored in the closing chapters of the *History*.²⁹⁰ Arguably, the *History*, in the state that it has been preserved, has not been thoroughly revised.²⁹¹ The final chapters, however, form an appropriate conclusion to Herodotos' narrative and close the "ring-composition" so common to archaic Greek poetry.²⁹² There should be no question as to the completeness of the *History*, at least in the sense that it ends where Herodotos intended it to end.

2.4.1 The story of Gyges and Kandaules

There are a number of ancient sources which relate the accession of Gyges to the throne of Lydia.²⁹³ A study of these various

²⁸⁸ Both Kambyses (3.1) and Dareios (3.134) are influenced into war campaigns by women. A woman will also figure prominently in the battle that develops between Xerxes and Masistes (9.108-13).

²⁸⁹ Kyros ignores Tomyris' advice before their battle (1.212.3), and he is subsequently killed (1.214).

²⁹⁰ For the prominence of, and symmetry between 1.8-13 and 9.108-13, see Wolff (1964); Immerwahr (1966) 43; Dewald (1981) 106-7; Flory (1987) 43; Herington (1991) 151-6; and Gray (1995) 188.

²⁹¹ Although Jacoby argues strongly that the *History* was unfinished (1913, 372-9), recent investigations defend Herodotos' ending and completeness of his *History*. See Herington (1991) and Boedeker (1986). One of the principal arguments towards the unfinished state of Herodotos' *History* is his unfulfilled promise to include an Assyrian logos (1.184).

²⁹² I follow Herington (1991) 151 n. 6, in his use of "ring-composition" to denote "thematic as well as verbal repetition." For an analysis of the verbal similarities between the Gyges/Kandaules logos and the Xerxes/Masistes logos, see Wolff (1964).

²⁹³ These sources have all been compiled and discussed by Smith (1902). The only exception is the Gyges tragedy, which was discovered after Smith's publication. Smith's purpose is to trace the original folk-tale of Gyges back to its roots; he therefore includes some later versions that differ only in minor details from the account in Herodotos. I have excluded accounts by Ptolemaios Chennos, who briefly mentions the queen's name and the fact that Gyges was seen by her as he left the room (see Smith, *ibid.*, 367-70) and Philostratos, who merely mentions the ring of Gyges (*ibid.*, 370-1). The version in Justin (1.7.14-19) is very similar to the account in Herodotos, except that Gyges is tempted to seduce the wife of Kandaules after he views her naked, and Gyges and the queen become lovers before the murder of Kandaules (ibid., 362-7). Smith also discusses the later tradition of Gyges and Kandaules well into the Middle Ages (1920).

sources, along with a comparison to the account preserved in Herodotos, establishes the prominence of the dominant female motif in Herodotos' version, as well as the theme that the motif invokes. For the present research, the principal versions of the change of dynasty from the Heraklidae (Kandaules) to the Mermnadae (Gyges) are those of Xanthos, Plato, Plutarch and an anonymous (Hellenistic?) tragedian.

Before discussing these other versions of the rise of Gyges, let us first consider the account of the change of the Lydian dynasty, from Kandaules to Gyges, as told by Herodotos.

2.4.1. A. The account in Herodotos²⁹⁴

According to Herodotos, Gyges was one of king Kandaules' guards. To this guard, he tells us, Kandaules confided everything. He especially spoke of the beauty of his wife. In fact, Kandaules never stopped praising the beauty of his wife to Gyges. One day, convinced that Gyges did not truly believe him, Kandaules compelled the guard to view the queen naked, disregarding the Lydian νόμος that "καὶ ἄνδρα ὀφθῆναι γυμνὸν ἐς αἰσχύνην μεγάλην φέρει".²⁹⁵ Gyges protested, but he was persuaded by his king, and he agreed. Kandaules devised a plan whereby Gyges might view the queen in the king's bedroom without her knowledge. The two conspirators accomplished the deed but, unknown to both men, the queen saw Gyges as he exited. Herodotos states that she immediately perceived

²⁹⁴ 1.8-13.

²⁹⁵ 1.10.3. The importance of νόμος to Herodotos and the Greeks has already been established (above, 43 and n. 177). νόμος is "a term for established custom which according to context may swing towards our concept of law or towards that of culture" (Humphreys [1987] 211). For Kandaules' personal disregard for νόμος, see Cairns (1996) 82-3 and n. 27.

what her husband had done, yet remained silent. The following morning, however, she gathered her supporters and summoned Gyges into her presence. She then gave him the option to be killed for his crime against her, or to kill the man responsible for that crime. Gyges naturally protested at having to make such a decision, but in the end he decided to live. Following the queen's detailed instructions,²⁹⁶ Gyges killed Kandaules at the time and place, and in the manner, designated by the queen. He then married the queen and ruled Lydia. His sovereignty was strengthened by an oracle from Delphi, but the Pythia also prophesied that Kandaules' ancestors would have vengeance on a descendant of Gyges in the fifth generation. Gyges and his ancestors, however, made no account of the latter part of the oracle.

2.4.1. B. The account of Xanthos²⁹⁷

The version of Gyges' ascent to the throne, from the sixth book of the Universal History of Nikolaos Damaskenos,²⁹⁸ preserved in an abstract made by Constantinus Porphyrogenetos,²⁹⁹ is important because Nikolaos supposedly drew his information from the fifth century logographer Xanthos.³⁰⁰ According to Xanthos, Gyges' grandfather had been murdered by the reigning Heraklidai,

²⁹⁶The plan is devised entirely by the queen (1.11.4-5). She lets Gyges into the bedroom, hides him behind the door, and gives him the dagger (1.12.1).

²⁹⁷FGrH 90 F 47.

²⁹⁸Nikolaos Damaskenos wrote in the mid to late first century BC. See Smith (1902) 263 n. 3.

²⁹⁹Constantinus Porphyrogenetos wrote in the tenth century AD.

³⁰⁰Xanthos is discussed by Pearson (1939) 109-137. The dependence of Nikolaos on Xanthos, though generally accepted, has been disputed (Fehling [1989] 177). Xanthos is known to have written extensively concerning Lydian history. It is assumed that whenever Nikolaos relates incidents not found in Herodotos, he is using Xanthos as his source. As many as 9 fragments of Xanthos contain material described by Nikolaos (Pearson [1939] 122).

and Gyges' father had therefore fled Lydia to avoid a similar fate. After having lived in exile for eighteen years, Gyges was recalled to Sardis. He quickly showed great skill, especially with arms and horses, and subsequently became one of the kings' personal bodyguards. The king, however, became suspicious of Gyges and therefore assigned to him many difficult tasks. Upon the successful completion of all these tasks, the king forgot his suspicions. Some time later, Gyges was sent to Mysia to accompany the king's future bride, Tundo, back to Sardis. On the return trip, Gyges attempted to seduce Tundo, but she successfully resisted. Upon reaching Sardis, she reported Gyges' complicity to the king who swore that he would kill the guard the next day. A servant warned Gyges of the king's decision, and therefore Gyges was able to assemble his friends and enlist their immediate support. He then killed the sleeping king that very night.

2.4.1. C. The account in Plato³⁰¹

Plato uses the Gyges story to illustrate the nature of just action: the only thing which prevents someone from being unjust is the fear of detection. The account in Plato is brief, and more like a folk-tale. According to Plato, Gyges was a poor shepherd in the service of the king of Lydia. One day, during an earthquake, the ground split open near Gyges and he descended into the cleft. In this opening he discovered a brazen horse, hollow and fitted with doors. Within the horse were the skeletal remains of a giant man. From the giant's finger, Gyges took a ring of gold. With this ring he

³⁰¹ *Rep.* 359 D, F. See also 612 B

discovered that he was able to turn invisible. He then managed to become one of the messengers who reported to the king concerning the condition of the flocks. With the help of his ring, he seduced the king's wife, and with her assistance, he killed the king and assumed the throne. Having made his philosophical point, Plato says nothing more concerning Gyges.

The participation of the queen in the successful murder of the king and the usurpation of the throne by Gyges are the only features consistent with the account in Herodotos. The magic ring, and its effect on just behaviour, are the focal points of Plato's discourse.

2.4.1. D. The Account in Plutarch³⁰²

The account in Plutarch seems to be an aitiological account of the Labrandean Zeus depicted wielding the axe of Hippolyte. He explains that the king of Lydia who succeeded Omphale (who herself received the axe from Herakles) carried the axe as a sacred symbol of office. Kandaules, however, let his companion³⁰³ carry the axe. The story continues that, when Gyges rebelled from Kandaules and waged war upon him, Arselis came with an army from Mylasa and assisted Gyges. Kandaules was killed in the battle.

³⁰² *Aitia Graecae et Romanus 45 = Moralia 302 A 1-2.*

³⁰³ ἑταῖρος in this passage may refer to an actual court official, as in Hellenistic times, or a close friend of the king, as in early Makedonian usage. The term can also mean guard.

2.4.1. E. The "Gyges Tragedy"³⁰⁴

The fragment believed to be part of a Gyges-drama contains sixteen lines spoken by the wife of Kandaules. It begins with the queen, as she noticed Gyges and feared a plot against her husband. The fragment then tells how the queen saw that Kandaules was also awake, and, it is assumed, that he too could see Gyges. She realized then the injustice done to her by Kandaules, but, like the queen in Herodotos, she remained silent. She woke Kandaules the next morning and sent him away to attend to his people. Having done so, she summoned Gyges into her presence. At this point the fragment ends.

2.4.2. Discussion of the Accounts

An analysis of these different versions of the rise of Gyges demonstrates that all, except for that of Plutarch, portray the woman in a prominent role. In Herodotos and in the fragment, her role is similar. She detects her husband's wrongdoing and she takes action against him. The wrong starts with Kandaules. In Xanthos, Gyges kills his king to escape the vengeance of Tudo; but because Sadyattes³⁰⁵ had killed Gyges' grandfather, the wrong can again be said to have started with the reigning king. The woman in Xanthos' version behaves, it can be argued, in a most Greek-like manner. That is to say, like Penelope who turns away many suitors, Tudo refuses the advances of a suitor. Just as Penelope lets Odysseus deal

³⁰⁴ P. Oxy. 23.2382. The Gyges tragedy is taken from a fragment found on papyrus around 1950. For the complete fragment in Greek with an accompanying English translation see Raubitschek (1955). See also Flory (1987) 168-9, n. 17.

³⁰⁵ Sadyattes is the name given to the reigning Heraklidian king in Xanthos' account. He therefore corresponds to the Kandaules of Herodotos.

with the punishment of the suitors, so TUDO lets her fiancé take care of punishing Gyges. Kandaules, however, as in Herodotos' version, lacks foresight in postponing his actions until the next day.

Plutarch, although omitting Kandaules' wife, also suggests a disrespect for Lydian νόμος, when he portrays Kandaules giving the king's sacred symbol of office to someone else, instead of carrying it himself, as his ancestors had done. Although the king is portrayed favourably in Plato's account, the role of the queen is more consistent with Herodotos' version. The philosopher writes that Gyges killed the king with the help of the queen (μετ' ἐκείνης ἐπιθέμενον).³⁰⁶ In Plato, although the unjust act starts with Gyges, it is the magic ring that initiates the action.

Herodotos' account is perhaps the most "rational" version of the rise of Gyges. Gyges is not required to prove himself to the king by enduring many hardships, nor does he possess a magic ring. In Herodotos, he has an established position and he is already close to both the king and the queen. He is depicted without undue desire or ambition, and the emphasis of the story lies with the queen and her reaction to the immoderate love of her husband.

Neither Plato, nor Plutarch, nor Xanthos depicts the woman with an equally important, active, and prominent role as does Herodotos. In Herodotos, she decides upon and devises the murder of her husband-king, and chooses his replacement. She is indeed much like Klytaimnestra in Aischylos' *Agamemnon*,³⁰⁷ in the way that

³⁰⁶ *Republic* 360 B 1. Justin's account also emphasizes that the woman handed over the Lydian Empire to Gyges (regnum viri et se pariter adultero tradidit) 1.7.19

³⁰⁷ Smith (1902) 386.

she carefully contrives the murder of her husband.³⁰⁸ Like Klytaimnestra, the wife of Kandaules also claims to have been wronged first.³⁰⁹ A Greek audience could perhaps have identified with a strong, passionate female figure in tragedy,³¹⁰ but they would have found it difficult to identify with the result of the Gyges story in Herodotos. The revolt of the people against Gyges and the response of the Delphic oracle³¹¹ might have made it more acceptable, but nevertheless, the fact that the queen herself was not punished for murdering her husband would have shocked a fifth century Greek audience. In Aischylos' *Eumenides*, Athens' patriarchal society is finally secured for posterity.³¹² The *Oresteia* concludes with Athenian judges voting as to whether Orestes should be put to death for the murder of his mother, or whether he should be absolved of the crime.³¹³ The vote is tied, and Athena casts the deciding vote to acquit. She agrees with Apollo,³¹⁴ and Orestes is absolved of the murder of his mother.

There is no Orestes to punish the wife of Kandaules. Herodotos' listeners should have been shocked by the success of this woman. Aside from the vengeance taken much later on a descendent of Gyges in the fifth generation, the queen escapes unscathed. She had already suffered by her exposure, but from the murder of her husband she is basically absolved. Although divine

³⁰⁸ See above, 72, n. 287.

³⁰⁹ 1.11. For Klytaimnestra's claim, see Aischylos' *Agamemnon*, 1521-1529.

³¹⁰ Klytaimnestra's role as only the murderess of Cassandra (*Odyssey* 3.263-4) had changed by the fifth century, where she is depicted murdering Agamemnon herself (*Aischylos' Agamemnon* 1380-92).

³¹¹ 1.13.1.

³¹² See *Eumenides* 657-666; see also above, 50, n. 197.

³¹³ *Eumenides*, 581-753.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 736-740.

causation is in part responsible for the change in dynasty,³¹⁵ it is the role of the woman within that change that interests us. The success of Kandaules' wife should be contrasted with the fate of Klytaimnestra. The Lydian queen's success is possible among the barbarians because Herodotos portrays her as more resourceful than the two men around her, both of whom act foolishly and without forethought.

Herodotos also depicts the queen enforcing accepted νόμος. Both Kandaules and Gyges act contrary to νόμος. In 1.10.3 the author writes: παρὰ γὰρ τοῖσι Λυδοῖσι, σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ παρὰ τοῖσι ἄλλοισι βαρβάροισι, καὶ ἄνδρα ὀφθῆναι γυμνὸν ἐς αἰσχύνην μεγάλην φέρει.³¹⁶ Both men, however, ignore this νόμος: one by displaying his wife naked; the other (although reluctant) by viewing naked another man's wife. Both men are therefore punished by a woman who is defending νόμος.

In Plato, Plutarch, and Xanthos, Gyges is responsible for his own actions. He is disloyal to his king, and usurps the throne. Herodotos, on the other hand, depicts Gyges as merely a pawn manipulated towards wrong, first by the king and then by the queen. Both Gyges and Kandaules are lacking by comparison to the queen. Her resourcefulness and forethought are contrasted with Kandaules' brash and poorly-planned episode in the bedroom, a plan that Gyges, although compelled to take part in it, does not alter. The

³¹⁵ For it was fated to go badly for Kandaules (1.8.3). See above, 18-19.

³¹⁶ The νόμος itself, in the case of men (καὶ ἄνδρα), is typically anti-Greek, and consistent with the depiction of the barbarians as "the other". In the fifth century, Greek athletes exercised and competed in the nude, warriors were depicted in art fighting virtually naked and statues of nude men were common. Thucydides mentions that the Spartans were the first to encourage public nudity, and that nudity at the Olympic games was a recent development (1.6.4-5).

men confidently proceed with the plan, but because they take no precautions against the possibility of its failure, they are completely unaware of it when such a failure occurs. The woman is depicted differently, however.³¹⁷ She sees Gyges leaving through the door and immediately understands the whole situation. The papyrus fragment of the "Gyges tragedy" shows the queen becoming aware of the true situation only after seeing that Kandaules was also still awake (ἐτ' ἐγρήσσοντα), and, presumably, that he could also see Gyges. The fifth century date for the fragment is disputed,³¹⁸ but regardless of the date, the character of the queen in Herodotos' account remains outstanding. She needs no clue, or sign on the part of her husband. She simply sees Gyges and immediately deduces what has happened. Without hesitation, she instantly begins to prepare her vengeance. Unlike Kandaules' plan, hers is well thought out. She prepares for the possible objections of Gyges by having an armed guard ready to compel him. Gyges' passiveness with both the king and the queen is perhaps understandable. He was, after all, their vassal. This passiveness, however, is exemplified even after Gyges has chosen to kill his king, as he asks the queen, φέρε ἀκούσω, τέω καὶ τρόπῳ ἐπιχειρήσομεν αὐτῷ.³¹⁹ The queen had told Gyges that **he**³²⁰ must kill Kandaules, or die. But, immediately after making his choice to survive, he asks how **they** will kill the king.

K.F. Smith argues that Herodotos' account is a rationalization of an ancient folk-tale, the remnants of which are found in Plato's

³¹⁷ The cleverness of the queen has been discussed by Flory (1987) 35-7.

³¹⁸ Arguments tend towards a Hellenistic date (Hall [1990] 65).

³¹⁹ 1.11.5.

