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Modesty and Manliness: Gendered Truth-Telling in Herodotus

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Modesty and Manliness: Gendered Truth-Telling in Herodotus

A Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements of the Renée Crown University Honors Program at
Syracuse University

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Honors Capstone Project in Classics

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Abstract

In the *Histories*, Herodotus fashions himself as the first historian as he chronicles the saga of the Persian Wars. Although he tries to base his narrative solely on fact, Herodotus must dip into the realm of oral tradition, folklore and myth in order fill the gaps of recorded history. In doing this, Herodotus takes on the roles of both author and historian. As a result, the work as a whole can be read as a historical document and a piece of literature. In order to gain the most from the narrative, it is imperative that one read the piece as both a historiography and literary work, and simultaneously and view Herodotus as an author of literature and a historian. What this means is that Herodotus the author uses his own beliefs and cultural biases to manipulate the characters in order to recount history accurately. Women especially are subject to these machinations. Unsurprisingly then, many of the female characters depicted by Herodotus act irrationally and unreasonably, just as the Greek cultural biases say they should. The mythological women who begin the *Histories*; Candaules' nameless wife; Atossa; and Artemisia all adhere to the strict norms of femininity, and as a result, Herodotus can use the illogicality inherent to their femaleness to instigate seemingly unexplainable historical events. In contrast, Herodotus' use of Greek male characters, in particular Aristagoras, allows the author to create an extension of himself. These parallel narrations allow Herodotus to assert his own authority as a narrator in order to strengthen the integrity of the work as a whole.

Executive Summary

At the start of the fifth century BCE, a single empire had come into existence, more powerful than any that had come before: Persia. Led now by King Darius, Persia controlled most of the known East, and was encroaching on the Greek *poleis* (city-states) in Asia Minor. While some Hellenic leaders accepted their new Persian rule, others did not. This led to the Ionian Revolt. Envoys from the *poleis* engaged in the rebellion were sent to Sparta and Athens, hoping to receive supplies and men. While Sparta refused, Athens agreed to help.

This caused the Persians to refocus their animosity onto Athens. Destroying this symbol of Hellenic culture would not only send a message to others who sought to revolt against Persia, but would also allow the Medes to extend their territory westward. In 490 BCE, a Persian fleet of 25,000 men approached Athens; they were met on the field of Marathon by an Athenian army with half those numbers. When the battle was through, the Athenians had proved victorious, losing just 192 men in the fighting. This was not just a triumph for Athens, however, but also the Greek way of life.

Ten years later, King Xerxes of Persia was eager to finish what his father started, and launched a second expedition against Athens. This time, the Greek *poleis* banded together in the first example of true Pan-Hellenic unity. Sparta, whose legendary soldiers had been absent during the first war, sent a small army to Thermopylae to keep the advancing Persian army at bay. During the past decade, Athens had become a formidable naval power. They evacuated the city, seeking instead to keep the battle confined to the sea. The 300 Spartans and their allies were slaughtered by the Persians, but were able to buy enough time for Athens. When the Persians tried to fight the Athenians at Salamis, they were not prepared for the Greek fleet. Once again, the Greeks were victorious.

Although the story of the Greco-Persian Wars has been retold many times, most recently in *300* (2006) and its sequel, the first recounting occurred soon after the wars ended. Herodotus of is known today as the “Father of History.” His nine-book accounting, the *Histories*—a term which Herodotus invented—demonstrates an effort to retell the happenings of the Greco-Persian Wars. He is not content to simply say what happened; instead he seeks to get to the root of the problems between the Persians and the Greeks. His accounting begins centuries before the first Persian invasion, back in the age of myths. From there, he follows the choices made by each emerging empire, analyzing how every decision led to the inevitable war. This includes looking into local folklore, regional histories, and detailed into Egypt, Ethiopia, and other lands.

Though Herodotus is known as the Father of History, numerous scholars have also known him as the “Father of Lies.” Many doubt that he could have traveled everywhere he claimed to, and that much of his “history” is not a history at all, but a conglomeration of outlandish stories that do more to obscure the truth than to reveal it. This criticism is valid, but it fails to take into account the facts behind his fiction, and more importantly why Herodotus felt it necessary to repeatedly delve into the realm of folklore. In order to gain the most from the *Histories*, it is necessary to understand the duality of Herodotus; he serves as historian *and* a *logios*, a literary author who must use his own creativity to enhance his work. When known history has gaps, Herodotus the author must fill them. He does this by using his folklore and his own cultural biases to manipulate the narrative in order to fit into the historical record. The women of the *Histories* experience this treatment most often, as Herodotus uses female characters as instigators of instability, characters whose irrationality becomes a driving force for historical change when there seem to be no logical reasons for events to occur. Compared to these unreasonable women are the Greek men whom Herodotus describes. Unlike their female

counterparts, these male characters are representative of reason and logic, often serving as narrative extensions for the author himself.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

If you want something said, ask a man; if you want something done, ask a woman

--Margaret Thatcher

The *Histories* begin with a declaration. Herodotus, the Greek writer credited as the first historian, proclaims his intention to narrate and explain the wars between the Persians and the Greeks. In the process of doing, this Herodotus produces a vivid portrait of sixth and fifth-century BCE society. Implicit in his descriptions, however, is the assumption that no cultures, be they Persian, Egyptian, Lydian or something else, can compare to Greek civilization. This essay will examine Herodotus' use of women in his narrative, in the belief that his internalized cultural biases steered his depiction of female influence throughout his work.

Herodotus himself was born in Halicarnassus and traveled extensively around the ancient world. Many of the sources he acquired while abroad are oral in nature, with various accounts seeming to come from the entirety of the Mediterranean region. As a result, the women in the *Histories* do not reflect regional anxieties or controversies related to a specific moment in history, but reveal a composite folktale tradition wherein universally Greek beliefs can be represented. As the first historian, Herodotus makes an effort to report only the facts and actual

events that occurred without incorporating elements of myth, but ultimately cannot escape the central literary conventions.¹

Herodotus is not only a historian, but also a literary author. The line between the two roles is often blurred, which causes Herodotus to develop his own unique narrative style. As the account goes from one episode to the next, each *logos* is stitched onto the one before it. The result is a not an “unmediated mimetic event in which we participate as readers,”² but rather the audience is left to establish connections between each tale. Here, Herodotus the author is evident; uses the historical record, and manipulates any difficult pieces of the narrative to fit into it. In this way, Herodotus weaves himself into the narrative as an authority figure, without whom the account could not exist. Therefore, the audience must put their faith in him to guide them through the *logoi*.

Of course, there are disagreements about the narrative integrity of Herodotus. As early as Thucydides, scholars were questioning the accuracy of Herodotus’ account. Plutarch charged that Herodotus deliberately created a narrative persona that was charming and affable, if a bit too loquacious, so that he could, under the veil of lighthearted teasing, defame the heroes of the Persian Wars. As he cantankerously noted, “It seems to me that, just like Hippocleides doing his headstand on the table, Herodotus would dance away the truth and say ‘Herodotus does not care.’”³ Contemporary readers no longer equate Herodotus’ historical rhetoric with morality. Instead, any peculiarities in his retelling are alternatively explained away or used as evidence for

¹ Donald Lateiner, *The Historical Method of Herodotus* (University of Toronto Press, 1989), 55-108.

² Carolyn Dewald, “Narrative Surface and Authorial Voice in Herodotus’ *Histories*” *Arethusa* 20 (Spring 1987), 149.

³ Plutarch, *Moralia* (“On the Malice of Herodotus”), trans. Lionel Pearson and F.H. Sandbach (Harvard University Press, 1965), 867B.

his irresponsibility and unreliability as a narrator. What is often forgotten, however, is that although Herodotus was the “Father of History,” he was not a historian in the modern sense of the word; like most inventors, it seems he did not understand exactly what he had created.

In early twentieth century scholarship, Herodotus was often mocked as “a pious anachronism completely removed from the more speculative and critical currents of his time.”⁴ This opinion has waned in popularity over the past century. Today, Herodotus is recognized as a contemporary of Sophocles and Protagoras, with his own sophistic ideas present in the *Histories*. What continues to puzzle scholars, however, is how Herodotus uses the authorial “I” to both insert himself in and remove himself from the narrative. To many, his interjections of opinions and knowingly false accounts are off-putting and seem to discredit the historian. Others view the “I” as a way in which he is able to maintain the distinction between Herodotus the inquirer and the voice of the *logoi* he is presenting. To best understand the narrative, it is necessary that the reader distinguish between the two voices.

This, I believe, is where the current scholarship on Herodotus suffers. Most of the research done on Herodotus has focused on pigeonholing him into the roles of historian *or* author. That being said, there are two opposing sides of Herodotean scholarship: those who read the text as a piece of historical evidence, and those who see it as a literary work. Neither interpretation is wrong *per se*, but they are not correct either. In order to gain the most from Herodotus, it is necessary to read the text simultaneously, as historical and literary. Even when the account of the Persian War may be inaccurate, the Herodotus’ rambling narrative provides a window into fifth century BCE Greek culture. In particular, the belief that men were inherently superior to women due to their physical strength and intelligence.

⁴ Dewald, “Narrative Surface and Authorial Voice in Herodotus’ *Histories*,” 152.

In Athens, women performed fundamentally different social functions than men. They were joined with the *oikos*, the household, and were responsible for its continued maintenance and care. Meanwhile, men were obligated to protect the *oikos* from any outside enemies. A woman had no legal personhood. They could not purchase property, conduct business, or become citizens. The ideal woman would rarely leave her home, dedicating her life to taking care of the household and raising children. These facts are almost universally agreed upon. The main point of contention is the question of whether or not the Greek writers used these different social spheres in their disdain for women as evidence of the female sex's inherent inferiority. Many classical scholars believe that the women in Ancient Greece were treated barely better than slaves, held back by their lack of education, and kept prisoner in the dark rooms of the *gynaikeion*.

As women did not speak for themselves in the records, Herodotus' views on them become much more important. He was the first Greek author who attempted to distinguish facts from myth, and cultivated a wide variety of oral traditions from all along the Mediterranean basin. As a result, the women in the *Histories* do not necessarily conform to fit the social anxieties or sexual fears associated with a certain place, but reflect broader underlying attitudes.

In analyzing the portrayals of the genders in Herodotus, Dewald notes that "Many women in the *Histories* occur in the context of thematic preoccupations that tell us not so much what Herodotus thought about women as how he, as a literary artist, symbolically chose to convey certain truths about the nature of human existence."⁵ That being said, it is necessary to read the *Histories* as not only the historical document it was intended to be, but as a work of literature in

⁵ Carolyn Dewald, "Biology and Politics: Women in Herodotus' 'Histories,'" *Pacific Coast Philology*, Vol. 15 (Oct., 1980): 16.

which the author used his own cultural biases to fill in gaps in the historical record in a way that would be convincing to his audience. To do this, Herodotus must be understood to inhabit the roles of both author and historian at the same time. Herodotus subscribed to the gender norms that permeated Greek society. Using these mores, he is able to manipulate his female characters into agents of instability. The mythic women from the early chapters of the *Histories*; Candaules' nameless wife; Atossa; and Artemisia all become embodiments of irrationality, whose actions end up having far-reaching historical ramifications. In contrast, male characters, such as Aristagoras, personify logic and reason, and often serve as an extension for Herodotus himself. By analyzing the *Histories* in terms of gendered truth-telling, it becomes clear that women serve the narrative purpose of catalysts for unexplainable events.

Chapter 2

Disputes of Women

For centuries before Herodotus began his “inquiry” (*historie*) into the Persian Wars and events leading up to them, the Greeks were given tales of their origins and greatest achievements from by the poets. Homer and Hesiod’s grand epics provide the earliest example of Greek poetry, dating back to the late eighth or early seventh century BCE, although they were likely continuing even older poetic traditions. Unmistakably educated in these conventions, Herodotus would have been exposed to these epics. He tried to separate himself from the poets by creating a work based on history instead of myth, yet the *Histories* demonstrate Herodotus’ internalization of the accepted literary traditions. The *Histories* begins in a way that the epic poets would have approved of, as Herodotus says, “Ἡροδότου Ἁλικαρνησέως ἱστορίας ἀπόδεξις 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” (This is a demonstration of the inquiry of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, so that the actions of men are not forgotten by time, and the great and marvelous deeds of the Greeks and and foreigners Do not go unsung, Hdt. 1.1).⁶ Just as the Muses were beseeched to recount a story for the poets, Herodotus appoints himself Apollo, ready to share stories of glory and greed during the Persian Wars.

⁶ Greek text courtesy of the Perseus Project. All translations are my own.

However, as much as Herodotus hopes to disengage himself from epic, in writing the first historiographical work he was unable to untangle himself from the mythic traditions he was well-versed in. As a result, the *Histories* transforms into an amalgam of fact and fiction, legend and truth. In looking at the stories about women, specifically in the Persian and Lydian *logoi*, it becomes clear that Herodotus uses these episodes in his narrative to explain seemingly unexplainable phenomena, while men, Greek men in particular, are symbols of fact, history, and logic.