³²⁰ ἀποκτείνας (1.11.2).

account.³²¹ The ring-motif, the fame and fortune story, and the circumstances of the discovery of the ring are certainly common folk-tale motifs.³²² The fact that all the incredible feats or events from Xanthos' or Plato's accounts are absent from Herodotos' seems to support Smith's argument. Scholars have also detected evidence for such a rationalization in 1.11.2, where Gyges answers the summons of the queen "for he was accustomed before, to visit the queen whenever she would call." It has been pointed out that such meetings would have been highly unlikely, historically, since the Lydian queen would have been secluded in the harem.³²³ A ring of invisibility, however, would have assisted the plot by making such a visit possible. To label Herodotos' account as merely a rationalization of a popular legend, however, reflects modern bias and fails to consider why Gyges, the prime motivator in the other accounts, becomes secondary in Herodotos.

Herodotos is giving his interpretation of the change of Lydian dynasty. He is introducing and elaborating upon a motif that will surface throughout his *History* in order to create a desired atmosphere among the barbarians. This repeated motif of female ascendancy first appears in the account of Gyges. Around unalterable facts, and without distorting history, he constructs a scene of character folly. The foolishness, and the simple-mindedness of acting without forethought, are the prominent characteristics of Kandaules in Herodotos. Gyges also acts without forethought, and both he and Kandaules act contrary even to Lydian

³²¹ Smith (1902) 361-387.

³²² Flory (1987) 31 and Smith (1902) 268.

³²³ Kilmer (1993) 161-162; How and Wells (1928) vol. 1, 11; and Smith (1902) 281.

νόμος. The queen, however, is depicted quite differently from both males. To a fifth century, predominantly male,³²⁴ Greek audience, her only flaw seems to be the degree of punishment that she inflicts on Kandaules for his crime. Through her choice of punishment, Herodotos invokes for his audience the memory of a common Greek story: the murder of Agamemnon by Klytaimnestra. The outcome, however, is completely altered, and in a sense, reversed. That is to say, **this** "Klytaimnestra" is not punished. It is this unbelievable and unacceptable outcome that would have remained with Herodotos' audience. This queen among the barbarians has the resolve, and is in the position, to succeed. Both of the male characters involved with her are depicted as inferior to her.

Herodotos, it can be argued, is also introducing a literary device in these introductory chapters (1.8-13), which the reader must also keep in mind. Amongst the barbarians, actions which occur at the instigation of a woman prompt the downfall of a dynasty. He fully describes such an occurrence at the outset of the *History*, so that similar accounts later on,³²⁵ it can be argued, signal the same outcome. The reader must therefore keep this literary device in mind in order to understand fully the author's intentions, and to recognize the signal whenever it appears in the *History*.

³²⁴See above, 9, n. 40, and 30-35.

³²⁵Most notable in the closing chapters on Xerxes (9.108-13), discussed below (especially 146-149).

CHAPTER 3: THE EARLY PERSIAN KINGS

3.1 KYROS

In the few generations that separated the time of Herodotos' inquiries from that of Kyros' reign, many legends arose surrounding the founder of the Persian Empire.³²⁶ It can be argued that Herodotos presents a uniform portrait of Kyros, and that various patterns emerge throughout his account.³²⁷ To provide this uniform conception of Kyros, Herodotos may have drawn from any or all of the four sources he acknowledges, as well as from his own creative mind. Consistent with his general depiction of the Persians³²⁸ as the "other", Herodotos demonstrates the special role of women among the barbarians within the two most significant episodes of Kyros' life: his birth and his death.

3.1.A. The Birth of Kyros

It has been argued that Herodotos' version of the birth of Kyros (1.107-113) is a rationalization of a legend of an exposed child being suckled by a bitch.³²⁹ Whether the rationalization is the

³²⁶ Kyros ruled from 550-529 BC., though he was a vassal king as early as 559 BC (Olmstead [1948] 34-37). Herodotos states twice (above, 20) that he knew several versions of the story of Kyros. For Herodotos' dates, see above, 24 n. 95 and 30-31 ns. 126-30.

³²⁷ These patterns are discussed by Avery (1972) 529-530.

³²⁸ And Medians in this instance (see above, 58 n. 227).

³²⁹ Fehling (1989) 110. See also Burkert (1983) 109, and Krappe (1930). The motif of an exposed child's miraculous preservation is common to Greek mythology. Oedipus, Perseus, Paris, and even Herakles are examples of children supposedly exposed at birth. Roman (Romulus and Remus) and Near Eastern (Moses, Sargon II) literature also record such miraculous stories. The suckling by a bitch is also common, in parallel with the myth of Romulus and Remus, who were suckled by a she-wolf, and Paris, who was supposedly fed by a female bear. The primary source for the myth of Romulus and Remus is Livy, *History of Rome* 1.4, see also Grimal (1986) 406-8 and 508; for the legend surrounding Oedipus see Sophokles' *Oedipus Tyrannos* (esp. 1120-82) and Grimal, *op. cit.* 323-25 and 500; for Perseus, Apollodoros, *Bibliotheca* 2.4.1-5, is the main source, but see also Grimal, *op. cit.* 360-62 and 503; both Sophokles and Euripides wrote plays entitled *Alexandros*, and excerpts from Euripides' play provide the most detailed information concerning the life of Paris before Helen: see Grimal, *op. cit.* 344-46 and 502; for the tradition

product of Herodotos' own creative genius, of his sources, or of a combination of both, cannot be known.³³⁰ Even if such Herodotean invention is not accepted, however, Herodotos does make it clear that he is choosing from among several versions,³³¹ and his choices would certainly have been subject to factors already discussed above,³³² such as his own view of the relationship between men and women among the barbarians.³³³

Before analyzing the actual birth of Kyros in Herodotos, it is important to consider the actions that Astyages takes towards his daughter Mandane, the mother of Kyros.

3.1.B. Astyages and Mandane

In chapter 107 of Book one, Herodotos describes how Astyages dreams that his daughter Mandane's urine flooded all Asia.³³⁴ He confides his dream to the Magian dream interpreters, and, although Herodotos does not divulge the Magians'

of Herakles being exposed at birth, and nursed by Hera, see Grimal, *op. cit.* 194; for Moses see the *Old Testament*, Exodus 2; and for the legend of Sargon, see Pritchard (1958) 85-6. See also How and Wells, Appendix IV 4.3.

³³⁰ Fehling (1989) 110, argues strongly for Herodotean invention. He discusses the etymological question raised by the passage, including the Greek ending placed on the Median word "Spako" (1.110). Burkert (1983) 109, also attributes the story to Herodotos himself.

³³¹ 1.95 and 1.214.

³³² For the subjective nature of Herodotos' work in general, see above, 19-23.

³³³ For Herodotos' personal views concerning women, see above, 69-71.

³³⁴ The dream has its enforcement in 1.108, where Astyages dreams that he sees a vine, growing from Mandane's womb, overshadowing Asia. The "Herrschaftstraum" (dynastic dream) motif is also repeated in the portraits of Kyros (1.209), Kambyzes (3.30) and Xerxes (7.19) (Hagel [1968] 51 n. 1). Kyros dreams that he sees Dareios with wings on his shoulders: one overshadowing Asia, and the other overshadowing Europe. Kambyzes dreams that a messenger comes from Persia and tells him that Smerdis sits on the royal throne and reaches for heaven with his head. Xerxes dreams that he sees himself crowned with an olive branch with shoots overshadowing all the earth, but the crown quickly disappears. The dreams of Astyages, Kyros, and Kambyzes are characteristic of despots desperately clinging to their rule. They are prepared to do anything necessary to protect their personal sovereignty, even killing members of their own families (Astyages - his grandson (Kyros); Kyros - his nephew (Dareios); Kambyzes - his brother (Smerdis)). Xerxes' dream, on the other hand, indicates that his "world empire" will suddenly collapse (Immerwahr 1956, 271, n. 59). Joseph's dreams illustrate that the "dynastic dream" motif was also common to Near Eastern literature (*Old Testament*, Genesis 37).

interpretation, he does write that Astyages was terrified (ἐφοβήθη, 1.107.3). Judging from the action that Astyages takes, it seems clear that a child from Mandane is the object of the king's fear. Astyages therefore marries his daughter to a Persian vassal of a much lower class (τὸν εὔρισκε οἰκίης μὲν ἐόντα ἀγαθῆς, τρόπου δὲ ἥσυχίου, πολλῶ ἔνερθε ἄγων αὐτὸν μέσου ἀνδρὸς Μήδου).³³⁵ The important element in the Mandane story is the end result: Astyages' plan fails. Divine causation and human motivation together are at the root of the action within Herodotos' work, and he obviously did not believe that destiny could be avoided;³³⁶ but like Laius and Oedipus in the Oedipus myth, characters in Herodotos' work also try to alter their fate. It is the manner in which Astyages tries to alter his fate that is of importance. The reasons for the failure of his plan lie once again in the role that Herodotos gives women among the barbarians within his *History*.

As stated above,³³⁷ in the patriarchal Greek society the male seed is regarded as the bearer of the soul of a child, and the woman is merely the receptacle for the bearing of that child. Therefore, if the offspring of a woman is fated to be of a particular nature, it is possible to affect that offspring by altering the father. Astyages' plan seems clear. He is in fact following Zeus' example. When omnipotent Zeus became aware that Thetis was the goddess fated to

³³⁵ 1.107.2.

³³⁶ As Kroisos tried to do in 1.34-45, where he attempted to alter the fate of his son Atys. In 1.8 and 9.109, Herodotos writes how the fates of individuals are predetermined. For Herodotos' personal faith in the divine, see above, 25-26, and, generally, 18-19.

³³⁷ 50, n. 197. Cartledge (1993) refers to Aristotle's description of the female reproductive system in *Generation of Animals* as "pure sexist ideology" (67). The Hippocratic writer of the *On Seed*, on the other hand, although admitting and accepting the woman's part in the reproductive process (concluding that there is a male and a female sperm), states that the female sperm, being weaker, must somehow originate from the male (Cartledge, *ibid.*, 68). For a bibliography pertaining to the Greek view of the biology of women see Cartledge, *ibid.*, 190.

have a son greater than his father, Zeus quickly married her off to the mortal Peleus.³³⁸ In this way, Zeus avoided the fate of his father, Kronos, and that of his grandfather before him, Ouranos. Both these gods were deposed by their sons: Ouranos by Kronos, and Kronos by Zeus. The myth was certainly well known to Herodotos' fifth century Greek audience, and there would be no doubt that Astyages was attempting to achieve a similar result. Achilles was the bravest of Greek heroes, but he was no match for an immortal god. Zeus therefore succeeded in his plan by marrying Thetis to a man of much less power than his own.

In Herodotos, Astyages is following a pattern similar to that of Zeus, and Herodotos' Greek audience would certainly have perceived the resemblance. The king is in dread of his daughter's offspring, and so he therefore arranges for her to marry a man with much less power than his own. His actions would be justifiable and understandable to Herodotos' audience, owing to their familiarity with similar actions in Greek myth, such as the marriage of Thetis to Peleus. Herodotos invokes the memory of a common myth, yet completely alters its central element. It is this modified element that would have been most striking to his audience. Astyages' plan fails because, among the barbarians, the situation is reversed: the soul of a child lies with the mother, not the father.³³⁹ Herodotos therefore makes it clear as early as possible, at the dawn of the

³³⁸ See Aischylos' *Prometheus Bound*, esp. 757-70 and 907-27. Pindar, *Isthmian*, 8.26-57, states that both Poseidon and Zeus desired Thetis, and that an oracle revealed by Themis revealed that Thetis was fated to have a son stronger than his father. The *Kypria*, on the other hand, records the less popular version of the myth, wherein Thetis refuses the advances of Zeus and is subsequently punished by being compelled to marry a mortal (Grimal [1986] 453 and 513).

³³⁹ Tourraix (1976) 374: "Kyros sera donc plus le fils de Mandane que celui de Cambyse."

Persian Empire, that among the barbarians, specifically the Persians and the Medians, an opposite, other, relationship exists between men and women.

After Astyages' second dream, in which he sees a vine growing from Mandane's womb overshadowing Asia, is interpreted to mean that her offspring will rule in Astyages' place, the king again takes action to prevent the loss of his kingdom.

3.1.C. The birth of Kyros in Herodotos

When Mandane's child is born, Astyages decides to have the child exposed, and entrusts the duty to his most faithful kinsman, Harpagos. Harpagos foresees the possible ramifications of killing a legal heir to the throne,³⁴⁰ and therefore passes the responsibility of killing the child on to the herdsman Mithradates. After leaving Harpagos, Mithradates learns the true identity of the child, and though he would prefer not to kill the child, he can see no other way of escaping the wrath of Harpagos. Mithradates' wife, Kyno by name, cannot persuade her husband to spare the child; so she suggests to exchange their own stillborn child for the grandchild of Astyages.³⁴¹ Mithradates approves of his wife's plan and exposes his own dead child; then the two raise the child, Kyros, until such time as his true identity is revealed (1.117). This in essence is the account of the birth of Kyros in Herodotos (1.107-13).

³⁴⁰ If Astyages died, the crown could then go to Mandane (1.109).

³⁴¹ Herodotos acknowledges a divine element in Kyros' survival: τότε κως κατὰ δαίμονα τίκτει οἰχομένου τοῦ βουκόλου ἐς πόλιν (1.111.1).

3.1.D. The birth of Kyros in Ktesias³⁴²

A fragment from Nikolaos Damaskenos³⁴³ contains a different version of Kyros' origin, that of Ktesias. In this account, Kyros' father becomes a thief out of poverty, and his mother herds goats. Both of them are Persians, and because of their extreme poverty they hand their child over to a member of the Median court as a servant. The child rises to a high position under Astyages, much as Gyges rose under Sadyattes in the account attributed to Xanthos.³⁴⁴ Having reached the high position of royal cup-bearer, Kyros is told by his mother of a dream she had before he was born. In this dream she had seen her own urine flood all of Asia. Kyros then decides on a revolt, and raises the Persians against the king. Kyros ultimately succeeds.

3.1.E. Discussion of the different accounts³⁴⁵

Ktesias' version differs from Herodotos' mainly in its total lack of fantastic elements. Kyros is portrayed in very human terms. He is of low birth, he has no Median blood, and he rises to the highest rank of cup-bearer through hard work. Kyros also wins through difficult combats, and he is defeated twice before a final victory at Pasargadae. One obvious similarity in the two accounts, aside from the victory of Kyros, is the dream of his mother urinating and flooding all of Asia. In Herodotos, the dream is attributed to

³⁴² FGrH 688 F9. For Ktesias himself, and his work, see Auberger (1991) 1-21. See also How and Wells (1928) Appendix IV 4b.

³⁴³ See above, 75 n. 298.

³⁴⁴ See above, 75-76.

³⁴⁵ The account in Justin 1.4.2-14 shares most of the features found in the Herodotean version. The significant differences are: the infant Kyros is suckled by a bitch (1.4.10); and the herdsman exchanges his own living newborn son for the grandson of Astyages (1.4.13).

Astyages, but Ktesias credits the dream to Kyros' mother. In both accounts, the mother of Kyros is the one that floods all of Asia. The poverty of Kyros' true parents in Ktesias' version is also similar to that of Kyros' foster parents in Herodotos' account. In both accounts, a child is handed over to the Median court.³⁴⁶ Also, Ktesias portrays the mother of Kyros as the instigator of the revolt, just as Herodotos portrays Harpagos in a similar fashion.³⁴⁷ It can certainly be argued that the woman in Ktesias' version plays an important role, for the conveying of her dream to Kyros initiates his rebellion. But her importance is in no way comparable to that of Kyno in Herodotos' version.

3.1.F. Kyno³⁴⁸

Herodotos' Kyno is portrayed as the one person responsible for the survival of Kyros. The three men involved in the story of Kyros' birth all decide that the child must die. In 1.108.2, Herodotos writes that Astyages is βουλόμενος τὸ γεννώμενον ἐξ αὐτῆς [Mandane] διαφθεῖραι. Harpagos, though he chooses not to kill the child himself, says, ἀλλὰ τοῦ μὲν ἀσφαλῆος ἔνεκα ἐμοὶ δεῖ τοῦτον τελευτᾶν τὸν παῖδα.³⁴⁹ Mithradates' decision to expose the child is

³⁴⁶ In Herodotos' account, it is the stillborn child of Kyno that is handed over (to impersonate Kyros for the inspection) (1.113).

³⁴⁷ Harpagos' motive is vengeance for the murder of his own son by Astyages, in exchange for Harpagos' role in Kyros' survival (1.119). The incident is extremely similar to the story of the feast of Thyestes. Just as Atreus cooks and serves up the sons of Thyestes to their father, so Astyages cooks the son of Harpagos and serves him to his father (Burkert [1983] 103-9). The cannibalistic meal was common in Greek mythology (see above, 8 and n. 36). Atreus and Thyestes were sons of Pelops. The myth surrounding Atreus and Thyestes was undoubtedly well known in the fifth century BC. Though none of the tragedies have survived, Sophokles wrote both *Atreus* and *Thyestes* tragedies, and Euripides also wrote a *Thyestes* tragedy. Herodotos, it can be argued, is again using atrocities from the Greeks' distant past to characterize barbarian behaviour.

³⁴⁸ Κυνώ (Kyno) is an obvious play on the Greek word for bitch (Κύων, gen. Κυνός). Herodotos also gives her Persian name as Σπακώ (Spako, 1.110).

³⁴⁹ 1.109.4.

also evident in 1.112.2, where Kyno says, ἐπεὶ τοίνυν οὐ δύναμαί σε πείθειν μὴ ἐκθεῖναι. Together with these three men that decide the child Kyros must die, Herodotos depicts a woman as his saviour.