As the founder of the historiographical tradition, Herodotus faced an important choice in choosing where to begin his account of the Persian Wars. Unlike Homer, who began the *Iliad* near the conclusion of the Trojan War, Herodotus decided to start at the beginning of the Greek/barbarian *diaphorē* (“difference/conflict”). His opinion of what the beginning is, though, is problematic at best and embarrassing at worst. Recorded history was a relatively new concept in the fifth century BCE, and as a result, Herodotus descends into the realm of myth in order to “accurately” depict the start of the enmity between the Greek *poleis* and Persian Empire. The first five chapters of the *Histories* depict euhemerized legendary women.

Herodotus opens with the Persian explanation, therefore revealing the issue of dueling narratives and uneven knowledge of the events he is describing. In order to fill in blanks of understanding and create a coherent historiographical account, he must fall back on Greek tradition, specifically on the idea of the woman within society; she is a paradoxical object of exchange, at once changing yet staying the same, passive and active, subordinate yet vital to the narrative. The opening chapters mirror this inconsistency, serving as both myth and history. The depicted exchanges of women demonstrate how the system should work, and its failures are the

ultimate cause of the barbarian/Greek divide. These kidnappings-cum-marriages are not just the *archē* “beginning” of the Persian Wars, but of social transmission and demarcation.⁷

According to the Persians, it was the Phoenicians who ignited this conflict. These archetypal traders are painted as pirates (a portrayal that can be traced back as far as Homer’s *Odyssey*), sailing around the Mediterranean before eventually coming to Argos. There, they took (*harpasthēnai*) Io, the daughter of the king, and some other, unnamed, women (Hdt. 1.1-1.3). Instead of practicing fair commerce and marriage, these merchants engage in rape and theft. When the Greeks, in turn, steal Europa, *harpagē* becomes another form of exchange and *xenia*. The theft of women is elevated into a normalized part of foreign relations. This is even more evident in Herodotus’ use of the phrase *isa pros isa*, meaning “tit for tat, equal for equal” (Hdt. 1.2.1). By that standard, the Greeks taking (*harpasai*) Europa is not theft, but the fair-market price for the Phoenicians kidnapping Io. In this way, rape is turned into marriage; an unlawful form of trade is standardized, and changes into an acceptable commerce arrangement.

The second injustice (*deuterēs adikiēs*) is initiated by the Greeks. This cycle of thievery and exchange restarts with the *harpagē* of Medea by the legendary Jason and the Argonauts. Medea’s father, however, does not retaliate; he sends a messenger to ask for the safe return of his daughter and *dikai*, “appropriate damages” (Hdt. 1.2.3). This request alters the established arrangement of *harpagē*, effectively revoking its status as trade, as the Greeks would be forfeiting more than they originally took. Naturally, they refuse. The Greek justification for this is that when Io was taken, the Greeks received neither her return or compensation. When eventually, Paris steals Helen, he is only mimicking the behavior which the Greeks originally exhibited. Although the Greeks request her return and additional damages, he refuses on the

⁷ Ann L. Bergen, “Language and the Female in Early Greek Thought,” *Arethusa* 16 (1983): 76.

grounds that the Greeks incurred no penalties for taking Medea. The theft of Helen denotes a return to equality. Once again, the Greeks and barbarians are *isa pro isa*.

When Paris refuses to return his prize, the Greeks gather an army to retrieve Helen. In doing this, the Greeks worsen and change the nature of the conflict. To the Persians who believe it is unlawful to take women, but wholly irrational to seek revenge so zealously (Hdt. 1.4.5-6), this is the true cause of the Persian/Greek animosity. It is because, they say

σφέας μὲν δὴ τοὺς ἐκ τῆς Ἀσίας... ἀρπαζομενέων τῶν γυναικῶν λόγον οὐδένα ποιήσασθαι, Ἕλληνας δὲ Λακεδαιμονίης εἵνεκεν γυναικὸς στόλον μέγαν συναγεῖραι καὶ ἔπειτα ἐλθόντας ἐς τὴν Ἀσίην τὴν Πριάμου δύναμιν κατελεῖν. ἀπὸ τούτου αἰεὶ ἠγήσασθαι τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν σφίσι εἶναι πολέμιον.

We in Asia made did not make a fuss of the snatching of our women. But the Greeks, because of a Lacedaemonian woman, assembled a great fleet of ships, and coming to Asia, brought down the might of Priam. Ever since then, we have regarded the Greeks as our enemies (Hdt. 1.4.8-14).

The act of invading Troy is so extreme that there can be no peaceful political solution between the Greeks and barbarians. Bergen points out that “the attempt not just to match one *harpagē* with another or one *harpagē*-plus-*dikai* with another, but instead to re-take the woman by force... is the origin (*archē*) of the enmity (*echthrē*) through which the terms ‘Greek’ and ‘barbarian’ acquire their enduring meanings.”⁸

Yet Herodotus is quick to remind us that the Persians’ chronicle is not the only account of events. The Phoenician version challenges the foundation of the “dueling *harpagai*” narrative. Instead, they claim that that Io consented to sex with the Phoenician captain, found herself pregnant, and sailed away with him by choice (Hdt. 1.5.2). Since the Phoenicians believe that Io was extremely amenable to her “captivity,” there was no theft. Here, Herodotus presents an interesting counterpoint to the Persians’ tale: if in the Persian narrative, women are passively

⁸ Bergen, “Language and the Female in Early Greek Thought,” 77.

stolen/traded and raped/married, their silence defines them. In the version of events told by the Phoenicians, however, the women are active agents in their own stories.⁹

By analyzing not only the kidnappings themselves, but the many ways they are described by the parties involved, irreconcilable disputes, ambiguities, tensions, and inconsistencies in how Herodotus portrays women are revealed. In these first five chapters of *Histories*, women are afforded a double status of both the actor and the acted upon. This paradoxical representation has political consequences, as it raises the question of who started the *harpagē* and who is merely continuing it? Of course the Persians blame the Phoenicians, and then the Greeks (Hdt.1.4.4). It is obvious that marking any one event as the origin of the conflict is completely arbitrary. Just as subjective is the act of *harpagē* itself. Should it be considered theft, rape, marriage, or all of the above? Or is it just a part of doing business? Is Europa the daughter of a barbarian, kidnapped in an act of revenge, or is she the mother of European Greeks? Is she both? Could she be both? Of course a woman can be abducted multiple times, as demonstrated by the attempted recapture of Medea and successful retaking of Helen. The *isa pros isa* can easily devolve into a competition of excesses that does little to satisfy any of the peoples involved.

The Trojan War was an integral part of Greek identity, and its presence in the *Histories* is not misplaced, but the inclusion of this and other myths is an interesting narrative choice. This could be explained by the author's personal history: Herodotus was not an Athenian,¹⁰ and the use of universal myths might have been a subtle reminder to his Athenian audience that he too was part of a shared Hellenic culture. I believe, however, that these mythic women are placed

⁹ Bergen, "Language and the Female in Early Greek Thought," 77.

¹⁰ Herodotus applied for, but was denied Athenian citizenship. Many Athenians were highly critical of his account of the Battle of Marathon. However, after his death, numerous *poleis*, including Athens, claimed to be the location of his grave.

within the story as a tool to continue explaining causality, and more specifically, to fill in the blanks of recorded history. Herodotus could have used any daughters or wives of political figures to make his point; he could have even created his own characters and perhaps no one would have known. Instead he uses myth, and specifically passive mythical women, to complete chain reactions. Instead of focusing on their male counterparts, Herodotus mentions Io, Medea, Helen, and Europa. Fifth century BCE mentalities on gender classified women as irrational, and that bias is on full display in the *Histories*.

However, it also lends itself to the idea that women, and specifically the women of legend, are unable to make rational decisions. This fear would be especially palpable for Herodotus and his male contemporaries. As Bergen notes, “If, then, on a divine level, the power of language attributed to the female is (re-)appropriated by the male, it remains the case that the human male is, in the perspective of early Greek thought, forever plagued by his vulnerability to the woman as an ambiguous source of truth and falsehood.”¹¹ The deceit of women was of deep concern, as a woman was the only person who could know her child’s paternity. In a world based on a patrilineal model of inheritance, the prospect of passing down their property to a son who was not theirs by blood was a very real anxiety to most men. Indeed, it seems that Greek men as a whole endowed upon their women great symbolic importance; men’s feelings and phobias are integral to understanding what was expected of a woman in society. These subliminal fears of purity and inheritance are different from the reality, and should be considered separately. Even in describing the Persians’ belief that the women were taken because they wanted to be, or the Phoenicians’ insistence that Io had given herself to the captain, Herodotus

¹¹ Bergen, “Language and the Female in Early Greek Thought,” 75.

does not fully address these fears. Instead, he displays the mythological women of the *Histories* as contradictions of passivity and willfulness, logic and irrationality. In doing this, it becomes clear that Herodotus places these women in a “context of thematic preoccupations that tell us not so much what Herodotus thought about women as how he, as a literary artist, symbolically chose to convey certain truths about the nature of human existence.”¹²

The smooth integration of folktales into history is a credit to Herodotus’ skill as an author. Myths, although written to explain particular phenomena, were almost certainly not intended to illustrate the beginning of Persian and Greek animosity. Considering that these oral traditions were the only “recorded history” dating that early, Herodotus inserts them into the narrative, filling the voids of concrete historical knowledge. He manipulates these myths for his own designs, using only the parts that suit the story he is trying to tell and disregarding the more divine aspects of them. In short, the women who begin the *Histories* are a literary tool used by Herodotus to explain that which history does not account for. At the same time, Herodotus deliberately rebels against particular types of myth, favoring what is known and endeavoring to return back to of known history. As Lateiner points out, he “reacts to three existing conventions: he rejects the epic convention of beginning in medias res and the cosmological and theogonic convention of beginning ‘in the beginning,’ and he curtails the logopoetic-genealogical convention of seeking mythical ancestors for historical persons.”¹³ Although it would be easier for Herodotus the author to simply skip five generations and recount the story of Croesus, Herodotus the historian must remain in the realm of folklore for just a little longer.

¹² Dewald, “Biology and Politics: Women in Herodotus' *Histories*,” 17.

¹³ D. Lateiner, *The Historical Method of Herodotus* (Toronto, 1989) 35-43.

Candaules' nameless wife allows Herodotus to continue his meditation on gender, specifically in the story of Gyges and Candaules. Gyges was a prized member of the royal guard, and friend to the Lydian king Candaules. The king, becoming too infatuated with his own wife, constantly bragged of her beauty. Suspecting that Gyges would not believe him unless he saw for himself, Candaules ordered Gyges to sneak into the royal bedchamber so that he could see the queen undress and witness her beauty. Although the guard persistently objected to the "request," Candaules overruled him and forced him to gaze upon what was not his to see. However, the queen saw him and took offense. She ordered Gyges to kill her husband and take his place as both husband and Lydian king,¹⁴ or be killed himself. Naturally Gyges chose self-preservation. A civil war began to stir between the supporters of Candaules and Gyges, and was eventually solved by Gyges appealing to the oracle at Delphi (Hdt. 1.8-14).

In depicting the conversation between Candaules and Gyges, Herodotus interjects "χρῆν γὰρ Κανδαύλη γενέσθαι κακῶς" (For it was necessary that Candaules come to a bad end, Hdt. 1.8.2). This phrasing is interesting, as it speaks to both the history and Herodotus' authorial intention. Herodotus knows that the Heraclid family lost power and the Mermnad dynasty remained in power until the Persian conquest of Lydia. For the purposes of the *Histories*, however, Herodotus needs a compelling tale to signify this change. The Gyges and Candaules story was well known among the Lydians and Greeks, even if its exact origin remains unknown.

Herodotus opens up his own retelling with the line "Κανδαύλης, τὸν οἱ Ἕλληνες Μυρσίλον ὀνομάζουσι" (Candaules, who the Greeks called Myrsilus... Hdt. 1.7.2). This innocuous clause, another of Herodotus' seemingly meaningless interjections, has a vital

¹⁴ For more information on the right of the usurper to marry the deposed king's wife, see J. Geiger, "The Hasmoneans and Hellenistic Succession," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 53 (2002), 8.

importance; it tells us that there was indeed a Greek account of this tale, and the king's name was Myrsilus. It was Herodotus' choice to use the name Candaules in his narrative instead, but why? For one, the Greek tale did not survive, and it remains in question who gave him that name.¹⁵ The Greeks, however, may have been using the "correct" name; "Myrsilus" is extremely similar to the Hittite name "Mursilus," any many myths circulated about King Mursilus II. The Lydians had a Hermes-esque god named Candaules who was known as a "dog throttler,"¹⁶ and eventually "Candaules" became a sacred name for the king. Herodotus the historian makes sure to mention both names, as knowing both is a testament to his knowledge. As an author, though, Herodotus makes the conscious choice to use exclusively, bar once, Candaules as the name of the king. Evans postulates that Herodotus may have preferred it because, "it sounded authentically Lydian, whereas 'Myrsilus' did not. 'Myrsilus' was the Lesbian form of 'Myrtitus', and was the name of the tyrant whom the Lesbian poet Alcaeus hated. Rightly or wrongly, to the Greek ear in the fifth century 'Myrsilus' sounded Greek, not Lydian."¹⁷ The relative notoriety of the Lesbian "Myrtitus" could argue that both the name and the tale come from Lesbian tradition, but that is only conjecture. All that is certain is that there was a tradition among the eastern Greek communities wherein Candaules was named Myrsilus, but there is no evidence that their Myrsilus is the same character in the narrative which Herodotus relates.