Astyages' reason for exposing the child could be madness,³⁵⁰ but in the case of Mithradates and Harpagos, although they both know that it is wrong to kill the child, they decide to do so anyway. They can see no other alternative but to do as they were told. They are prepared to proceed along a path that they know is wrong. Their behaviour is much like Gyges',³⁵¹ and Herodotos depicts them as typical slaves under a despot's rule. Kyno, on the other hand, does not behave like a slave.³⁵² She asserts her own opinion, which is opposite to that of her master and king, and furthermore she is able to persuade her husband to follow her advice: κάρτα τε ἔδοξε τῷ βουκόλῳ πρὸς τὰ παρεόντα εὖ λέγειν ἢ γυνή. καὶ αὐτίκα ἐποίηε ταῦτα."³⁵³ Once more, Herodotos depicts a woman among the barbarians defending νόμος, since it was certainly not the custom for a Median king to kill his grandson. Astyages therefore acts contrary to νόμος, and amidst the action that evolves out of the repercussions of Astyages' choice, Herodotos portrays a woman preserving νόμος. Kyros lives only because of Kyno, his substitute

³⁵⁰ As Harpagos states in 1.109. Herodotos depicts Astyages as a despot clinging to his rule. Unlike Laius, who is told by an oracle that his son will kill him, and marry his own mother; Astyages is told that his grandchild will rule against him (βασιλεύσειν ἀντὶ ἐκείνου 1.108). The folk tale motif of a dangerous child is extremely common to Greek mythology. Perseus was also fated to kill his father, and Paris was destined to cause the destruction of Troy. Zeus was obliged to devour Metis, since her second born would have overthrown Zeus. He also had to marry Thetis to a mortal, since her son was destined to be more powerful than his father. Zeus himself was also a dangerous child. See above, 88 n. 338.

³⁵¹ 1.8-11 and above, 73-75.

³⁵² It can be argued that Labda, the mother of Kypselos also successfully saved her son from the Korinthian men sent to kill him (5.92), but Herodotos acknowledges the element of fate in the preservation of Kypselos (ἔδει δὲ ἐκ τοῦ Ἡερίωνος γόνου Κορίνθῳ κακὰ ἀναβλαστεῖν 5.92.γ.1) The incident is also part of the Greek "barbaric" past, a time before Greeks had distinguished themselves from barbarians (see above, 9-10).

³⁵³ 1.113.1

mother. When he is sent to live with his parents, Mandane and Kambyses, Kyros continually praises Kyno and says that Kyno was everything to him (1.122). Indeed Kyno is everything in Herodotos' account. If it were left up to the men involved in the story, Kyros would have died. It takes a woman to defend νόμος and save Kyros, enabling him therefore to found the Persian Empire.

3.1.G. The death of Kyros

All the ancient sources, except Xenophon,³⁵⁴ agree that Kyros died in battle while expanding his empire in the East.³⁵⁵ They do not however agree on who the enemy were on that occasion. Ktesias³⁵⁶ identifies them as the Derbikai, a people east of the Caspian sea, and although Kyros is mortally wounded, the campaign is a success. Berossos³⁵⁷ makes the enemy the Dahai, south-east of the Caspian. Herodotos takes Kyros farthest to the east, to campaign against the Massagetai (1.204-214).³⁵⁸

3.1.G.1. The account in Herodotos

In Herodotos' account, the campaign begins as Kyros tries to woo Tomyris, the queen of the Massagetai.³⁵⁹ Tomyris had taken

³⁵⁴ Xenophon (*Cyrop.* 8.7) writes that Kyros is warned by a vision of his forthcoming death. He heeds the warning and offers prayers and sacrifices before reviewing his life, counseling his sons Kambyses and Tanaoaxares, and giving other discourses. He then bids farewell to his family and dies peacefully.

³⁵⁵ How and Wells (1928) vol. 1, Appendix IV 7.1. See also Rawlinson (1875) vol. 1, 272-3 n. 9.

³⁵⁶ FGrH 688 F9.

³⁵⁷ FGrH 680 F10.

³⁵⁸ How and Wells, *loc. cit.*, credit Berossos with the most probable account, and state that Herodotos, "in defiance of all probability, takes Kyros over the Araxes" (Appendix IV 7.1). Herodotos' reasons for taking Kyros over the Araxes become clear as his *History* unfolds, highlighting the importance of physical boundaries (See Lateiner [1989] 126-144). The different tribal names can possibly be attributed to changes in the tribes over the more than two centuries spanned by these different sources.

³⁵⁹ The wooing of Tomyris is an attempt to conquer the Massagetai peacefully. The "dynastic marriage" would have been similar to that of Kambyses (31). See above, 68, and Brosius (1996) 136-142.

over the rule on the death of her husband.³⁶⁰ Because she realizes that it is only the kingship that Kyros truly desires, she refuses his proposal. Kyros then decides to conquer Tomyris by force. The Persian king prepares to cross the Araxes river, but Tomyris offers him the choice of crossing the river unmolested into the land of the Massagetai, or retreating and letting the Massagetan army cross into his land to do battle. At this point Kroisos, fulfilling the role of the wise advisor, counsels the Persian king. Kroisos, in this passage, appears not only in the wise advisor motif,³⁶¹ but Herodotos also uses him to insert his dominant female motif. Kroisos explains why Kyros should cross the Araxes river into the land of the Massagetai, instead of admitting Tomyris into Persian territory to do battle. He culminates by stating χωρίς τε τοῦ ἀπηγημένου αἰσχρὸν καὶ οὐκ ἄνασχετὸν Κῦρόν γε τὸν Καμβύσεω γυναικὶ εἴξαντα ὑποχωρῆσαι τῆς χώρας.³⁶² On the advice of Kroisos, Kyros chooses to cross the river. Also on the advice of Kroisos, Kyros leaves a feast and wine in a poorly-defended camp, and retreats with the majority of his army. One third of the Massagetan army attacks and vanquishes the poorly-defended camp, and consumes the feast and wine. The trick works, and while this portion of the Massagetan army is asleep, the remainder of Kyros' army attacks them, killing many and taking even more prisoner. Among the prisoners is the queen's son, Spargapises. When Tomyris hears of this slaughter, she condemns Kyros for having used trickery to capture her son. She

³⁶⁰ As the wife of Kandaules, whose husband becomes king (1.13-14). See also (1.109), where it seems that Mandane could have become queen.

³⁶¹ Lattimore (1939) 24-35.

³⁶² 1.207.5

also threatens that Kyros will get his fill of blood if he does not release his prisoners and leave the land of the Massagetai. Kyros ignores her threat, and the Persians give battle. The Persian army is subsequently defeated, and Kyros killed. True to her word, Tomyris gives Kyros his fill of blood by placing his severed head in a skin filled with human blood.

Herodotos' account is a highly dramatized amplification, and has been regarded as not historical.³⁶³ It is consistent with the expansionist motif and closely linked to three other episodes in Herodotos' work. In 7.18, the Massagetan campaign is mentioned in the same context as the Ethiopian campaign of Kambyzes and the Scythian campaign of Dareios. The passage in question also looks forward to Xerxes' campaign against Greece. In all four cases, Persian expansionism is curtailed beyond the four "physical borders" of the empire by "noble savages".³⁶⁴

In 1.214.5, Herodotos writes: τὰ μὲν δὴ κατὰ τὴν Κύρου τελευτὴν τοῦ βίου πολλῶν λόγων λεγομένων ὅδε μοι ὁ πιθανώτατος εἴρηται. As in 1.95, Herodotos tells us that he is using his own judgment in choosing which version of the death of Kyros to include in his work. From an examination of his work in its entirety, noting similarities between the Massagetan campaign, the unsuccessful campaigns of Kambyzes and Dareios, and the failure of Xerxes' campaign in Greece, it is apparent that "Herodotos was in control of his material and that he manipulated it for certain purposes, some

³⁶³ How and Wells, *op. cit.*, 153-4.

³⁶⁴ See above, 39-41 and n. 161. "Noble savages" is a term used to describe the simple, free, natural people living at the fringe of the Persian empire. The four "physical borders" that must be crossed: Kyros must cross the Araxes river (1.205), Dareios the Bosphoros (4.87-88) and the Ister (4.97), Kambyzes the desert (3.25), and Xerxes the Hellespont (7.54-56).

of which we would call historical, but many of which we would call literary."³⁶⁵ Whether one goes beyond "manipulation" and accepts the possibility of free invention on the part of Herodotos is unimportant. Whether Herodotos created Tomyris, or whether she already existed in one of his sources is immaterial. The importance lies in the fact that she is present in his account to lend further significance to the downfall of Kyros.

Herodotos' account of Kyros' death is a fitting conclusion to his treatment of Kyros. This treatment follows "the pattern of the rise and fall of a ruler," and this pattern "is based on the idea of a reversal of fortune."³⁶⁶ This pattern of rise and fall is central to Herodotos' entire work, as discussed above.³⁶⁷ This pattern is introduced in the Gyges-Kandaules episode, but the tragic cycle is most evident and most fully developed in the Kroisos logoi.³⁶⁸

At the height of his power and wealth, Kroisos is visited in Sardis by Solon (1.29-33).³⁶⁹ Solon counsels the Lydian king to be moderate in thought, action, and wealth, so as not to incur the wrath of the gods. He also advises Kroisos to count no man happy until he is dead, since a reversal of fortune can occur at any time. Kroisos does not heed Solon's words, but realizes their inherent wisdom only after he has suffered his catastrophic reversal of fortune. After his tragic fall, Kroisos fulfills the motif of the wise advisor that becomes so common throughout the *History*.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁵ Avery (1972) 530.

³⁶⁶ Immerwahr (1966) 75-76.

³⁶⁷ See above, 7, with n. 26, and 41, ns. 170-171.

³⁶⁸ 1.26-56, 69 and 76-92.

³⁶⁹ Plutarch (*Solon* 27) noted long ago that such a visit was historically improbable, owing to the chronological difficulties.

³⁷⁰ The wise advisor motif is discussed by Latimore (1939). See also Fehling (1989) 203-209.

Kyros' behaviour and actions in the Massagetan campaign are meant to be contrasted with his comportment during the Lydian campaign.³⁷¹ At that time, Kyros' thoughts about the insecurity of human life, especially his own, are demonstrated when he decides to spare Kroisos: ἐνώσαντα ὅτι καὶ αὐτὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐὼν ἄλλον ἄνθρωπον, (...), ζῶντα πυρὶ διδοίη.³⁷² During the Massagetan campaign Kroisos reminds Kyros that he is only human, and that fortune does not always stay with the same person throughout his lifetime (1.207).³⁷³ At this point, however, Kyros firmly believes in his own good fortune³⁷⁴ and that ἐμεῦ θεοὶ κήδονται καί μοι πάντα προδεικνύουσι τὰ ἐπιφερόμενα.³⁷⁵ Although belief in a divine protection leads Kyros on, the choice of embarking on a policy of expansion is clearly his own, and in 1.210, Herodotos makes it clear that the gods have abandoned Kyros when the king misinterprets the dream about Dareios.³⁷⁶ Kyros believes that he is being shown a conspiracy led by Dareios, when in fact he is being informed of his own impending death. Kyros' end is consistent therefore with the theme of the rise and fall of rulers, at the heart of which lies reversal of fortune. The fact that the victorious army is led by a woman is characteristic of Herodotos' portrayal of women among the barbarians.

³⁷¹ Although Kyros may have intended to invade Lydia regardless, the campaign in Herodotos is clearly presented as a defensive campaign for the Persians (1.71.1 and 1.130.3).

³⁷² 1.86.6.

³⁷³ Kroisos, fulfilling the role of the wise advisor to Kyros, just as Solon had done to Kroisos (1.30-32), cautions the Persian king. Kyros' ἄτη (tragic blindness), however, causes him to ignore Kroisos' advice, just as Kroisos' ἄτη had caused him to ignore Solon.

³⁷⁴ 1.204

³⁷⁵ 1.209.4. See also 7.8, for Xerxes' similar belief.

³⁷⁶ Avery (1972) 539.

3.1.G.2. Kyros and women

Herodotos depicts Kyros with an obvious attitude of male superiority, at least with respect to war and physical strength.³⁷⁷ When Kroisos offers to turn the Lydian men into women, insinuating that they will then no longer be a threat to Kyros, the Persian king accepts his prisoner's suggestion.³⁷⁸ A more obvious display of Kyros' attitude surfaces when one of his sacred white horses drowns in the Gyndes river.³⁷⁹ An angry Kyros declares that δὴ μιν ἀσθενέα ποιήσιν ὥστε τοῦ λοιποῦ καὶ γυναικᾶς μιν εὐπετέως τὸ γόνυ οὐ βρεχούσας διαβήσεσθαι.³⁸⁰ The irony of this statement becomes clear several passages later, when Kyros meets the Massagetai and their queen, Tomyris.³⁸¹

3.1.G.3. Tomyris

Tomyris is the only woman in the *History* depicted in a military campaign against the Persians.³⁸² She is also the only person who defeats Kyros, and she is responsible for his death. Herodotos' presents Tomyris as a type of Penthesilea.³⁸³ The deceitful attempt by Kyros to woo Tomyris, his failure to do so, and his subsequent defeat and death at her hands should be contrasted with the death

³⁷⁷ 1.55-6, 1.189 and 1.207.

³⁷⁸ 1.155-156

³⁷⁹ 1.189.

³⁸⁰ 1.189.2

³⁸¹ 1.209-214.

³⁸² Artemisia did not battle the Persians, she voluntarily joined the Persian navy (7.99.1)

³⁸³ Penthesilea was the queen of the Amazons. The coming of the Amazons to the aid of the Trojans was a later feature of the epic cycle. Their involvement in the Trojan War is alluded to in Quintus Smyrnaeus' *Post-Homerica* (1.538-810), and it was evidently the subject of one of the cyclic poems, the *Aithiopsis* of Arktinos of Miletus (Dubois [1982] 33 and 44). The popularity of the myth of Achilles and Penthesilea is attested as early as the middle of the sixth century BC on Athenian Black Figure vases (Boardman [1985] 230 and figs.98 and 204). For the myths surrounding Penthesilea see Grimal (1986) 356-7 & 503.

of Penthesilea at the hands of Achilles.³⁸⁴ There is no trickery involved between Achilles and Penthesilea. The two meet in battle, and, as Achilles is mortally wounding the Amazon queen, he falls in love with her. Herodotos' account therefore emphasizes the trickery used by Kyros, both in the marriage proposal and in battle. The deceit used by Kyros, while conjuring up images of Achilles and Penthesilea, more directly and more openly shows Kyros falling on the cycle of rise and fall. In 1.136.1, Herodotos explains that the goodness of a Persian man (ἀνδραγαθίη) is demonstrated most by valour in combat (τὸ μάχεσθαι εἶναι ἀγαθόν). The fact that Kyros does not even attempt to engage the Massagetan army in battle before resorting to trickery is surely meant to be contrasted with this earlier observation on Persian culture. Kyros directly violates the principal criterion for being a good Persian.

Kyros' treatment of the Gyndes river is also testimony to his fall. In 1.138.2, Persians are said to revere rivers most of all (σέβονται ποταμοὺς μάλιστα), and yet Herodotos depicts Kyros verbally threatening, and then physically altering the Gyndes river (1.189-190).³⁸⁵ The Persian king expends a considerable amount of time and manpower towards violating yet another Persian νόμος. This violation contributes to the fall of Kyros.

Not only is Kyros different during the Massagetan campaign, but so are the Persians themselves. Tomyris and the Massagetai are depicted as noble, primitive and naive people, unaccustomed to the

³⁸⁴ As depicted on an Athenian Black Figure Vase signed by the vase painter to Exekias (Boardman [1985] fig.98).

³⁸⁵ Kyros assigns many men to the task of dividing the river into 360 channels (1.190.1).

"pleasures" of civilization.³⁸⁶ They are depicted much like the Persians at the time of the Lydian campaign, as described by Sandanis (1.71). Therein, the Lydian says that the Persians οὐκ οἴνω διαχρέωνται.³⁸⁷ The Persians, upon conquering the Lydians, are corrupted by luxuries already known to their enemy.³⁸⁸ One of these luxuries, wine, is a direct factor in the manner that they wage war upon the Massagetai.

Truthfulness is also of prime importance to the Persians (1.138.1), yet Kyros clearly misleads the portion of his army that he leaves behind in his mock retreat from the land of the Massagetai. The fact that the Persians enter into Massagetan territory in the first place, and initiate the war, is arguably the strongest indication of the downward shift of Kyros and the Persians on the cycle of rise and fall. During the Lydian campaign, the Persians were fighting a defensive battle, but as stated above,³⁸⁹ the Persians are the aggressors in the war with the Massagetai. The negative aspect of aggression beyond one's own boundaries has already been discussed,³⁹⁰ and this theme of expansion and aggression will surface in the portraits of the kings that follow Kyros.

The Massagetai, therefore, are in the identical situation that the Persians were in when Kroisos attacked them, except for the critical difference that the Massagetai are ruled by a woman. The fact that they are ruled by a woman seems to be of no great concern

³⁸⁶ 1.207 and 1.214-5.

³⁸⁷ 1.71.3.

³⁸⁸ Herodotos is not consistent with regards to the Persians' knowledge of wine. Kyros himself clearly uses wine as part of his enticement of the Persians towards revolt from the Medes (1.126). Herodotos writes that the Persians adopt foreign customs more readily than any other people (1.135.1).