¹⁵ J. A. S. Evans, "Candaules, Whom the Greeks named Myrsilus" in *The Beginnings of History: Herodotus and the Persian Wars* (Tonawanda, N.Y: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 219. Although there is no certainty who referred to Candaules as Myrsilus, Herodotus notes in 1.12.2 that the seventh-century BCE poet Archilochus openly criticized Gyges.

¹⁶ As Lydia was a neo-Hittite kingdom, it seems most plausible that both of the names "Candaules" and "Myrsilus" originated there.

¹⁷ Evans, "Candaules, Whom the Greeks named Myrsilus," 231.

Although Evans provided keen insight in the onomatology of Candaules/Myrsilus, he goes on to say that “It is, in fact, hard to find a good folktale parallel for Herodotus’ story.”¹⁸ I respectfully disagree. Herodotus’ plot here is an alternative telling of the tale of Potiphar and his (nameless) wife. The Gyges/Candaules story has all the key features of the biblical parable: there is a conflict between two men over a woman, the men are of unequal status, and the more powerful of the men—who also is a paternal figure of sorts—ends up in lethal conflict with his younger foe. Oftentimes in Greek myth, when two men try to “share” a woman, one of them ends up dead.¹⁹ Men are not the only active participants, however; in the Gyges/Candaules narrative, as in the original Potiphar tale, the woman refuses to remain passive, and is often a key instigator, usually with a false accusation of attempted rape. Although Candaules’ wife uses a different means of achieving her aim, she, like Potiphar’s wife, possesses an unusual agency; she serves as her negotiator, not using her husband or any male family members to assert her wishes, and violating the established gender norms. She utilizes her own sly ingenuity, not her body²⁰ to persuade Gyges.

In demonstrating how Gyges was forced to defile the modesty of the queen, and consequently murder the king, Herodotus presents the usurper to the crown as innocent, while the dead king is held responsible for the events that unfolded. When Candaules first approaches his bodyguard with the immodest proposition, Gyges vehemently protests, saying

¹⁸ Evans, “Candaules, Whom the Greeks named Myrsilus,” 231. He goes on to state that the Gyges and Candaules narrative has only a passing thematic resemblance to Ahasuerus and Vashti story from the Book of Esther (1.10-12).

¹⁹ Thomas MacCary, *Childlike Achilles: Ontogeny and Phylogeny in the Iliad* (New York 1982) 110.

²⁰ It could be argued that sexual gratification is implicit in her proposal to Gyges, as one of the options would make her his wife. However, she is characterized by both her beauty and calculating nature, both of which she used to her advantage here. Much like Io, the queen plays an active role in shaping her future.

δέσποτα, τίνα λέγεις λόγον οὐκ ὑγίεια, κελεύων με δέσποιναν τὴν ἐμὴν θεήσασθαι γυμνήν; ἅμα δὲ κιθῶνι ἐκδυομένῳ συνεκδύεται καὶ τὴν αἰδῶ γυνή. πάλαι δὲ τὰ καλὰ ἀνθρώποισι ἐξεύρηται, ἐκ τῶν μανθάνειν δεῖ: ἐν τοῖσι ἐν τόδε ἐστί, σκοπέειν τινὰ τὰ ἐωυτοῦ. ἐγὼ δὲ πείθομαι ἐκείνην εἶναι πασέων γυναικῶν καλλίστην, καὶ σέο δέομαι μὴ δέεσθαι ἀνόμων.

Master, what an improper suggestion, that I should see my mistress naked. When a woman removes her clothing, so too she dispenses with her modesty. Long ago, men made wise rules that one ought to follow. One of them is that a man should mind his own business. I have no doubt that your wife is the most beautiful of women, but I beseech you not to ask of me what is lawless (Hdt. 1.8.3-4).

It was Candaules who became too besotted with his wife, who ignored traditional Lydian customs of propriety (which Gyges attempted to remind him of), instead insisting that the servant view his queen naked.

The Lydians are portrayed as the Proximal Other. They exist in a realm of the Greek imagination that is at once foreign but similar. Both Near-Eastern and Near-Greek, the Lydians serve as a cultural and physical link between the Greeks and the Persians. This is evident in how Herodotus presents the Persian and Phoenician *logoi* compared to the Lydian myths; the former are characterized by an argumentative tone (it seems that the entirety of the first five chapters are variations of a “was not!” “was too!” squabble), while the latter are defined by the author’s certainty. Herodotus is comfortable relating the *logoi* of the Lydians because they rely less on myth and more on truth. This recognizable difference can be attributed to the cultural similarities and geographical closeness between the Greeks and Lydians. In fact, it seems that Herodotus makes a point to accentuate their similarities. Unlike the Persians who established their own unique religion, the Lydians subscribe to the same gods and oracles as the Greeks. As

is later shown in the Croesus narrative, even the purification rituals are the same.²¹ Herodotus' inclusion of divine intervention, prophecy, and fated punishment entwine the Lydians with Greeks on a folk level. The inclusion of these very Hellenic tropes is detrimental to Herodotus' credibility as a historian, but is a smart authorial decision on the part of Herodotus the narrator. By establishing the Lydians as the Proximal Other, he is able to create a group of characters (and as a historian, a sound ethnography) which would appeal to the intended Greek audience, while also allowing him to demonstrate Greek ideologies within a non-Greek setting. It is only fitting then, that Herodotus concludes the Lydian *logoi* by demonstrating the likeness of the Lydians to the Greeks once again. He uses perhaps the best ethnographical statement in the entirety of the *Histories*: Λυδοὶ δὲ νόμοισι μὲν παραπλησίοισι χρέωνται καὶ Ἕλληνας, χωρὶς ἢ ὅτι τὰ θήλα τέκνα καταπορνεύουσι (The customs of the Lydians are very much like those of the Greeks, except they prostitute their daughters, Hdt. 1.94).