³⁸⁹ 97, n. 371.

³⁹⁰ Above, 38-41.

to the Persians, however. Although Kroisos had mentioned that it would mean shame for Kyros, the son of Kambyses, to recoil and give ground to a woman,³⁹¹ the fact that they were actually at war with a woman seems to be of no great concern. This statement should be contrasted with Herodotos' statement concerning the Athenian trierarchs in 8.93.3. Here he makes it clear that the Athenians are very unaccustomed to war with women: δεινὸν γάρ τι ἐποיעῦντο γυναῖκα ἐπὶ τὰς Ἀθήνας στρατεύεσθαι. Herodotos is giving his opinion regarding one aspect of the two entirely different cultures. In Greek society, the woman had no part in military or political affairs. She was indeed treated as a second class-citizen, and the men certainly thought of themselves as superior. Among the barbarians, the situation appears quite different. Persian men profess an attitude of superiority, much like Greek men, but events throughout the *History* testify otherwise. Women like Tomyris can hold the highest political office and command armies, and women like the wife of Kandaules and Kyno appear to manage very well, compared to the men around them. When men like Kandaules and Astyages act contrary to νόμος, Herodotos portrays a woman defending or even enforcing the validity of that νόμος. Women among the barbarians therefore function as a type of control for male behaviour. In fact, Herodotos portrays women having such control over men among the barbarians throughout his *History*. Women have the ability to thrust their kings into military campaigns,³⁹² a queen has her king killed and chooses his

³⁹¹ 1.207.7. See above, 94.

³⁹² Nitetis (3.1), and Atossa (3.134).

replacement,³⁹³ and women are depicted actually fighting better than men.³⁹⁴ In reference to the battle between the armies of Kyros and Tomyris, Herodotos writes: ταύτην τὴν μάχην, ὅσαι δὴ βαρβάρων ἀνδρῶν μάχαι ἐγένοντο, κρίνω ἰσχυροτάτην γενέσθαι, καὶ δὴ καὶ πυνθάνομαι οὕτω τοῦτο γινόμενον.³⁹⁵ Herodotos also tells us that from the many versions of the story of Kyros (1.95.1) and from the many stories concerning his death (1.214.5), he, Herodotos, chose the one that seemed most convincing (ὀπιθανώτατος). It is most convincing for Herodotos because of his preconceived notion of Persian culture as "the other," and the role that he gives women in that "other" culture.

3.2. KAMBYSES

Herodotos' portrait of Kambyses is almost entirely unfavourable.³⁹⁶ He lists Kambyses' outrages (3.27-38) and culminates them by saying that a man must be mad to do such things. He is a destroyer of both family and νόμος in Herodotos. Although, as Lloyd points out,³⁹⁷ there are both favourable and unfavourable elements in Kambyses' portrait, the unfavourable greatly outweighs the favourable. According to Egyptian evidence, although a period of disorder in Egypt certainly followed Kambyses' conquest, this period seems to have been brief and was soon

³⁹³ The wife of Kandaules (1.11-12).

³⁹⁴ Tomyris defeating Kyros (1.214), and Artemisia at Salamis (8.68 & 87).

³⁹⁵ 1.214.1

³⁹⁶ Aischylos, *Persai*, 774, also refers to Kambyses in a negative light (αἰσχύνῃ πάτραι).

³⁹⁷ Lloyd (1988) 62.

followed by restraint on the part of the Persians.³⁹⁸ Evidence also suggests that Kambyzes repaired much of the damage done during his invasion of Egypt. Following the pattern set by his father Kyros, who portrayed himself as a legitimate ruler to the Babylonians, Kambyzes tried to legitimise his rule of Egypt by calling himself the son of Nitetis, daughter of Apries, the last legitimate pharaoh of the 26th (Saite) dynasty.³⁹⁹ Since Amasis was a usurper, who seized the throne from Apries, Kambyzes' actions towards Amasis' mummy may have been orchestrated to demonstrate to the Egyptians that Amasis had illegally seized the throne and that he had no real claim to that Egyptian throne or to a kingly burial.⁴⁰⁰ The other significant incident that seems false in Herodotos is the episode involving the Apis bull (3.27-29). According to Egyptian sources, the only Apis bull to have died during Kambyzes' reign did so in 524 BC, and on a stele at Memphis Kambyzes is featured in Egyptian dress, kneeling before the sacred bull.⁴⁰¹ These sources do not support Herodotos' version, where Kambyzes is depicted stabbing the Apis bull and causing the Egyptian priests to bury the sacred bull secretly (3.29). Although primary sources do seem to contradict some elements of Herodotos' account of Kambyzes, there certainly was a negative picture of Kambyzes in the fifth century BC. This unfavourable view of Kambyzes was probably propagated by the Egyptian priesthood, whose revenues and privileges were limited by Kambyzes. Together

³⁹⁸ Boyce (1982) vol. 2, 71. See also Lloyd, *op. cit.*, 55-66 and Atkinson (1956) 167-77.

³⁹⁹ Boyce, *op. cit.*, 72. See also Lloyd, *op. cit.*, 62.

⁴⁰⁰ Atkinson, *op. cit.*, 171. Also, to legitimise his rule, Kambyzes dated his rule over Egypt to 530, the year that he became king of Persia, and not to 525, the year that he conquered Egypt (Boyce, *op. cit.*, 72).

⁴⁰¹ Atkinson, *op. cit.*, 170-1.

with the physical destruction of Kambyzes' conquest of Egypt, there was also apparent dislike for him by his successor, Dareios.⁴⁰²

Although scholars continue to debate the historical reliability of Herodotos' account of Kambyzes,⁴⁰³ the importance of the portrait lies in the fact the Herodotos chose to include it within his *History*. Although already depicting Kambyzes in a less favourable light, Herodotos nevertheless uses the dominant female motif to demonstrate to his Greek audience the weakness of the Persians. Herodotos' depiction of Kambyzes in relation to the female sex is not as developed as the relation between Kyros and women, but there are two significant incidents that deserve our attention. One provides Herodotos' reason for the Persian attack on Egypt. The other is the murder of Kambyzes' sister-wife.

3.2.A. Nitetis and the campaign against Egypt

It is understood that Kambyzes inherited the war against Egypt from his father Kyros,⁴⁰⁴ and yet Herodotos tells a story in which a woman is indirectly responsible for Kambyzes' attack on Egypt (3.1). Herodotos tells how Kambyzes, on the advice of an Egyptian doctor,⁴⁰⁵ asks Amasis, the king of Egypt, for his daughter. Amasis knows that Kambyzes only wants his daughter as a concubine.

Because he fears the power of Persia, he apparently agrees, but substitutes his predecessor's daughter, Nitetis, for his own. After Nitetis reveals her true identity and Amasis' trick to Kambyzes,

⁴⁰² Boyce, *op. cit.*, 74-75. See also Lloyd, *op. cit.*, 62-66.

⁴⁰³ For a bibliography see Lloyd, *op. cit.*, 56 n. 1.

⁴⁰⁴ The campaign against Egypt had already been planned by Kyros (1.153.4) (Immerwahr [1956] 259).

⁴⁰⁵ The Egyptian doctor in 3.1 behaves in a similar fashion to the Greek doctor Demokedes in 3.134. Both doctors encourage and assist in war plans against their respective native countries for purely selfish reasons.

Herodotos continues, ... καὶ αὕτη ἡ αἰτία ἐγγενομένη ἤγαγε Καμβύσεα τὸν Κύρου μεγάλως θυμωθέντα ἐπ' Αἴγυπτον.⁴⁰⁶ Herodotos accepts this version as fact. He briefly states two other possible reasons for the attack on Egypt, but he immediately discredits them. In 3.2, he recounts the Egyptian version of the story that depicts Kambyses as the son of Kyros by Nitetis, the daughter of Apries. As mentioned above,⁴⁰⁷ Kambyses himself was responsible for this version, and he was following a precedent set by his father Kyros at Babylon. Herodotos credits the version to the Egyptians and declares that it is not true (λέγοντες δὲ ταῦτα οὐκ ὀρθῶς λέγουσι).⁴⁰⁸

In 3.3, Herodotos explains how Kambyses, when he was ten years old, boasted to his mother, Kassandane, that he would turn Egypt upside down on account of his father Kyros' relationship with the Egyptian princess Nitetis. Before even relating this version to his audience, Herodotos declares it to be untrue (ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐ πιθανός).⁴⁰⁹

Both of the personal statements above are extremely important. Herodotos disclaims two alternatives and chooses a version in which Nitetis incites Kambyses into war. He proclaims this version to his audience as the version to accept, because of the role that women play among the Persians within his *History*. The cause of this major military campaign is then reduced to a woman's vengeance (Amasis had killed Nitetis' father, Apries).⁴¹⁰ Nitetis, as portrayed by Herodotos, has the ability to thrust the king of Persia

⁴⁰⁶ 3.1.5.

⁴⁰⁷ 102-103, and n. 399.

⁴⁰⁸ 3.2.2.

⁴⁰⁹ 3.3.1.

⁴¹⁰ 2.162-169.

into a war with Egypt. The Persians greatly criticised the Greeks for going to war on account of a woman (1.4), and yet they are depicted not following their own advice. Herodotos continues to develop a great irony surrounding the relationship between men and women among the Persians. He develops a theme of male inferiority by inserting the dominant female motif throughout the *History*. Helen, and the Trojan war, belong to the Greeks' distant past, to the time before Greek distinguished itself from barbarian. That a woman could propel fifth century Greek men into battle would have seemed ludicrous to Herodotos' audience. Such an event is possible among the Persians because of an opposite, other, role that women are given in that society by Herodotos.

3.2.B. The murder of Kambyses' sister-wife

Among the atrocities that Kambyses commits, such as the killing of his brother Smerdis⁴¹¹ out of envy, Kambyses takes the life of his own sister-wife (3.31-32). Herodotos says that there are two stories about her death. The first relates how Kambyses was watching a lion cub fighting a dog. Another dog came to the aid of the first dog and the lion cub was defeated. Kambyses was pleased at the outcome, but his sister-wife wept. When Kambyses asked her why she wept, she, remembering the murder of Smerdis by Kambyses, answered that unlike the puppy, the king no longer had anyone to rescue him. For this reason Kambyses killed his sister-wife. The other version tells how the sister-wife took a lettuce and striped away its leaves in front of Kambyses. She then asked him

⁴¹¹ Bardiya, according to the Behistun inscription (DB I.28-60). See below, 109.

whether the lettuce looked better with its foliage, or whether it looked better bare. Kambyses answered that it looked better when it was full. Hearing his answer, the sister-wife then asked him why he stripped the leaves off the house of Kyros, and made it like the bare lettuce. Kambyses was enraged by her question and he pounced on her, causing her to miscarry, and later to die.

3.2.C. Kambyses and women

Within his depiction of Persian culture, Herodotos portrays women with much more power than he feels they actually held in his own Greek world. Herodotos also had a bias towards his own culture,⁴¹² however, and saw women as subordinate to men.⁴¹³ In his depiction of Persian culture, "the other", he wishes to show that women have risen to greater influence in Persia and that they actually exercise control over men. The *History* is not a work of pure fiction, however, and it is unreasonable to expect Herodotos to be consistent throughout. Herodotos is often working with unalterable facts. That is to say, our author seems to show significant respect for what he sees as fact. One of these facts is that the Persian empire was always ruled by a king. He could not, therefore simply invent a matriarchal society for his Greek audience, in order to develop a theme of male subordination among the Persians. On the other hand, he can colour his information to create scenes in which Persian males appear to be in charge, while they are actually only reacting to the wishes of some woman.

⁴¹² See above, 3-13.

⁴¹³ See above, 31-35 and especially 69-71.

Herodotos shows both Kambyses and Dareios being manipulated by women into war campaigns.⁴¹⁴ Both incidents are examples of Herodotos' dominant female motif.

Kambyses' portrait is characterised by his madness, and this madness is also apparent in his treatment of his sister-wife. Her death should be seen as a culmination of Kambyses' outrageous acts in Herodotos: he mocks Egyptian religion and kills the Apis bull (3.27-29); then he has his own brother assassinated (30), and, lastly, he kills his pregnant sister-wife (31-32). This last act is by far the worst, for Kambyses is destroying his own (and Kyros') royal line, and the very means of continuing such a line. Since he does not recognize the necessity of women as a life-giving "force", he therefore kills his sister-wife, who is defending the νόμος that Kambyses has violated by killing his own brother. His treatment of women is therefore consistent with his madness. Although Herodotos, and fifth century Greek men in general, seem to have viewed women as second-class citizens, when compared to themselves, they obviously acknowledged their necessity. It can be argued that the gender specific roles and the hierarchical relationship between women and men in Greek society are characteristics of that society and an integral part of why Greek culture, in the eyes of the Greeks, was superior to Persian culture. To develop and implement a similar relationship in Persian society would be a step towards Hellenisation, but simply to eliminate women was of course madness.

⁴¹⁴ For Dareios being manipulated by Atossa, see 3.134 and below, 119-121.

The importance of keeping within the bounds of νόμος is stressed by Herodotos shortly after he lists examples of Kambyzes' disregard for such behaviour. The author then quotes Pindar:⁴¹⁵ "*nomos* is king of all (νόμον πάντων βασιλέα)". Kambyzes is mad to have mocked the religion and the customs of the Egyptians (3.38), but, on top of this, he even acts contrary to Persian νόμος. His actions against νόμος recall Kandaules' disregard for νόμος (1.10). Once more a woman's support of νόμος signals the fall of a dynasty.

3.3. SMERDIS, BARDIYA AND GAUMATA⁴¹⁶

In 3.30, Kambyzes has Prexaspes kill Smerdis, a full brother to Kambyzes, because of a dream that Kambyzes has. In this dream, Kambyzes sees Smerdis sitting on the royal throne and reaching for the heavens. Kambyzes interprets the dream to mean that his brother Smerdis would usurp the throne and rule the empire. For this reason, Kambyzes sends Prexaspes to kill Smerdis. In 3.61, Herodotos then describes how two Magian brothers rise in conspiracy against Kambyzes, and how one of the brothers, whose name happens to be Smerdis, assumes the identity of the "true" Smerdis, and the throne. He rules in seclusion until his death at the hands of Dareios and the other conspirators (3.78).

⁴¹⁵ 3.38.6. The passage from Pindar is preserved in Plato's *Gorgias* 484 B. The poem from Pindar has not survived. See above, 43 and note 177.

⁴¹⁶ Smerdis is the name of Kambyzes' full brother in Herodotos (3.30). He is also listed as a full brother to Kambyzes in the Behistun inscription, but his name is given as Bardiya. The Magian impostor, known to Herodotos as another Smerdis, is referred to as Gaumata in the inscription. See Boyce (1982) vol. 2, 78-79. For other variant names in Greek sources see Boyce, *ibid.*, 80.

Of the account in Herodotos 3.61, Olmstead has written the following:

After the death of Cambyses, we are expected to believe, Prexaspes publicly recanted his story, informed the people of the secret murder of the "true" Bardiya (Smerdis), and then in repentance committed suicide. Deathbed repentances we all know as frequent devices of the propagandist; after a suicide, the dead man can tell no tales. Furthermore, the "false" Smerdis was false only in claiming to be the son of Kyros; his actual name was Smerdis! The height of absurdity is reached when we are informed that so alike were the "true" and the "false" Smerdis that even the mother and sisters of the "true" Smerdis were deceived!⁴¹⁷

Olmstead's reservations seem warranted, yet Herodotos does seem to have followed the official Persian story circulated at the time of Dareios' accession.⁴¹⁸ The Behistun inscription supports Herodotos' account of Kambyses' part in the murder of his own brother, the usurpation of the throne by a Magus who claimed to be the deceased brother, and the fact that Kambyses died by his own hand.⁴¹⁹ The fact that Herodotos was following a source close to the official Persian account is also supported by the names of the conspirators listed in the *History*. The seven Persians listed by Herodotos are almost identical to the seven conspirators listed at Behistun.⁴²⁰

There are not only unbelievable aspects in Herodotos' account, but also in Darieos' official version.⁴²¹ In the first place, Dareios explains that the impostor put many noble Persians to

⁴¹⁷ Olmstead (1948) 109.

⁴¹⁸ On the circulation of Dareios' version of his accession, including the deaths of Kambyses, Bardiya, and Guamata, see Boyce, *op. cit.*, 79 and n. 6.

⁴¹⁹ For the full inscription see Kent (1953) 116-134.

⁴²⁰ Lewis (1985) 102 writes: "Unlike the epitome of Ktesias, who claimed to have been using official records, but only got one and a half names out of six right, Herodotus only got one wrong, naming Aspathines instead of, apparently, Ardumanis."

⁴²¹ Boyce, *op. cit.*, 80-82.

death, and that, because of these acts, he was hated and feared by many. And yet, when Dareios defeated this usurper, he was obviously not treated as a hero or welcomed as a deliverer from evil, but instead was forced to quell uprisings in almost every part of the Persian empire. Sources other than Herodotos and Dareios himself also indicate that the true Bardiya seemed to have gained the favour and support of the masses while his brother Kambyses was campaigning in Egypt and that he used his popularity to usurp the Persian crown.

The actual facts surrounding the deaths of Kyros' sons and the accession of Dareios are perhaps lost forever. The account preserved in Herodotos is important not only because it is the main Greek source for the change of dynasty, but also because he includes his dominant female motif, and the subsequent theme that it creates.

An interesting element in Herodotos' account, once again, is the role that he gives women among the Persians. The false Smerdis had isolated himself from all Persian men in order to secure his rule. Following the professed Persian (and Greek) attitude that women were of no consequence, especially in terms of war and politics, the Magian's actions would have seemed understandable to Herodotos' Greek audience. Once again, however, the Persian assumption about women is proven wrong. Herodotos inserts his dominant female motif by placing the woman in a critical position (3.68-69). Only a woman can discover with certainty whether the king of Persia is an impostor, or the legitimate king. The "false" Smerdis is successful in secluding himself from Persian men, and he sees no Persians except

for his wives. It is clear from 3.70, that the conspirators all suspect the "false" Smerdis, and Herodotos in no way makes Phaedyme responsible for the conspiracy or the death of the Magian usurper. She is simply portrayed as a daughter following her father's orders. The fact that the woman is in this crucial position, and that the Persian men depend on her to confirm the true identity of the Magian is another example of the dominant female motif in Herodotos. A Persian⁴²² male takes action that somehow involves a woman, or women. This action is consistent with the Persians' own statements in Herodotos concerning the second class nature of women and their proper exclusion from war and politics. For these reasons, the false Smerdis, although secluding himself completely from Persian noble men, takes no precautions concerning the women. Consistent with his theme of Persian men underestimating women, and later being proven wrong in some way by those women, Herodotos depicts a woman in a crucial role in the detection of the false Smerdis. Her discovery and her message to her father lead directly to the accession of Dareios.

3.4. DAREIOS

Dareios is the most favourably presented of the Persian kings discussed by Herodotos. His portrait is not as favourable, however, as it is in Aischylos' *Persai*, where Dareios is not guilty of either transgression or excess.⁴²³ Herodotos stylizes his picture of Dareios

⁴²² Magian (Median) in this instance. See above, 55 n. 226.

⁴²³ Hall (1989) 70, *Persae*, 852-903.

and manages to conform it to his theme of "the rise and fall of a ruler."⁴²⁴ Since he says little of Dareios' early reign, and nothing of his victories in the Far East (India),⁴²⁵ he therefore suppresses some of Dareios' greatest successes, and emphasizes instead his limitations.

Like Kyros, Dareios must rise to the kingship of Persia.⁴²⁶ Dareios in Herodotos is a self-made man and most Greek-like. The democratic debate concerning the best form of government (3.80-82), that precedes the choice of Dareios as king, is certainly not characteristic of Persian culture.⁴²⁷ Nor are Dareios' views concerning truthfulness. Lying is considered by the Persians to be the very basest thing: αἴσχιστον δὲ αὐτοῖσι τὸ ψεύδεσθαι νενόμισται (1.138.1). Yet Dareios justifies lying as a means to an end: ἔνθα γάρ τι δεῖ ψεῦδος λέγεσθαι, λεγέσθω (3.72.4). He also uses cunning and trickery to establish himself as king (3.85-86).

Just as Herodotos is able to manipulate his information and fit his portrait of Dareios into the theme of "the rise and fall of a ruler," he also is able consistently to introduce his dominant female motif in order to develop his themes of male inferiority among the barbarians and the corresponding power of their women. Herodotos depicts Dareios being outsmarted by one woman, and manipulated into war by another. He even describes how Dareios

⁴²⁴ Immerwahr (1966) 169. I have followed Immerwahr's opinions (169-176) in the main, concerning the portrait of Dareios in Herodotos.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁴²⁶ Parallels can be observed between Kambyzes and Xerxes who are both born into their respective royal positions, and Kyros and Dareios who must rise to theirs.

⁴²⁷ The only other occurrence of a democratic element in a Persian council presents itself in the council scene before the battle of Salamis (8.67-69).

indirectly owes his life to a woman. Herodotos also tells a story about Greek⁴²⁸ men dressing like women before killing Persian men.

3.4.A. Alexander and the youths of Makedon

The following account in Herodotos (5.18-21) does not specifically involve Dareios, but because the incident does involve his envoys it should be dealt with in a chapter dealing with Dareios. The story in Herodotos is important for our theme because it contains Makedonian men dressing like women in order to kill Persian men.

The story begins as Amyntas, the king of Makedon, gives earth and water to an embassy sent by Dareios. Amyntas also provides a feast for these Persian envoys, during which the Persians tell Amyntas to bring in the Makedonian women, since it is the Persian custom to have women present during the feast. Amyntas makes it clear that the Makedonian custom is the opposite, women and men being segregated during the feast, but since he is now a Persian vassal, he will do as their custom demands. After the Persians have been drinking for some time, they begin to touch and feel the women. Although Amyntas disapproves, he does nothing, for he fears the power of Persia. Alexander, the son of Amyntas, sends his father away and takes control of the situation. He tells the Persians that the women will be excused to bathe, and that they will shortly return to lie with the Persians. Alexander then arranges for young beardless Makedonian men to dress up like the women, and return

⁴²⁸ Specifically Makedonians (5.18-20), but Herodotos insists that Makedonians are Greeks (5.22). See above, 48-53.

to the banquet. When they are all paired off with the Persians, these men, dressed as women, kill the Persians.

The story itself is difficult to accept, for several reasons. There are similar stories involving other persons in Pausanias, Plutarch, Polyaeos, and Xenophon.⁴²⁹ The inconsistent patriotism of Alexander is also somewhat suspicious, and that must be taken into account. After the honourable beginning mentioned above, Alexander becomes and remains a Persian vassal for the remainder of Herodotos' work.⁴³⁰ Another problem with the passage presents itself in the following statement made by the Persians: Ξεῖνε Μακεδών, ἡμῖν νόμος ἐστὶ τοῖσι Πέρσησι, ἐπεὰν δεῖπνον προτιθώμεθα μέγα, τότε καὶ τὰς παλλακὰς καὶ τὰς κουριδίας γυναῖκας ἐσάγεσθαι παρέδρους (5.18.2). Since in reality, wives and mistresses did not join Persian men in their dinner/drinking festivities,⁴³¹ the custom Herodotos describes seems more like a custom invented to fit a description of the "other" than it does an actual Persian custom.

In 5.21, Herodotos describes how Alexander checked an inquisition into the missing embassy by giving his sister, Gygaea, to a Persian noble named Bubares. Although the sequence of events cannot be disproved, it seems more likely that the tale of the murdered envoys was invented by Alexander and his court to parade an air of phil-Hellenism, when in reality Alexander and Makedon had

⁴²⁹ How and Wells (1928), s.v. 5.17. Messenians and Laconians (Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 4.4.3); Athenians and Megarians (Plutarch, *Solon* 8 and Polyaeos, *Strategemata* 1.20); and Theban exiles and the Polemarchs (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 5.4.4-6). All these accounts, however, are later than Herodotos, and may have been influenced by our author.

⁴³⁰ See however the exception in 9.45, where Alexander delivers a message to the Athenians.

⁴³¹ How and Wells, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, 7. See however Brosius (1996) 20, who claims that there is evidence to support Royal women feasting and banqueting with the men. She claims that later Greek traditions distorted the information and presented the "Greek" view on the presence of women at banquets.

Medized much earlier.⁴³² It is obvious from the expansion and conquests of Makedon after the defeat of Xerxes and Mardonios, that Alexander was a very ambitious man. He was no doubt anxious to gain influence with the Persian court, and therefore offered his own sister in marriage to a Persian nobleman of very high status.⁴³³

The final difficulty with this passage involves the action itself. If Alexander had truly been angered by the conduct of the Persian men, he certainly need not have gone through the elaborate plan of dressing young men up like women in order to kill the Persians. There is nothing to be gained by his plan, except the removal of the women to safety. Once he has managed to get the women out, only the Persian and Makedonian men remain. These Makedonians certainly outnumbered the Persian envoys; moreover, their tempers surely flared upon witnessing the Persians' mistreatment of the Makedonian women. Self-restraint, however, is one of the principal criteria that separates Greek from barbarian.⁴³⁴ That a plan is developed and followed in due time is a feature of Greek culture. Also, Herodotos' account is much more engaging as it stands, than if he had simply depicted the Makedonians setting upon the Persians and killing them. It can be argued that he is also able to include his dominant female motif, emphasizing a dominant behaviour of women over barbarian males. He stresses the Hellenic lineage of Alexander⁴³⁵ (and therefore Makedon) to draw attention to a difference between the Greek and Persian cultures. The "invented"

⁴³² *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴³³ *Ibid.* Almost certainly the same Bubares who, under Xerxes, oversees the construction of the Athos canal (7.22).

⁴³⁴ See above, 7-9.

⁴³⁵ 5.22 and 9.45.

Persian custom is the opposite of the Greek custom. To portray the Makedonian women themselves killing the Persians would have been inconsistent with the rest of his work, since the women would have appeared to be more in control than the Greek males. The purpose of the dominant female motif is to present that element of control over barbarian men only. Since Herodotos is now telling a story that takes place in Greece, among Greeks, he must show the Greek men in control of the situation, rather than Greek women. However, he also wishes to continue with his motif of female dominance and male subservience among the barbarians. He therefore creates a scene where Greek men dress like women in order to kill Persian men. The power of the female, and her role as defender of νόμος (since the Persians act contrary to Makedonian νόμος)⁴³⁶ are therefore demonstrated abstractly, without at the same time distorting the relationship between male and female in Herodotos' own culture.

3.4.B. Tomiris

In an indirect way, Dareios also owes his life to a woman. In 1.209, Kyros dreams that he sees the eldest son of Hystaspes, Dareios, with wings on his shoulders.⁴³⁷ One of the wings overshadows Asia, and the other Europe. After Kyros dreams about Dareios, Herodotos implies that Kyros means to harm or even kill Dareios. In 1.209.3, when Kyros is addressing Hystaspes concerning the dream, Kyros says: "Υστασπες, παῖς σὸς ἐπιβουλεύων ἐμοί τε καὶ

⁴³⁶ The actions of the Persians also violate the guest-friendship relationship so common in Greek literature.

⁴³⁷ For the dynastic dream motif see above, 86, n. 334.

τῆ ἐμῆ ἀρχῆ ἐάλωκε. Also, in 1.210.3, Herodotos writes that: Ὑστάσπης μὲν τούτοισι ἀμειψάμενος καὶ διαβὰς τὸν Ἀράξεα ἦε ἐς Πέρσας φυλάξων Κύρω τὸν παῖδα Δαρεῖον. If we also take into account Kyros' behaviour during the Massagetan campaign (1.207), and his sacrifice (seemingly without remorse) of a portion of his Persian army, it is evident that Dareios is in danger. Since Kyros' intentions towards Dareios are far from favourable, Tomyris, by defeating and killing Kyros, is the saviour of Dareios.

3.4.C. Nitokris

Herodotos gives a very favourable account of Nitokris, the queen of Babylon (1.185-187). No Persian king is portrayed campaigning against her. Instead, Herodotos describes an incident in which Dareios attempts to rob her grave.⁴³⁸ Herodotos writes that when the queen died, she was entombed above the main gate of the city (1.187). On this tomb the following statement was inscribed:

τῶν τις ἐμεῦ ὕστερον γινομένων Βαβυλῶνος βασιλέων ἦν σπανίση χρημάτων. ἀνοίξας τὸν τάφον λαβέτω ὅκόσα βούλεται χρήματα· μὴ μέντοι γε μὴ σπανίσας γε ἄλλως ἀνοίξῃ· οὐ γὰρ ἄμεινον.

(1.187.2)

Dareios disregards the inscription, for he certainly was not lacking in money, and opens the tomb. Instead of discovering riches, he finds that he has been outdone by a woman. The only thing in the tomb besides the body of the queen is the following inscription: εἰ μὴ ἄπληστός τε ἕας χρημάτων καὶ αἰσχροκερδής, οὐκ ἂν νεκρῶν θήκας ἀνέωγες (1.187.5). Even after death, Herodotos depicts the

⁴³⁸ Although the incident is related by Herodotos during the Kyros logoi, Dareios is clearly the Persian king in question (1.187.3). Flory (1987) 43, is mistaken: he identifies the king as Kyros.

woman among the barbarians as a defender of νόμος. Dareios acts contrary to this νόμος when he violates the queen's tomb. His defilement of her grave looks forward to Kambyses' behaviour towards the body of Amasis (3.16) and the opening of many coffins in Memphis (3.37), but more importantly, the tale uses the dominant female motif in order to demonstrate the weakness of the Persian king.⁴³⁹

3.4.D. Atossa and the campaign against Greece

Herodotos portrays Dareios as being manipulated into a campaign against Greece in 3.134. Herodotos does not portray Atossa as ambitious in this passage. Rather, she is simply paying back her debt to Demokedes, who had cured a growth on her breast (3.133). She was extremely embarrassed by the illness, and therefore went to the Greek doctor in utmost confidence. He cured the growth only upon the condition that Atossa would grant him any favour, providing he asked nothing dishonourable. After curing her, he therefore tells her to manipulate Dareios into campaigning against Greece. Demokedes' motive is to return to Greece, and he is willing to risk focusing Dareios' expansionist policy on Greece, if it will somehow enable him to return there himself.

Atossa tells Dareios that now is the time to add to the power of Persia. Herodotos ironically writes:

⁴³⁹Dillery (1992) points out the tale emphasizes the greed of Dareios, but the story also continues to build upon the theme of female dominance among the barbarians.

οἰκὸς δέ ἐστι ἄνδρα καὶ νέον καὶ χρημάτων μεγάλων δεσπότην φαίνεσθαι τι ἀποδεικνύμενον, ἵνα καὶ Πέρσαι ἐκμάθωσι ὅτι ὑπ' ἄνδρὸς ἄρχονται.

(3.134.2)

The passage is ironic because Atossa is telling Dareios how to be a man. Herodotos purposely repeats the word for man (ἄνῆρ, genitive ἄνδρός) in Atossa's statement to draw his audience's attention. The Persian king is told by his queen how to act like a man. The phenomenon is not surprising, since in Herodotos' depiction of this other culture, the woman is actually in charge. The irony lies in the fact that the Persian men do not know it. They express typically Greek sentiments regarding the inferiority of the female, yet Herodotos never seems to depict such an inferiority as truly existing. In fact, an opposite situation seems to surface throughout the *History*. To a fifth century Greek audience, Dareios' behaviour is anything but "manly" in this passage. He had already decided to embark on a campaign against Scythia, but after hearing Atossa, he says:

ὦ γύναι, ἐπεὶ τοίνυν τοι δοκέει τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἡμέας πρῶτα ἀποπειρᾶσθαι, κατασκόπους μοι δοκέει Περσέων πρῶτον ἄμεινον εἶναι ὁμοῦ τούτῳ τῷ σὺ λέγεις πέμψαι εἰς αὐτοῦς
(3.134.9)

And so the irony culminates with Dareios taking Atossa's advice on how to behave like a man in order to be seen as a man by the Persians. At the outset of the *History*, the Persians themselves say that one should not pay much attention to women,⁴⁴⁰ and elsewhere in the *History*, their participation in war campaigns is clearly not

⁴⁴⁰ 1.4.2-3.

usual.⁴⁴¹ Yet Dareios allows himself to be manipulated out of one war campaign and into a course of action that results in the loss of the Greek doctor (3.136-137).

It can be argued that the plan does not belong to Atossa, but to Demokedes. The interesting element concerning the story in Herodotos, however, is the manner in which Demokedes is able to succeed. Since Herodotos is depicting an 'other' culture, where male and female roles seem to be reversed, he tells a tale where a Greek male manipulates a Persian woman into a desired course of action. Since that woman, as depicted in the *History*, will later exercise control over her husband and king, the Greek male is able to succeed in his plan.

H.R. Immerwahr states that the motivation for the campaign against Greece is "absurd, and the cause is a ludicrous one."⁴⁴² The reason for its inclusion in the *History*, however, is understandable. Such a scene is even anticipated because of the role that Herodotos assigns to female characters among the barbarians. Dareios, then, the most favourably presented king in the *History*, is portrayed by Herodotos as following a woman's advice on how to behave like a man. His actions in this passage set the stage for the role that women will fulfill in the portrait of his son Xerxes.

⁴⁴¹ 1.207 and 7.11.

⁴⁴² Immerwahr (1956) 253. The same can be said of the Nitetis and Kambyes episode (3.1).

CHAPTER 4: XERXES AND FIFTH CENTURY PERSIA

By far the most complex and fully developed portrait within the *History* is that of Xerxes.⁴⁴³ All the individual traits common to previous monarchs seem to exhibit themselves in Xerxes and "it seems beyond doubt that in his text Herodotus has modelled and sculptured the person of Xerxes."⁴⁴⁴

He (Xerxes) shares with Cambyses the derivative nature of his rule as well as certain destructive tendencies, and with Croesus his excessive wealth. Even the divine guidance apparent in the affairs of Cyrus recurs in Xerxes' speech before the Persian nobles, when he says of the Persian tradition of conquest, "A god leads us thus" (7.8a.1). The main similarity, however, is with his father Darius....⁴⁴⁵

Herodotos portrays Xerxes, even more than he does Dareios, as the typical Persian, and in an extreme form. He is the ruling Persian king at the time of the invasion, and it can be argued that he is depicted as a personification of what Persian culture had become, as Herodotos saw it, in the fifth century. Certain aspects of Xerxes' portrait, therefore, are meant to apply to Persian culture in general, and not to the king alone. His actions are meant to be contrasted with the Persian customs described in book I.⁴⁴⁶ While ἀνδραγαθίη for a Persian is most signified by valor in fighting (1.136.1), Xerxes is depicted as a coward (8.102) who deserts his troops while they continue fighting in Greece. It is also stated in 1.137, that the king

⁴⁴³ See Briant (1997) 531-580; Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1989) 549-561; Boyce (1982) vol. 2, 164-177; and Immerwahr (1966) 176-183.