Therefore, when Candaules became hopelessly besotted with his wife, he acted without reason or consideration of the Lydian *nomoi* ("customs/laws").²² In comparison, Gyges strived to act with reason, justice, and restraint. He resisted Candaules' plan to gawk at his nude wife, and argued against the queen's plot to kill her husband, only acquiescing when faced with resounding pressure and the threat of death. It would appear that no man was ever held less responsible for regicide than Gyges.

²¹ Hdt. 1.35.2. ἔστι δὲ παραπλησίη ἢ κάθαρσις τοῖσι Λυδοῖσι καὶ τοῖσι Ἕλλησι (The Lydians have the same methods of purification as the Greeks.)

²² Besides considering Candaules' violation of *nomos* as working exclusively to exculpate Gyges of any wrongdoing, one could also consider the king's disregard of custom and law as part of the grander theme of royal transgression. Herodotus often returns to the idea of regal offenses throughout the *Histories*, but this is the first example where he presents a definite wrongdoer.

Although Gyges is the eventual victor, he is not initially presented in a positive light. Superficially, Gyges is a bodyguard who played peeping Tom, killed his king, and hastily married the widowed queen. Almost two millennia later, Shakespeare would use almost this same formula to create the villain in *Hamlet*. So why is Gyges considered the hero of this tale? Every time he is given a choice between justice and self-interest, he chooses to act for his own benefit. It could be argued that Gyges eventually faces the consequences of his actions by the capture of Lydia five generations later, but Gyges the person never really suffers. That is not his own fault, of course, but a result of history and Herodotus' storytelling decision. The word *hairesis* ("choice") appears three times within the Gyges narrative.²³ There are no moral connotations to the word; *hairesis* is a practical decision between two options. Knowing history— it was common knowledge that the Mermnad dynasty ruled until Croesus' defeat by Cyrus—and the Potiphar's wife theme, it is clear that Gyges *needed* to act selfishly in order for the narrative to continue. Gabriel Danzig points out that, "neither Herodotus nor Herodotus' Gyges seem to think that choosing to die is a real option at all. The fact that Gyges' descendant is punished may be attributed to the instability of human things, or to the fact that the gods punish even those who could not have reasonably avoided their crimes

In the scheme to kill the king, the queen is a much more aggressive character. Although like Gyges she is a victim of the king's folly, it is her choices that ultimately result in her husband's death. In many ways, Herodotus presents her revenge, compelling Gyges to murder his ruler, as the result of the king's exploitation of her for his own pleasure. Embarrassed, her modesty violated, the queen is almost presented as justifiable in her bloodlust; murder is not her ultimate goal. Instead, she seeks retribution for Candaules' dishonoring her and assurance that

²³ Twice as a noun, and once as a verb (1.11.2,3,4).

this sort of violation will never happen again (Hdt. 1.11.2). Stephanie Larson argues that by withholding her name, Herodotus exonerates Candaules' wife from the charges of usurpation and conspiracy to murder. By keeping her anonymous, her name cannot be associated with killing her husband, therefore making her appear "more sympathetic in the planning of his punishment, as opposed to the hostile and Clytemnestra-like interpretation she has sometimes received."²⁴

There is also the sexual level to this act; Candaules' wife was first spurred into action by the unlawful viewing of her sexuality by a man other than her husband, she bribes Gyges by promising herself to him, and finally her husband is killed in bed. By willfully withholding her name, Herodotus is taking pains to protect her modesty and legacy, for "rather than anxiety over sexual licentiousness, it is concern for her own propriety and the related reputation of her household which motivates Candaules' wife to act in what first seem inappropriate ways for a respectable woman."²⁵ Yet although she behaved in a decidedly unfeminine fashion, she is deliberately given anonymity out of deference for her sexual decorum and gendered morality.

There is no denying that killing her husband is a drastic action, but it fits with the theme of the irrational woman as a plot device. Regardless of where the account originated from, Herodotus uses the queen to create a dynastic shift that simultaneously condemns the Heraclidae and validates the Mermnad rule. In Herodotus' scenario, the queen takes part in her sexual self-negotiation; she takes control of her own future, possessing an agency that appears in contradiction with her namelessness. She is presented as wholly responsible for murder, exculpating Gyges from the guilt related to killing one's king, and the condemnation associated

²⁴ Stephanie Larson, "Kandaules' Wife, Masistes' Wife: Herodotus' Narrative Strategy in Suppressing Names of Women: (Hdt. 1.8-12 and 9.108-13)" *The Classical Journal*, 101 (Feb.-Mar. 2006): 241.

²⁵ Larson, "Kandaules' Wife, Masistes' Wife: Herodotus' Narrative Strategy in Suppressing Names of Women: (Hdt. 1.8-12 and 9.108-13)" 230.

with it.

Despite laying the blame at the queen's feet, Herodotus still demonstrates that the murderer and accomplice—regardless of who takes on each role—behaved in good faith, while the real villain of the story was Candaules. Considering the folklore origin of this tale, it becomes clear that the literary history of this account is to provide an “exculpatory narrative on behalf of the usurpers.”²⁶ Origin stories such as these would be disseminated throughout a population in order to rationalize the usurper's actions in taking the throne and preserving his newfound position. Even in Herodotus' account, rival factions begin to fight over Gyges' new kingship. Spinning a tale of a wicked king, wronged wife, and noble warrior, while clichéd, would be a publicity move calculated to persuade those loyal to the former dynasty to peacefully accept the new king.

Although this story has a deep history in the Lydian *logoi*, Herodotus manipulates the folktale to his advantage, affecting the dialogue and characters in order to create a cohesive narrative. In his account of the Candaules and Gyges story, Herodotus increases the apologetic tone of the tale, insisting on Gyges' innocence even when it seems otherwise. The conversations that the author depicts first between Gyges and the king, then Gyges and the queen, add a psychological aspect to the narrative that would not be present in rumor or oral tradition. These conversations are an authorial invention that makes the implausible sequence of events that follows seem not only plausible, but a natural consequence of their thoughts and actions.

²⁶ Danzig, Gabriel, “Rhetoric and the Ring: Herodotus and Plato on the Story of Gyges as a Politically Expedient Tale,” 177.