⁴⁴⁴ Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1989) 556.

⁴⁴⁵ Immerwahr (1966) 176.

⁴⁴⁶ Especially 1.131-140, but remarks on Persian custom surface sporadically throughout the *History*. See also 1.4.15, 71, 89, 125, 126, 143.4, 148, 153, 192; 2.167; 3.2, 12, 15, 16, 31, 68, 69, 79, 83, 84, 89, 97, 154; 5.18; 6.41, 43, 59; 7.2, 39, 61, 114, 136, 238; 9.107.3, 109, 110.

of Persia cannot execute anyone on only a single charge, and yet Xerxes kills a son of Pythios because of the nature of that father's request.⁴⁴⁷ Pythios asked that the eldest of his five sons be spared from serving in Xerxes' army, but the request infuriated Xerxes (whose own brothers and sons were in his army), and he subsequently had Pythios' eldest son cut in two. The two halves of the body were placed on either side of the road, and Xerxes' army marched between them.⁴⁴⁸ The Persians are also said to revere rivers most of all things (1.138). Although the Hellespont is not technically a river, Xerxes' lashing of that narrow strait (7.35) can be compared to that Persian νόμος involving reverence for rivers.⁴⁴⁹ Xerxes, it can be argued, is once again depicted acting contrary to Persian νόμος. A number of other characteristics of Persian culture are associated specifically with Xerxes, in order to contribute to the fall of that character, as will be discussed below.

Xerxes must first deal with Egypt, then Greece; just as Dareios first had to deal with Skythia, then Greece. But the Skythian excursion is a skillful preparation for the campaign of Xerxes in Greece, and it is therefore dealt with in great detail. The Greek campaign is central to Xerxes' portrait, and for this reason

⁴⁴⁷ 8.38-39.

⁴⁴⁸ Dareios also punishes Oeobazos in similar fashion, for having made a similar request (4.84). How and Wells (1928) vol. 2, 145, explain that a Persian custom decreed that those one wished to protect from harm should be made to pass between two parts of a sacrificial animal. The effectiveness of the "charm" increased with the value of the victim. "Thus the slaughter of the son of Pithios might be a propitiatory sacrifice for the army." Boyce (1982) vol. 2, 167 remarks that such acts of human sacrifice were "clearly unZoroastrian in character" and that they "can only be regarded as old pagan rites persisting and being practiced thus at times of communal or individual stress."

⁴⁴⁹ Herodotos also uses Kyros' treatment of the Gyndes river to contribute to that king's fall (1.189-190).

Herodotos deals with the Egyptian revolt in a mere few sentences,⁴⁵⁰ even though the war lasted four full years.

A number of parallels can be drawn between both the Skythian campaign of Dareios and the Greek campaign of Xerxes.⁴⁵¹ In both logoi the king escapes death and owes his life to a Greek. Dareios is able to flee Skythia only on account of Histiaios, who failed to be persuaded by the Skythians to break the bridges over the Ister (4.137). Xerxes owes his life to Themistokles, who councils the Athenians not to pursue the king as he retreats to Persia (8.108-110).

One important aspect of Xerxes' portrait is, of course, his interactions with women. Herodotos uses the dominant female motif to the greatest degree in his depiction of Xerxes in order to display the role of women among the Persians. Statements implying that the Persian attitude was that men were superior to women are most numerous in the last three books,⁴⁵² and Xerxes himself makes comments to that effect.⁴⁵³ Xerxes' interactions with women are also more fully developed than the relationships between women and any of the previous oriental monarchs. A degree of control by his queen, Amestris, is certainly anticipated, and no surprise when encountered,⁴⁵⁴ but the most striking example of the dominant female motif appears in the character of Artemisia and her

⁴⁵⁰ 7.7.2 and 20.1. Boyce, *op. cit.*, 164, remarks that Xerxes also had to put down a revolt in Babylon sometime in 482 BC.

⁴⁵¹ The Skythian campaign is not described by Herodotos as a threat to the Persian empire, and Dareios' defeat there is more of a setback. Though Xerxes was not killed, his defeat was much more ignominious than that of Dareios, and Herodotos implies that Persia is no longer a threat to Greece after the Persian Wars.

⁴⁵² 7.11, 8.64, 88, 9.20, and 9.107

⁴⁵³ 7.11 and 8.88.

⁴⁵⁴ 9.110-112.

relationship with Xerxes, discussed in detail below.⁴⁵⁵ We will begin, however, with the account of Xerxes' accession to the throne.

4.1. XERXES' ACCESSION

It is customary for the Persian king to appoint a successor before going to war (7.2). Kyros gives his kingdom to his son Kambyses (1.208) before engaging the Massagetai. Kambyses in turn leaves a Magian as steward of his house (3.61) while campaigning in Egypt, and Xerxes leaves Artabanos as his viceroy (7.52) when invading Greece.⁴⁵⁶ At the beginning of Book 7, Herodotos explains that Dareios had three sons by the daughter of Gobryas before he became king, and that after becoming king, he had four more sons by Atossa, daughter of Kyros. Xerxes is the eldest born to Atossa, and Artobazanes is the eldest born to the other woman. Demaratos, following Spartan custom, advises that Xerxes should become king, since Artobazanes was born to a Persian noble, while Xerxes was born to the king of Persia. Dareios follows the advice of Demaratos. The fascinating aspect about the passage is Herodotos' personal interjection. He writes: δοκέειν δέ μοι, καὶ ἄνευ ταύτης τῆς ὑποθήκης ἐβασίλευσε ἄν Ξέρξης· ἢ γὰρ Ἄτοσσα εἶχε τὸ πᾶν κράτος.⁴⁵⁷ Herodotos does not explicitly say what the nature of Atossa's power is, although it would seem to

⁴⁵⁵See below, 127-134.

⁴⁵⁶Dareios does not appoint a successor before his Skythian campaign, perhaps because of his youth (How and Wells [1928] vol. 2, 341). He does so, however, before the Greek campaign (7.3). It is also interesting to note that Xerxes' eldest son, Dareios, would have been old enough to be appointed as successor at the time of Xerxes' invasion, yet Herodotos does not portray Xerxes appointing him as such (Immerwahr [1966] 180, n. 95). The fact that Herodotos does not have Xerxes appoint his son as successor can be interpreted as the unwillingness of a despot to relinquish his rule (like Astyages in 1.107-108).

⁴⁵⁷7.3.4

derive from her descent from Kyros.⁴⁵⁸ The daughter of the founder of the Persian empire was arguably the most important woman in Persia. If, on the other hand, Herodotos is speaking somewhat anachronistically, that is to say speaking of Atossa as "holding all the power" when her son Xerxes assumed the throne, or as a result of his assuming the throne, then Atossa's power would certainly stem from her position as the mother of the king of Persia.⁴⁵⁹ We know from the Persepolis⁴⁶⁰ tablets and from Herodotos (1.136) how important the production of male children was in Persian society. The Harem inscription⁴⁶¹ appears to support Herodotos, indicating that there were other sons of Dareios, and therefore implying that there was perhaps some form of contention between Xerxes and other sons of Dareios for the throne. However, the Harem inscription makes no mention of Atossa or Kyros. Therefore inscriptional evidence lends no support to the view that Atossa's power stemmed from her descent from Kyros, nor that Xerxes' designation as king depended upon this descent.⁴⁶² This inscriptional evidence alone should not be used to discredit the accuracy of Herodotos' statement. However, the contribution of such a statement to the theme of female dominance and male inferiority among the Persians, must be acknowledged. For Herodotos to say that, in his opinion, Atossa had "all the power" is a very strong statement, reminiscent of the power that the wife of

⁴⁵⁸Avery (1972) 535.

⁴⁵⁹See above, 66-68, for Brosius' conclusions concerning the hierarchy among Royal Persian women.

⁴⁶⁰Hallock (1985) 589. See also Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1983) 25-26.

⁴⁶¹Kent (1950) 149-150.

⁴⁶²For the non-Greek evidence on the position of women in Persian society see above, 65-69.

Kandaules exhibits in Book 1.⁴⁶³ Herodotos has already depicted Atossa using this power when she manipulated Dareios into expanding his empire into Greece.⁴⁶⁴ From the beginning of his work Herodotos has shown both directly and indirectly the power of the women in barbarian society. Women seem to be in control in this "other" culture. Now, in 7.3.4, he explicitly states that, in his opinion, among the Persians a woman has all the power, and furthermore he goes on to place a woman amidst the Persian host gathered against Greece (7.99) and shows that she is superior in battle and council to those barbarians.

4.2 ARTEMISIA

Artemisia is quite favourably presented in the *History*, and does not fall into the category of the clever and vengeful queen,⁴⁶⁵ nor does she represent the terrible vengeance motif characteristic of the leading female figures we have seen.⁴⁶⁶ But then again, Artemisia is not barbarian. Herodotos obviously intends Artemisia to be seen as Greek, since he states that her father was Halikarnassian, and he stresses the Doric nature of Halikarnassos and the other states under her rule (7.99).⁴⁶⁷ She is indeed in a unique position for a Greek: a woman among men, and a free person

⁴⁶³ 1.8-12. See also above, 71-84.

⁴⁶⁴ 3.134. See also above, 119-121.

⁴⁶⁵ As identified by Flory (1987) 29-48. Some of Flory's examples include the wife of Kandaules, Tomyris, Pheretima, and Amestris. Artemisia in Herodotos is discussed by Munson (1978) 91-106, and Weil (1974) 215-224.

⁴⁶⁶ The wife of Kandaules had her husband murdered (1.11-12); see also above, 71-84. Tomyris takes vengeance on the body of Kyros (1.214); see also above, 98-102. Amestris takes vengeance on the wife of Masistes (9.112); See also below, 140-149.

⁴⁶⁷ Munson (1988) 93, n. 12.

among slaves.⁴⁶⁸ Although she contributes only five ships (7.99) out of the 1,207 in Xerxes' fleet (7.89), Herodotos gives her more attention than any other individual on the Persian side, after Mardonios.⁴⁶⁹ He also says that out of the whole host gathered against Greece, her five ships were the most highly regarded after those of the Sidonians.⁴⁷⁰

It has been suggested that Herodotos' interest in Artemisia originates from the fact that the queen, like him, was Halikarnassian.⁴⁷¹ It has even been suggested that she was his great aunt.⁴⁷² I propose that Herodotos' main interest in Artemisia lies in the fact that she was a woman. She represents the motif of the female dominant in a Persian setting. Herodotos uses Artemisia in the same way that he used Kroisos in Book 1, when Kroisos appeared in the wise advisor motif. Therein, in his advice to Kyros, Kroisos included the dominant female motif: a statement emphasizing the strength of the male and the weakness of the female.⁴⁷³ Artemisia follows exactly the same pattern in 8.68.

4.2.A. Artemisia's advice before Salamis

After her introduction in 7.99, Herodotos next mentions Artemisia during the Persian Council scene before Salamis (8.67-69). When Xerxes asks the leaders of the various contingents of his force whether they should engage the Greeks in a naval battle, only

⁴⁶⁸ Herodotos makes it clear that she is not compelled to serve Xerxes (7.99.1). For forced participation in Xerxes' army see 7.108.1, 110, and 172 (Munson, *op. cit.*, 95 n. 18).

⁴⁶⁹ Munson (1988) 92.

⁴⁷⁰ The Sidonians make up part of the Phoenician fleet (7.96.1) which is the largest fleet in Xerxes' navy.

⁴⁷¹ Jacoby (1913) 216.

⁴⁷² Georges (1994) 139, n. 96.

⁴⁷³ 1.207.

Artemisia answers that they should not. She advises Xerxes not to fight the sea battle at Salamis, and states as her reason for doing so: οἱ γὰρ ἄνδρες τῶν σῶν ἀνδρῶν κρέσσονες τοσοῦτον εἰσι κατὰ θάλασσαν ὅσον ἄνδρες γυναικῶν ⁴⁷⁴. "As men are to women" is quite vague. If it includes military tactics and planning, then Artemisia would be admitting defeat before speaking, since she is the lone woman speaking in a war council with men. How can she, a woman, give better advice than the other commanders who are all men? But Herodotos' underlying theme is that these barbarians, these slaves, are not men, or at least not Greek men. At no place in his *History* does Herodotos place a woman among Greeks in a military council.

This is not to say that Herodotos never depicts women fighting or even defeating Greeks. He simply does not elaborate on such stories unless they conform to, or can be conformed to, his theme of gynocracy among the barbarians. A woman defeating Greeks does not conform to this theme, but the occasions that such an event took place could not simply be ignored by Herodotos, especially if they involved a polis that he discusses at length. Such is the case with Kyrene, and for these reasons he mentions that Eryxo killed her husband's brother as retribution for that brother's part in the murder of her husband. However, he mentions the event very briefly, in one line: Λέαχρον δὲ ἡ γυνὴ ἡ Ἀρκεσίλειω δόλω κτείνει, τῆ οὔνομα ἦν Ἐρυξίω (4.160.4) Eryxo and her enemy were both Greek, and Herodotos does not elaborate on this story.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷⁴8.68α.

⁴⁷⁵ There is no question that the Kyrenians are descended from Greeks. In fact, Herodotos portrays them as originating from the purest stock of Greeks, that is the Dorian Spartans (4.147).

In the next generation, however, another woman of Kyrene also has success against Greeks. Herodotos elaborates on the story of Pheretime because it is consistent with, or he was able to conform it to, his theme of male inferiority among the Persians. Herodotos tells the story in a way that places no emphasis on Pheretime in battle against Greeks. He elaborates only on her role in acquiring an army (4.160,165 and 167), and then on her terrible vengeance (202) and punishment from the gods (205). When Pheretime asks Euelthon, ruler of Salamis in Cyprus, for an army, he gives her a spindle of gold, a distaff, and some wool. He explains to her that these are the proper gifts for a woman, but not an army. And yet this same woman is able to persuade the Persians (Aryandes, viceroy of Egypt) to give her an army. (4.167) The Persians know that war is no place for women (7.11), but again, what they say and what they do are completely different. Even Xerxes offers Artaynte an army that only she could command (9.109.3). He can only do so within his Persian 'other' culture.

Consistent with his theme of male subservience among the Persians, Herodotos depicts Artemisia with a better understanding of the tactics of the naval engagement at Salamis: better than any of the other Persian male commanders. The nature of Artemisia's advice may stem from the fact that she is not a slave and that, not fearing Xerxes, she is not compelled to say what the king wishes to hear.⁴⁷⁶ But the fact that it is a woman offering this advice, as opposed to Demaratos for example, cannot be attributed to coincidence or personal interest on the part of Herodotos,

⁴⁷⁶Munson, *op. cit.*, 96.

especially when we consider the general theme of male inferiority and female dominance among the Persians created by the dominant female motif. It seems much more likely that Herodotos chose this account involving Artemisia because of the irony that such a tale creates. It takes a woman to recognize the wisest strategy for war. Since the Persians do not realise that in their 'other' society, the situation is reversed, and women therefore have the upper hand in terms of politics and war, they ignore the advice of Artemisia and suffer the consequences.

It may have been easy enough for Herodotos to colour his information about Artemisia when dealing with her speeches and interactions with Xerxes, in order for her to appear superior in words to barbarians and even to Xerxes himself. But in the matter of the actual battle of Salamis, and her superiority over the barbarians in deeds, Herodotos surely did not have the same liberties.

4.2.B. Artemisia and the battle of Salamis

Although Herodotos writes that Artemisia's ships enjoyed Xerxes' greatest confidence at Salamis, "... the intelligence and skill she displays even blatantly denies heroic valor."⁴⁷⁷ Herodotos could not depict Artemisia truly fighting well against Greek men, because his audience would not have accepted it. He therefore describes a scene in which her actions are more appropriate to suit a fifth century Greek's reasonable expectations of a female character

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 103.

fighting against Greek men. At Salamis,⁴⁷⁸ she is observed fleeing from an Attic warship. Unable to escape it because of the proximity of ships of her own allies, she rams and sinks one of these allies. The Attic warship, seeing her sink a Persian vessel, assumes that she is fighting on the Greek side, and subsequently breaks off its pursuit. Xerxes witnesses the act, but he is unable to identify the combatants. He is informed that Artemisia struck and sank an enemy ship, at which point the king says: οἱ μὲν ἄνδρες γεγόνασί μοι γυναῖκες, αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες ἄνδρες.⁴⁷⁹ If Artemisia and her ships were already held in high repute by Xerxes, as Herodotos says, why would her sinking one enemy vessel warrant such a statement? It would not, but the statement is consistent with the Persian attitude of male superiority and the reality of their inferiority, as depicted throughout the *History*. We are again dealing with the dominant female motif, and again Herodotos is taking one single incident, and one single statement, as analogous for Persian society. It is clear from 9.122 and 1.126, that Herodotos portrays the early Persians, at the beginning of Kyros' reign, as Noble Savages. They are depicted as a simple, rugged people before Kyros leads them on an expansionist policy later followed by Kambyses, Dareios and Xerxes. In that process, according to Herodotos, the Persians have become soft (μαλακοὺς) as Kyros puts it, or as Xerxes puts it, the men have become women (ἄνδρες γεγόνασι γυναῖκες). The irony of Xerxes' statement lies in the fact that if such an occurrence took place (his

⁴⁷⁸8.87

⁴⁷⁹ 8.88.3

men becoming women), he would be better off, for in this 'other' society, a man is "worse than a women" (κακίω γυναικός).