The odd behavior of Candaules is explained by further delving into his psyche, and exploring his abnormal thoughts.²⁷ Then, as if to solidify Herodotus' credibility as a narrator and drive the point home, he adds that the king was doomed from the start. Through this, he continues to maintain Gyges' innocence. Not one, not twice, but four times the guard argues against the king's plan. He first claims that “ἅμα δὲ κιθῶνι ἐκδυομένῳ συνεκδύεται καὶ τὴν αἰδῶ γυνή” (when a woman takes off her clothes, she also dispenses with her modesty), but when Candaules persists, Gyges continues with a reminder that one should follow the traditions passed down from earlier times, one should mind their own business, and that he wholeheartedly believes the king's description of the queen's beauty without needing to see it. Clearly, these arguments are not necessarily Gyges' reasons for refusing the offer, as Herodotus adds another impetus for declining. As if it were an afterthought, Herodotus says “ἀπεμάχετο, ἀρρωδέων μὴ τί οἱ ἐξ αὐτῶν γένηται κακόν” (he resisted, dreading that something evil would befall him because of these affairs, Hdt. 1.9.1). Candaules ignores Gyges' spoken arguments, instead responding to his thoughts, almost as if Herodotus has forgotten what is spoken and what is not. The king vows to protect his guard from any harm that may result from his scheme. In Tragedy, often times the plot is familiar to the author and the audience, but the drama would need to be expanded in order to fill an entire play. Herodotus may have simply been overfamiliar with the story, which caused him to make a rare narrative misstep. However, an easy way to explain this rare error away is to suppose that it is not a mistake at all. Herodotus does not need Gyges to tell Candaules that he is concerned for his own safety; they are both aware of the danger surrounding

²⁷ Hdt. 1.8.1-2. While it is normal for a man to be proud of his wife's beauty, a husband should still act logically and with decorum. Candaules becomes so obsessed with his queen that he forsakes the Lydian (and Greek) laws regarding nudity with a scheme that could be charitably called irrational.

the scheme. Additionally, it seems that Gyges lacks a poker face (to use an anachronistic term), and perhaps fear, more so than moral superiority, is apparent in his expression.

Delving into Gyges' thoughts to unearth his real motivation, fear rather than decorum or morality, adds to Herodotus' credibility as a narrator, despite the slight conversational error. Here he is not just repeating a story told by many, but is adding meaningful rationale to the characters in order to explain actions that may charitably be described as foolish and illogical. The very visceral reaction response of fear both enhances the realism of the story, and makes Gyges more relatable. Not only that, but the king's promise serves the double purpose of convincing Gyges to agree to the plot, and absolving him of guilt. In beseeching the queen (and audience) after his lecherous action has been revealed, Gyges offers the king's promise as a reason he should be free from fault and punishment. He presents himself as an obedient servant whose only crime was following orders.

Following this observation, it becomes clear that it is not just the structure of the story that aims to pardon the killers, but that Herodotus uses his own additions for the same end. One would presume that Herodotus was completely cognizant of the apologetic aim of the narrative he both recorded and concocted. Perhaps that is why the author goes to considerable lengths to describe the "hero's" most problematic action, regardless of whether or not the event was historical or not. Candaules is killed in his bedchamber, a dishonorable way to die (or kill for that matter). It is interesting that Herodotus pays no mind to how this plus the queen's hasty remarriage would be perceived by the fictional aristocratic Lydians. Did *not a single* advisor or nobleman suspect foul play? Were the palace guards and servants not questioned at all? It seems most likely then, that this power grab was openly made; the duplicitous actions of Gyges and the queen easily become the worst-kept secret in Lydia. And with all the power afforded a king,

Gyges is now in the position to silence anyone who questions his rule; as we have seen, he is not a man who values justice above all else, but consistently makes decisions that benefit only himself. Herodotus does, however, make one concession to the messy realities of the real world: in order to allay a bloody civil war, Gyges consults the oracle at Delphi, in order to validate his rule.

This one concession to the complexities of the real world is not the only way Herodotus hopes to improve the accuracy of tale. He attempts to write himself out of this plot hole by having the queen explain, “ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ μὲν χωρίου ἢ ὀρμῆ ἔσται ὅθεν περ καὶ ἐκεῖνος ἐμέ ἐπεδέξατο γυμνήν, ὑπνωμένῳ δὲ ἢ ἐπιχείρησις ἔσται” (You shall attack him from the same spot where he made you look at me naked; attack while he sleeps, Hdt. 1.11.5). In typical dramatic fashion, the revenge is to take place in the same place as the original crime. This idea that the punishment should fit the crime is quintessentially Herodotean. The intimate setting of the murder shifts any suspicions of wrongdoing, sexual or otherwise, from the killer to the victim. This awkward location becomes a symbol of the king’s sexual improprieties, and removes focus from the murders. By including the queen’s rationalization for killing her husband in bed, Herodotus actively works to continue the narrative of the usurper’s innocence.

In an account that is purportedly about the Persian Wars, why would Herodotus choose to include the Gyges and Candaules story? For one, unclothing a beautiful woman in the first few chapters is a surefire way to inspire interest in one’s literary creation. On a more meaningful level, however, this *logos* contains many of the same elements that Herodotus continues to explore in the rest of the *Histories*, and serves as microcosm of the work’s thematic interests. Where the series of abductions introduced the relationship between the role of women in historical causation, Candaules/Gyges’ wife provides one of the most vivid examples. Female

influence on political happenings is further explored in the Persian *aitia* stories, the war between the Egyptians and Persians (Hdt. 3.1-3) and in the many instances where a woman holds great influence over a Persian king.²⁸ As Lateiner notes, “Disregard for that nearly universal rule of private property, the exclusive enjoyment of a wife by her husband, opens and closes the *Histories*.”²⁹ In between the politically expedient *logoi* of Candaules and Masistes, Herodotus continues chronology of the Persian Wars with a continued emphasis on the role of women in historical causality, particularly women in Persia and her satrapies. The barbarians, already thought of as horribly feminine by the Greeks, are often portrayed as victims of the decisions of women. Unlike their manly Greek counterparts, the Persians are seen as easily manipulated by feminine wiles, even going so far as invading Greece at the behest of a woman. As Herodotus begins his account of the Persians in Book III, the story of Atossa and Democedes introduces yet another instance of female influence on historical causation.

²⁸ In one of the oddest instances of female influence over kingship 3.85-7 Herodotus describes Darius’ ascension to throne due to his horse neighing first at sunrise. The story of the horse proclaiming Darius King of Persia is an interesting tale in and of itself, and is often used by Danzig and other scholars to assert female historical causation. However, just because a mare is possibly involved (in one of the accounts Herodotus cites, the stallion neighs of his own accord) does not make this a prime example of female agency. For the mare’s part, she has no decision in choosing the king; she is physically—and arguably sexually—violated by the groom so that her body and sexuality can be used to tempt the male horse in question.