Artemisia next appears again in the motif of the wise advisor.⁴⁸⁰ This time she advises Xerxes to leave the fighting and return to Persia. The scene is yet another example of the dominant female motif, and it is the climax of Xerxes' downfall as a warrior, and therefore as a good Persian.⁴⁸¹

4.2.C. Artemisia's advice after Salamis

In 7.11, upset with the advice of his uncle Artabanos, Xerxes charges that:

καί τοι ταύτην τὴν ἀτιμίην προσίθημι ἐόντι κακῶ τε καὶ ἀθύμῳ,
μήτε συστρατεύεσθαι ἔμοιγε ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα αὐτοῦ τε μένειν ἅμα
τῆσι γυναιξί.⁴⁸²

In 8.102, however, Xerxes imposes the exact same disgrace on himself. He is advised by a woman (who according to his own words should not even be there) to return to Persia, to return to the women, while the men continue fighting.⁴⁸³ Xerxes explicitly acknowledges the dishonour attached to such an act, yet Herodotos writes that when the king heard Artemisia's advice, he was thinking the same thought, so much was he καταρρωδήκεε.⁴⁸⁴ And so Xerxes leaves the fighting, and the only woman serving in his army also

⁴⁸⁰ 8.102-3.

⁴⁸¹ Persian ἀνδραγαθίη is proven first by valour in fighting (1.136.1)

⁴⁸² 7.11.1

⁴⁸³ Burn (1985) 326-7, comments: "Without command of the sea, Xerxes at Athens, though in no personal danger, was intolerably isolated from his empire; and his return to show himself safe and sound at Sardis (not Susa), though represented by the Greeks as a flight, was no more than Darius had done after the Scythian campaign." Although there are similarities between the ends of the Skythian and Greek campaigns, as Burn points out, it is clear that Dareios' actions towards the end of the Skythian campaign, as depicted by Herodotos, certainly represent a flight. Dareios lies to a portion of his army and leaves them behind (4.135). The similarities, therefore, should not be used to minimize Xerxes' actions in 8.102, or to lessen the effect that these actions had on the fall of Xerxes within the *History*.

⁴⁸⁴ 8.103.2.

leaves. She escorts some of Xerxes' illegitimate children to Ephesos. Here Herodotos depicts Artemisia returning to a role more appropriate for a woman in the eyes of his Greek audience, that of the guardian of children.⁴⁸⁵

4.3. HERODOTOS AND THE DEATH OF XERXES

The facts concerning the death of Xerxes are difficult to ascertain. It is clear that he died in 465 BC,⁴⁸⁶ but the events surrounding his death are uncertain and survive only in later historians.⁴⁸⁷ Herodotos, of course, does not depict the death of the Great King, for this lay beyond the artistic scope of his work.⁴⁸⁸ However, Herodotos was gathering his information shortly after the death of Xerxes,⁴⁸⁹ and he certainly knew of this death at the time he was writing.⁴⁹⁰ Nevertheless, he remains within his established

⁴⁸⁵The charge of the king's offspring, be they legitimate or not, was certainly a most prestigious and honourable charge in the eyes of the Persians, but I do not believe that Herodotos conveys this prestige to his audience. Xerxes praises Artemisia for her advice, but Herodotos' wording concerning her task appears neutral and indifferent: ἐπαινέσας δὲ τὴν Ἀρτεμισίην ταύτην μὲν ἀποστέλλει ἄγουσαν αὐτοῦ τοὺς παῖδας ἐς Ἐφεσον· νόθοι γὰρ τινες παῖδες οἱ συνείποντο. (8.103.1)

⁴⁸⁶The death has been dated between August 4 and 8 465 BC. See Parker and Dubberstein (1956) 17. See also Badian (1987) 2 no. 7.

⁴⁸⁷Ktesias FGrH 688 F 33-35; Diodoros 11.69; Aelian, *Var. Hist.* 13.3; and Justin 3.1

⁴⁸⁸The siege of Sestos and the story of Protesilaos' revenge form a fitting conclusion to a work so strongly influenced by Homer, and for an audience so well acquainted with that poet: "...the last Persian killed in Xerxes' offensive is punished for his transgression against the first Greek killed in the Trojan War, at the very spot of Persian transgression against Greece" (Boedeker [1988] 47). See also Herington (1991). For the importance of Homer to Herodotos and his audience see above, 16 n. 64.

⁴⁸⁹According to the traditional dates, Herodotos would have been approximately twenty years old in 465 BC. See above, 24 and n. 95.

⁴⁹⁰The time Herodotos began writing is unknown, but a date prior to 460 seems unlikely (see above, 30-31 and ns. 125-132). According to Herodotos' figures, news of Xerxes' death could have reached Sardis from Susa in less than 3 months (5.53), and Cook points out that a royal letter could cover the same distance in less than one week (Cook [1983] 168, n. 10). The death of Xerxes was therefore known among the Greeks of Asia Minor before the end of 465 BC, and subsequently most likely known throughout the rest of the Greek world early in 464 BC.

chronological parameter⁴⁹¹ to skillfully complete the fall of Xerxes, without actually relating the murder. Xerxes' actions and his fate throughout the *History* are meant to be contrasted with the Persian customs described in Book 1⁴⁹² and clearly testify to his fall. Moreover, it will be shown that the closing chapters concerning Xerxes actually foreshadow his murder.

4.3.A. The fall of Xerxes in Herodotos

Herodotos tells us that Persian ἀνδραγαθία is proven first by valour in fighting, and second, by a multitude of sons.⁴⁹³ Concerning the second criterion little can be said. Herodotos does not discuss Xerxes' offspring at all, even though the king would have been approximately forty years old in 479 BC. He names only two sons of Xerxes: Dareios and Artaxerxes.⁴⁹⁴ The former is the eldest son, and Herodotos only mentions him in 9.108, while the younger Artaxerxes is named in several passages.⁴⁹⁵ In each of the passages concerning Artaxerxes, however, Herodotos is very briefly relating later events (post Xerxes) and merely naming the Persian ruler at that time. Although it is generally accepted that Xerxes had more than two sons,⁴⁹⁶ it is impossible to prove that Herodotos knew this information and chose to suppress it. It is nevertheless interesting

⁴⁹¹ Herodotos rarely extends this parameter. References throughout the *History* to events after 479 BC are sporadic and few, and generally quite brief (3.12, 160, 5.32, 6.98, 7.7, 106, 107, 114, 137, 151, 170, 190, 213, 233, 8.3, 109, 9.35, 37, 64, 73, 75, 105, and 9.108-113).

⁴⁹² 1.131-140. See also 9.107.3.

⁴⁹³ 1.136. See also above, 122.

⁴⁹⁴ Aside from these two sons, Herodotos briefly mentions that there were some bastard sons of Xerxes (νόθοι τινες παῖδες) who were part of the expedition against Greece (7.39, 8.103).

⁴⁹⁵ 6.98, 7.106, 151 and 152.

⁴⁹⁶ Modern scholars generally follow Diodorus 11.69, who names Hystaspes, satrap of Bactria, as a son of Xerxes. The claim in Eusebios, that Artabanos was another son of Xerxes (*Chronica* 478.6 & .8), has found no support, even among other Christian chronologists (Georgius Monachus *Chronogr.* 1.285 and 2.110.337 and Joannes Chrysostomos *Scr. Eccl.* 21.48.899).

that Dareios, the most favourably presented Persian king in the *History*,⁴⁹⁷ is given at least twelve sons by Herodotos,⁴⁹⁸ and Kambyses, whose portrait is almost entirely negative, dies childless.⁴⁹⁹ The subjective nature of Herodotos' work, and the acceptance of manipulation of information on his part, in order to create various themes, has already been established.⁵⁰⁰ These observations are reinforced by Herodotos' comments concerning Homer. Herodotos' debt to Homer, and that poet's influence on our author, as well as on fifth century Greek society in general, have already been established.⁵⁰¹ In 2.116, Herodotos goes to great lengths to prove that Homer knew about Paris' travels to Egypt, and that consequently Homer surely knew that Helen was never at Troy.⁵⁰² He writes:

δοκέει δέ μοι Ὅμηρος τὸν λόγον τοῦτον πυθέσθαι· ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ ὁμοίως εἰς τὴν ἐποποιίην εὐπρεπῆς ἦν τῷ ἑτέρῳ τῷ περ ἐχρήσατο, [ἐς δὲ] μετῆκε αὐτόν, δηλώσας ὡς καὶ τοῦτον ἐπίσταιτο τὸν λόγον (2.116.1).

As stated above, Herodotos' personal comments are important.⁵⁰³ In his opinion, Homer knowingly told a different version of Helen's abduction and presence at Troy, for artistic reasons. Herodotos accepts this poetic license and has nothing derogatory to say concerning it. For artistic reasons, Homer, the author

⁴⁹⁷ See Boyce, *op. cit.*, 90-131; and Immerwahr, *op. cit.*, 169-176.

⁴⁹⁸ Herodotos names 12 sons of Dareios: Abrocomes (Phratagune) 7.224; Hyperanthes (Phratagune) 7.224; Achaemenes (Atossa) 7.97, 7.7, 3.12; Xerxes (Atossa) 7.3; Hystaspes (Atossa) 7.64; Masistes (Atossa) 7.82; Artobazanes (daughter of Gobryas) 7.3; Ariabignes (daughter of Gobryas) 7.97; Arsamenes (?) 7.68; Asrames (Artystone) 7.69; Gobryas (Artystone) 7.72; Ariomardus (Parmys) 7.78; 1 son (by daughter of Gobryas) 7.2. If Arsamenes (whose mother is not named) is not the missing son of the daughter of Gobryas, then Herodotos gives Dareios 13 acknowledged sons.

⁴⁹⁹ 3.66. In one version, Kambyses actually kills his unborn son (3.32).

⁵⁰⁰ See above, 20-23.

⁵⁰¹ Above, 16 n. 64.

⁵⁰² He quotes *Iliad* 6.289-92, and *Odyssey* 4.227-30 and 4.351-52.

⁵⁰³ See above, 25-27, and esp. n. 98.

acknowledged as Herodotos' biggest influence, suppressed aspects of a story to make it more appealing to his audience. There is no evidence in Herodotos to suggest that the historian would not follow Homer's example. However, it is not necessary to prove that Herodotos suppressed information concerning Xerxes' offspring. Suffice it to say, the only two sons briefly mentioned by Herodotos are those who would have been well known to his audience: Artaxerxes, for his position as King of Persia for more than forty years,⁵⁰⁴ and Dareios, it will be argued, for his part in the death of Xerxes.

Concerning the characteristic that most signifies ἀνδραγαθία for the Persians, valour in combat, Herodotos is much clearer. Xerxes displays no valour whatsoever in the *History*.⁵⁰⁵ Even the four years that he spends suppressing the Egyptian revolt are passed over in a mere line (7.11.1). Herodotos does not give Xerxes a chance to shine in combat. In fact he is depicted as a coward. In 7.11.2 he calls his uncle a coward and threatens to disgrace him by leaving him behind with the women while he himself joins the expedition against Greece.⁵⁰⁶ But in 8.102, Xerxes bestows upon himself that same disgrace. He is advised by Artemisia to leave Greece, to leave the fighting, and to return home.⁵⁰⁷ Herodotos writes that Xerxes wanted to do exactly that, out of fear (καταρρωδήκεε). And so Xerxes does return home, literally to the women, for once he returns home,

⁵⁰⁴ Artaxerxes ruled from 465 BC to 424 BC.

⁵⁰⁵ Xerxes spent four years (484-481) campaigning in Egypt and successfully quelled the revolt there (7.20). There was certainly occasion for stories of his valour had Herodotos wished to include such stories. Xerxes also successfully put down a revolt in Babylonia before attacking Greece. See above, 124, n. 450.

⁵⁰⁶ See above, 133-134.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

his actions reported by Herodotos revolve almost entirely around Amestris, Artaynte and the wife of Masistes.

Xerxes' relations with women are not only a fascinating aspect of his portrait, but also an integral part of his downfall. These relations, as well as the attitudes towards women in general that Herodotos gives his characters must be examined to understand fully Xerxes' fall as a fifth century Greek would have understood it.

The fact that it is a tragic fall should not be overlooked. Evans writes that:

People around Xerxes suffer but Xerxes, as Herodotus treats him, lives on, giving no sign that his defeat has taught him anything. It has not been often remarked how curious a choice the story of Masistes' wife was, with which Herodotus took his leave of Xerxes. Had Herodotus wanted to present Xerxes as a tragic figure who fell victim to his own hubris, he could have told the story of Xerxes' death, which was a very satisfactory end, for a tragedian. Instead, he chose the tale of Masistes' wife, which told once again how Xerxes brought disaster on those around him!⁵⁰⁸

Evans' interpretation is valid when comparing Xerxes to a Sophoklean tragic hero. Xerxes does not come to acknowledge his *hubris* before dying, nor is he even killed in the *History*. But Herodotos was far more influenced by Homer than by Sophokles, and Xerxes should be compared instead to a Homeric epic hero. Although Achilles' death is not depicted in the *Iliad*, he is nevertheless a tragic figure who seals his own fate by killing Hektor. The death of Achilles was undeniably well known to, and anticipated irresistibly by Homer's audience. Even though Achilles' death is beyond the artistic scope of Homer's work, he foreshadows the hero's death in the death of Hektor.⁵⁰⁹ Herodotos uses a similar

⁵⁰⁸ Evans (1988) 89, in his review of Hart, J. 1982. *Herodotus and Greek History*. London.

⁵⁰⁹ The death of Patroklos, who is wearing the armour of Achilles, is clearly meant to foreshadow the death of Achilles. Also, the death of Hektor clearly foreshadows the fall of Troy. Achilles, however, as depicted

literary device, and foreshadows the death of Xerxes by that of Masistes. Herodotos' work concludes with the defeat of Xerxes' troops and its aftermath, events no later than 478 BC. Xerxes' death therefore lies beyond the scope of his work. It is important to keep in mind that Herodotos "flourished" about two decades after the death of Xerxes,⁵¹⁰ and though Xerxes' death was not as familiar to Herodotos' audience as Achilles' was to Homer's, it is safe to assume that Herodotos' audience was quite aware that Xerxes had died. Moreover, they were probably aware of the particular circumstances surrounding the king's death.

Other elements that contribute to the fall of Xerxes are also apparent when considering Otanes' charges against monarchs: τὰ δὲ δὴ μέγιστα ἔρχομαι ἐρέων· νόμαιά τε κτινέει πάτρια καὶ βιάται γυναικάς κτείνει τε ἀκρίτους (3.80). The third charge against monarchs, "to kill unjustly (without trial)" is similar to the Persian *nomos* stated in 1.137: no Persian, not even the king himself, may kill anyone on one single charge. Xerxes, however, kills Pythios for his request (7.39),⁵¹¹ has several Phoenicians beheaded for their accusations against the Ionians (8.90), has another Phoenician beheaded for causing the death of many Persians (even though he saved Xerxes himself),⁵¹² and has his brother Masistes killed because of Amestris' request and the ensuing conflict (9.113).

Perhaps the most apparent example of Xerxes' neglect or abuse of ancient traditions is his lashing of the Hellespont (7.35). In

by Homer, is fully aware that he will die if he kills Hektor, *Iliad* 9.308-429. Hektor's death, therefore, clearly foreshadows the death of Achilles also.

⁵¹⁰ See above, esp. 30-31 and ns. 125-132.

⁵¹¹ See above, 122-123.

⁵¹² 8.118.

1.138, Herodotos explains that the Persians revere rivers most of all things, therefore Xerxes is again guilty of one of the charges against monarchs put forth by Otanes.⁵¹³

The most interesting element of Otanes' charges, for the present research, is the forcing of women. It is fascinating that, from among the three biggest charges against monarchs, Herodotos does not depict Xerxes succumbing to this vice. If Xerxes had given in to this vice, that is to say, if he had forced himself upon the wife of Masistes, the entire episode with Amestris, Artaynte and the wife of Masistes would likely have been avoided. It is in his attempt to obtain the consent of the wife of Masistes, and to have her near him, that Xerxes arranges to have his son marry the daughter of that woman and Masistes (9.108). Since, it will be argued, these closing chapters on Xerxes foreshadow his death, by forcing himself on the wife of Masistes, Xerxes might well have saved his own life.

4.3.A.1 The closing chapters on Xerxes in the History

After Xerxes successfully retreats from Greece and reaches Sardis, the following events take place.⁵¹⁴ Xerxes falls in love with the wife of his brother Masistes. He tries to seduce her, but to no avail. He devises a plan whereby he marries his son Dareios to the daughter of Masistes believing, writes Herodotos, that bringing the daughter of the woman he desires into his household will assist him in obtaining that woman. He then leaves for Susa. At Susa, he forgets about his desire for the wife of Masistes, and falls in love

⁵¹³See above, 123 and n. 449.

⁵¹⁴9.108-113

with Masistes' daughter, Artaynte, who is now Dareios' wife. Xerxes manages to seduce Artaynte, and some time later he bids her to ask a favour of him, in return for the favours she had granted him. He is wearing a cloak woven by the queen Amestris when he asks Artaynte to make her request and she requests the cloak. Xerxes offers her many other wonderful gifts, but he is unable to dissuade her. He therefore gives her the cloak. Upon discovering that Artaynte has the cloak, Amestris blames the mother, Masistes' wife, and not the daughter. Intent on the destruction of that woman the queen waits until the *τυκτά*, an annual feast on the king's birthday, and at this time she asks Xerxes for the wife of Masistes. The king is required by law to supply any gift asked of him on this day, and although he is unwilling to hand the woman over to Amestris, in the end he consents to do so. He later tries to talk his brother Masistes into forsaking his present wife in favour of a new one, but Masistes refuses and the two brothers quarrel and part in anger. After Masistes finds his wife at home savagely mutilated at the command of Amestris, he leaves for Baktria with his sons, intent on raising that Satrapy in revolt. Before he can reach Baktria, however, Xerxes' army intercepts and kills Masistes, his sons, and his army.

Before discussing Herodotos' use of the dominant female motif, in this passage, another significant element of Xerxes' downfall deserves mention. In 1.133.1, Herodotos writes that among the Persians a person's day of birth is most honoured by that person. The *τυκτά*, Herodotos tells us, is celebrated on Xerxes' birthday. Therefore, on the day that Xerxes honours most of all, he is forced against his will into actions that, arguably, lead ultimately

to his demise. These closing chapters on Xerxes have interesting parallels with the chapters that begin Herodotos' account of the conflict between East and West, that is the story of Gyges.⁵¹⁵ The patient, carefully planned and excessive revenge of the wives, and the foolishness and lack of foresight of the males are consistent in both stories. Like Kandaules and Gyges, Xerxes is portrayed as lacking by comparison with the queen. She cleverly tricks him into putting the wife of Masistes under her power. Like Gyges, Xerxes is compelled by the queen to do as she wishes, though it is very much against his will.⁵¹⁶ Like Kandaules, Xerxes is depicted acting foolishly and without foresight when he bids Artaynte to request anything she desires. Also like Kandaules, Xerxes acts contrary to νόμος by pursuing the wives of his brother and his son.⁵¹⁷ This behaviour, and the corresponding actions of Amestris, signal the end of Xerxes, just as similar behaviour, and the dominance of a woman signaled the end of Kandaules. Herodotos is foreshadowing a death that lay beyond the scope of his work, but that was certainly known to his audience.⁵¹⁸

4.3.B. The Death of Xerxes

Concerning Xerxes' death, Bengtson writes: "For us today it is hard to understand what actually took place, for over the events lies a thick web of intrigue, fostered by the suffocating atmosphere of

⁵¹⁵The close verbal parallels between the two "Harems-Liebeshgeschichten" has been studied by Wolff (1964) 51-58. See also above, 73 and n 290.

⁵¹⁶9.111.1. For Gyges' unwillingness see 1.2.

⁵¹⁷Herodotos states that each Persian has several lawful wives and even more concubines, but he implies that it was not the custom for the wives of Persian nobles to act as concubines for the king (9.108).

⁵¹⁸For Herodotos' dates, see above, 25 and n. 95. For the date of Xerxes' death, see above, 134 and n. 486.

the court.”⁵¹⁹ The most popular account of Xerxes death is found in a fragment of Ktesias,⁵²⁰ and scholars generally follow that version.⁵²¹

According to Ktesias, who seems to have written around the middle of the fourth century,⁵²² Artapanos and the eunuch Aspamitros, both being very powerful at Xerxes' court, conspired and murdered the king. They then proceeded to convince Artaxerxes that the other son, Dareios, had killed their father. Dareios was then brought before Artaxerxes and killed. And Artaxerxes ruled, writes Ktesias, by the zeal (σπουδῆ) of Artapanos. But Artapanos then contrived against Artaxerxes and took a certain Megabyzos as a partner. This Megabyzos revealed everything to Artaxerxes, and Artapanos and Aspamitros were subsequently put to death. A battle between the sons of Artapanos, his fellow conspirators, and other supporters on the one side, and Artaxerxes and his followers on the other then ensued, and the 3 sons of Artapanos were killed and Artaxerxes was victorious. The king then put down a revolt in Baktria, led by its satrap, another Artapanos.

The account in Diodoros shares many of the features of Ktesias' version. Diodoros wrote towards the middle of the first century BC, and may have followed the account of the fourth

⁵¹⁹ Bengtson (1969) 77.

⁵²⁰ *FGrH* 688 F14 29-31.

⁵²¹ Cook (1983) 127; Bengtson (1969) 77; Sykes (1958) 213-14; Olmstead (1948) 289-90; and Rogers (1971) 172-174.

⁵²² Ktesias' dates are not certain. For a recent discussion see Auberger (1991) 4-10.

century historian Ephoros.⁵²³ According to Diodoros,⁵²⁴ Artabanos wanted the kingship for himself and decided to kill Xerxes. He took the eunuch Mithridates as an accomplice, and Mithridates led Artabanos to Xerxes' bed chamber at night. There, Artabanos killed Xerxes. He then went after the three sons of Xerxes. Dareios, the eldest, and Artaxerxes, the youngest, were in the palace, while Hystaspes was busy in Baktria, where he was the satrap. Artabanos told Artaxerxes that same night that Dareios had killed their father in order to seize the rule for himself. He convinced Artaxerxes to punish Dareios and the two killed Dareios together. Artabanos then called for his sons in order that they might assist him in killing Artaxerxes, but the prince was only injured and he managed to kill Artabanos. He then assumed the throne and ruled for forty years. Although this account is similar to that of Ktesias, there are some minor as well as major discrepancies. It is clear from Ktesias that Artaxerxes did rule before he was in turn conspired against by Artapanos who was foiled by the confession of the third conspirator. In Diodoros, however, there is no third conspirator and no passage of time before the plot is revealed. The murder of Xerxes, the rôle of Artaxerxes and the murder of Dareios are the same, but in this account Artabanos desired the kingship for himself from the beginning, and he attacked Artaxerxes when Dareios was killed.

⁵²³Ephoros is generally accepted as Diodoros' main source for the Classical period, although the latter was not just a "copy machine" (Sacks [1994] 217). Ephoros flourished toward the middle of the fourth century and was active until about 330 BC, see Barber (1935). A fragmentary papyrus of Ephoros (F 16) mentions Μιθρι-[δάρτην], who figures in Diodorus' account, but not in any other surviving account. See Hill (1951) 114.

⁵²⁴ 11.69.

Scholars generally follow the version of Ktesias, with some elements from Diodoros' account.⁵²⁵ The only other notable account⁵²⁶ of the death of Xerxes is found in Justin's epitome of Trogus and is substantially later.⁵²⁷ Therein, Artabanus, one of Xerxes' top officers, decides to kill Xerxes and he does so with the aid of his seven sons. He then blames Dareios, Xerxes' eldest son, and convinces the younger Artaxerxes to kill his brother as a parricide. Artabanus then enlists the help of Baccabatus, who in turn confesses everything to Artaxerxes. Artaxerxes then kills Artabanus during an inspection the next day.

All accounts agree that Artapanos⁵²⁸ murdered Xerxes and all accounts most likely were derived from Ktesias. The only significant differences between Ktesias' version and that of Diodoros are the name of the conspiring eunuch,⁵²⁹ and the fact that Diodoros adds Hystaspes as a third son of Xerxes. Justin's account is also very similar, but Artabanus does not have the assistance of a eunuch. An interesting element in the accounts is the placing of the blame for Xerxes' murder on Dareios. There is no indication in Ktesias as to how much time elapses before the truth is discovered. If we assume that there is some element of truth or accuracy in the Christian

⁵²⁵ Cook (1983) 127; Bengtson (1969) 77; Sykes (1958) 213-14; Olmstead (1948) 289-90; and Rogers (1971) 172-174.

⁵²⁶ Aristotle, *Politiks*, 5.8.14 mentions that Artapanes killed Xerxes because, having previously killed Dareios against the king's orders, he feared Xerxes' actions. Cornelius Nepos, *De Reg.* 1.4-5 briefly remarks that Xerxes was murdered by Artabanus. The fragment from Ephoros, see above 141, n. 519, provides little information, but Artaxerxes can be interpreted as the prime motivator. Eusebios, *Chronica* 478.6 & .8 claims that Artabanus was another son of Xerxes; and both Georgius Monachus, *Chronogr.* 1.285 and 2.110.337 and Joannes Chrysostomos, *Scr. Eccl.* 21.48.899 give Artapanos a 7 month reign, but do not make him a son of Xerxes. Aelian, *Varia Historia*, 13.3 states that Xerxes was killed by his own son.

⁵²⁷ Justin, 3.1. Trogus' work is dated as late as A.D. 20. The epitome of Justin has been dated as early as the middle of the second century, and as late as the end of the fourth century. Develin remarks that the late second century is the most likely date (Yardley [1994] 2-3).

⁵²⁸ Artabanos is Diodoros, Artabanus in Justin and Cornelius Nepos, and Artapanes in Aristotle.

⁵²⁹ Aspamitros in Ktesias, Mithradates in Diodoros.

Chronologists'⁵³⁰ source for Artapanos' 7-month reign, then it can be argued that over the course of those months, the tale of Xerxes' death at the hands of his eldest son, Dareios, would have become well known. However, even if Artapanos had never actually ruled, the fact that Dareios was accused of the murder of Xerxes was most likely known to the Persians and to the Greeks. It is also important to bear in mind the nature of our primary source. Concerning Ktesias, Cook remarks that "the specific information that he gives is usually quite false" and that "it seems most prudent to disregard him as a serious historical source."⁵³¹ It can be argued that these closing chapters on Xerxes (9.108-113), when interpreted without consideration for the later versions of Xerxes' death, foreshadow that death and Dareios' part in it. Even if the accepted version of Xerxes' death was similar to Ktesias' account, the mere fact that Ktesias mentions that Dareios was first accused of the crime is reason enough to suppose that such a version of Xerxes' death at the hand of Dareios existed when Herodotos was writing. Even some of the later sources claimed that Xerxes was killed by his son.⁵³² The subjective nature of his work would have allowed Herodotos to use such an account to model his tale of the fall of Xerxes. Xerxes' escapades at Sardis and Susa at the end of Book 9 should therefore be considered with the understanding that Herodotos and his

⁵³⁰ See above, 133, n. 491, and 140, n. 417. It is possible that the seven month reign assigned to Artapanos actually belonged to Smerdis/Guamata.

⁵³¹ Cook (1985) 206. See also Briant (1997) 532-533; and Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1987b).

⁵³² Aelian, 13.3. See also above, 144 n. 526.

audience were under the impression that Xerxes had been killed by his son Dareios.⁵³³

4.3.C Herodotos and the inevitability of the death of Xerxes

The motifs of male inferiority and the power of the woman among the Persians are exemplified in the stories of Gyges/Kandaules (1.8-13) and Xerxes/Amestris (9.108-113), and these stories provide the framework for Herodotos' use of the motifs throughout his work. Just as the Kandaules/Gyges story foreshadows the power of the female within his work, so the Xerxes/Amestris episode foreshadows such power lying beyond the temporal scope of Herodotos' work:

ἀλλὰ γὰρ Ξέρξης πυθόμενος ταῦτα ἐκείνον πρήσσοντα πέμψας ἐπ' αὐτὸν στρατιὴν ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ κατέκτεινε αὐτόν τε ἐκείνον καὶ τοὺς παῖδας αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν στρατιὴν τὴν ἐκείνου. (9.113.4)

Masistes' children are killed, but Herodotos' audience would surely be aware that his daughter Artaynte, the woman at the core of the troubles within Xerxes' harem, was married to Dareios. Furthermore, it is likely that Herodotos' audience knew that Dareios supposedly killed his father. A Persian male's revenge over his dead wife would certainly fit into Herodotos' pattern. But one can go even further, judging from Herodotos' use of the masculine article (τοὺς), and assume that he meant only the sons of Masistes were killed.⁵³⁴ According to our examination of Herodotos' use of the female

⁵³³ It is of course possible that Dareios did in fact kill his father. Since, according to Herodotos (7.2), Dareios was not eligible to become king, he did have a motive for killing Xerxes. See Briant (1997) 582-584.

⁵³⁴ Such an act would not be unusual. Herodotos tells us that the Skythian king did not harm the women when he wiped out a family (4.69). Grene (1987) 661, translates the passage as "his sons."

power and influence motif, Herodotos would seem to imply that Artaynte was responsible for the death of Xerxes. He has shown the potential for brutal vengeance of barbarian women, especially when the crime against them involves their family.⁵³⁵ He has also shown their power, and their ability to manipulate men. Could Artaynte have manipulated Xerxes' son, Dareios, into killing the king? Herodotos' account of Xerxes and Dareios' wife would certainly create an anticipation of hostility and tension between father and son. Furthermore, Herodotos' consistent and frequent use of the dominant female "power" motif throughout his *History* also would have influenced his Greek audience's understanding of this particular tale.

4.3.D The end of Xerxes in Herodotos

Herodotos shows Xerxes failing to conquer Greece, and his whole army in general as inferior to one woman, Artemisia. In his final chapters on Xerxes, he portrays the king being reduced from conquering nations to attempting to conquer women. Consistent with his motif of male inferiority among the barbarians, Herodotos portrays Xerxes as unable to get the upper hand with the women around him. He is not able to have his way with the wife of Masistes. Artaynte takes advantage of his foolishness, and he is not able to persuade her to request something other than the cloak. Amestris shows that she is more clever than Xerxes by tricking him into putting Masistes' wife into her hands. Xerxes' cowardly

⁵³⁵ Tomyris (1.205-215; see also above, 98-102); Nitocris (2.100); and Pheretime (4.165,202; see also above, 129-130).

conduct while battling in Greece should be compared to that same type of conduct with his wife, Amestris. In 8.103.2, Herodotos writes that Xerxes "was in the grip of fear" (καταρρωδήκεε) during the battle of Salamis. In 9.109.7, he also writes that Xerxes "was in dread" (φοβεόμενος) of his wife, Amestris. Xerxes' failures in conquering nations, as well as women, are therefore complete. Herodotos depicts the great king's fall, but Xerxes' death lies beyond the scope of his work. He therefore uses a literary device learnt from Homer, and foreshadows the death of Xerxes with that of Masistes. He also implants in the minds of his audience the possibility and probability of Artaynte's role in Xerxes' death.

The downfall of Xerxes can also be broadened to include the Persians in general by the possibility of and allusion to Dareios killing his father. In 1.137, Herodotos states that no Persian has ever killed his father. When such allegations are put forth, upon further investigations, the accused is always proven to be adopted, or a bastard: οὐ γὰρ δὴ φασὶ οἶκός εἶναι τόν γε ἀληθέως τοκέα ὑπο τοῦ ἑωυτοῦ παιδὸς ἀποθνήσκειν (1.137.2). That such an event is reported by Herodotos as never before taking place, is surely meant to be contrasted with what Persia had become (or sunk to) under Xerxes. As was the case with so many other statements concerning Persian customs that are broken or changed in the time of Xerxes, so also has a Persian male killed his father.

5. CONCLUSION

It is not by coincidence that Herodotos waits until the final chapters of book 9 to observe: *παρὰ δὲ τοῖσι Πέρσησι γυναικὸς κακίῳ ἀκούσαι δέννος μέγιστος ἐστὶ.*⁵³⁶ He has shown throughout his history that the Persian men are indeed worse than or inferior to women. Herodotos creates a "great irony" within the Persian culture. He portrays the men displaying an attitude of obvious superiority over women,⁵³⁷ but he then relates stories demonstrating exactly the opposite situation. That is to say, the Persian women (as well as other barbarian⁵³⁸ and Greek⁵³⁹ women) do not appear in any way to be inferior to Persian men. Ironically then, Persian men are blissfully unaware that women are not "worse than men".

The reasons that Herodotos portrays the barbarian men in such a manner are consistent with his depiction of Persian culture as an anti-Greek "other" culture. Since Herodotos saw the women in his Greek society occupying a secondary status, he therefore created the opposite situation among the Persians.

The use of a repeated motif, such as the dominant female motif, is not uncommon in the *History*. Herodotos does not explicitly state that barbarians are unable to distinguish the better of two alternatives, or unable to choose the correct interpretation of an omen, oracle, or sign. Instead, he inserts his wise advisor motif.⁵⁴⁰ This wise advisor points out the correct interpretation, or the proper choice, to a barbarian (usually the Persian king), only to

⁵³⁶ 9.107.1.

⁵³⁷ See (1.189, 207, 8.88, 9.20 and 107).

⁵³⁸ The wife of Kandaules (above, 71-84) and Tomyris (above, 98-102).

⁵³⁹ Artemisia (above, 127-134).

⁵⁴⁰ Lattimore (1939). See above, 7 and n. 31.

be ignored. The repetition of the motif creates a theme of intellectual inferiority on the part of the Persians, in the eyes of Herodotos' Greek audience. I argue a similar use for the dominant female motif.

The role that women play among the barbarians is emphasized throughout Herodotos' *History*. In fact, he frames the main portion of his work with two similar scenes depicting the foolishness of men, and the resolve (and even power) of women.⁵⁴¹ Wherever possible, and without distorting facts, he inserts this dominant female motif into the portrait of each Persian king, culminating with its extensive presence in the portrait of Xerxes. The result is a depiction of Persian men that is "less than manly." This theme of effeminacy among Persian men is popular in writers later than Herodotos,⁵⁴² but it is clear from our investigation that such a theme exists in the pages of Herodotos.

⁵⁴¹ 1.8-13 and 9.108-113.

⁵⁴² See above, 59 and ns. 234 - 235.

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