²⁹ Lateiner, *The Historical Method of Herodotus*, 141.

Chapter 3

Queens and Tyrants

As evidenced by much of Herodotus, Ancient Greeks based their identities on differences which they believed inherent: citizen or slave, Greek or foreigner, man or woman. These dichotomies were attached to an assumed hierarchy in which being a Greek male citizen—really the only type of citizen—was naturally considered superior. Throughout the *Histories*, Herodotus provides many examples of difference. He describes not only a semi-other Lydia, but an Egypt wherein “τὰ πολλὰ πάντα ἔμπαλιν τοῖσι ἄλλοισι ἀνθρώποισι” (Almost everything is opposite to other people, Hdt. 2.35.2), and a Persia that represents the antithesis of Greek ideals.

Much scholarship has been devoted to analyzing and disrupting the differences that Herodotus illustrates. The dichotomy between Mede and Greek as a reoccurring motif throughout the work, and the continuous Greek success against the Persians is attributed, at least partially, to these differences. However, by the end of Book IX, the two groups seem more alike than different. Where Flower and Marincola examine this dichotomy through the lens of literature³⁰, Paul Cartledge and Emily Greenwood postulate that the “polarization” is a tool used to support Herodotus’ credibility as a historian and moral guide.³¹ Munson embraces a more

³⁰ Michael A Flower. and John Marincola. *Herodotus Histories Book IX* (Cambridge University Press, 2002). 37-9.

³¹ Paul Cartledge and Emily Greenwood, “Herodotus as a critic: truth, fiction, polarity,” in *Brill’s Companion to Herodotus*, ed. E. J. Bakker, I. J. F. de Jong and H. van Wees (Brill, 2002), 358.

positive outlook, and argues that Herodotus' discourses on cultural differences are a foil by which ethnic similarities will seem more evident and appealing.³² This is supported by Herodotus' near-obsessive use of difference to explain and disrupt commonly held beliefs. His audience would be much more inclined to accept reinforcement of their own prejudices as fact, rather than a complex portrayal of the defeated ideological enemy. Therefore, for every parallel between the Greeks and another culture, he is quick to provide a contrasting practice. The instability brought about by cultural dissimilarities is necessary to his presentation of history, not only because of the message it helps him convey, but because instability is an important part of the historical narrative. To Dewald, "polyvocalism of the world itself"³³ is the persistent theme of Herodotus; his entire historiography is an attempt to fathom "the human world, in all its dimensions."³⁴ To do this means that he cannot ignore the messy complexities, contradictions and instability of the real world. With that being said, Herodotus utilizes the distinctions in order to create a complete and accurate portrayal of the events that transpired.

Although Herodotus tries to be objective while going through his ethnography, he frequently slips. The author in him shows through, validating his audiences' biases instead of remaining untouched by ethnic prejudices. In no other group is this as evident as it is with the Persians. They represent the quintessential other. Unlike the Lydians, the Persians do not worship the same gods, or have the same myths and customs. As Herodotus later explains, they

³² Rosaria Vignolo Munson, *Telling Wonders: Ethnographic and Political Discourse in the Work of Herodotus* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 98. For example, Munson writes that when "instead of difference or equivalency, actual similarity occurs [between two seemingly different cultures], it constitutes a 'wonder,' that is, a profoundly satisfying discovery that invites reflection.

³³ Carolyn Dewald, " 'I didn't give my own genealogy': Herodotus and the authorial persona," in *Brill's Companion to Herodotus*, ed. E. J. Bakker, I. J. F. de Jong and H. van Wees (Brill, 2002), 276

³⁴ Dewald, "I didn't give my own genealogy" 288.

do not even dress in a similar fashion. The otherness of Persia is conflated with Greek gender stereotypes. Being a barbarian makes a Persian less manly, and Herodotus frequently remarks on their weak wills, irrationality, and general femininity. It is perhaps because of this “inherent” femininity that Herodotus depicts the Persian kings as easily swayed by women.

In the beginning of Book III, Herodotus, much as he did in the story of Gyges and Candaules, presents an image of a woman, a queen, who is decidedly different than the men who populate the *Histories*. Atossa, daughter of Cyrus and wife of Darius, is anxious and embarrassed about a large growth on her breast. She calls upon Democedes, the great Greek doctor being held captive at the Persian court. As Herodotus writes, “ἐπὶ τοῦ μαστοῦ ἔφυ φῶμα, μετὰ δὲ ἐκραγὲν ἐνέμετο πρόσω. ὅσον μὲν δὴ χρόνον ἦν ἔλασσον, ἢ δὲ κρύπτουσα καὶ αἰσχουμένη ἔφραζε οὐδενί: ἐπεῖτε δὲ ἐν κακῷ ἦν, μετεπέμψατο τὸν Δημοκίδεα καὶ οἱ ἐπέδεξε” (There was a growth on [her] breast, that broke and spread. When it was small, she hid it out of shame and spoke of it to no one, but when it got worse, she sent for Democedes and showed him, Hdt. 3.133.1). In exchange for curing her, Democedes asks the queen for a favor of his choosing. When making this request, Democedes explicitly promises that he would not ask “οὐδενὸς τῶν ὅσα ἐξ αἰσχύνην ἐστὶ φέροντα” (Anything that would bring her shame, Hdt. 3.133.2). Once healed, Atossa, “διδαχθεῖσα ὑπὸ τοῦ Δημοκίδεος” (instructed by Democedes, Hdt. 3.134.1), proposes to Darius that he invade Greece, thereby directly influencing his military decisions. It becomes clear that shame, and specifically αἰσχύνη or shame of her body, is Atossa’s primary motivation during this chapter. As Tourrix points out, “La localisation de cette tumeur n'est pas indifférente: la pudeur d'Atossa l'empêche de consulter d'emblée Démocédès, et surtout cette localisation

implique une symbolique de fécondité menacée sous-jacente à l'anecdote.”³⁵ In one other place in the *Histories* does Herodotus use bodily shame as motivation, complete with the root αἰσχύν-: when Candaules’ wife is shamed after Gyges sees her naked.³⁶ Much like Candaules’ wife, Atossa’s vulnerability is based on her being a woman in a sexually restrictive, male-dominated culture.

Once cured, Atossa persuades Darius to invade Greece. The fact that he quickly acts on her prompting seems to substantiate Josine Blok’s claim that women “play a salient role in the historical world as Herodotus portrays it.”³⁷ It would appear that Atossa is an active agent in Persian foreign relations, having a direct influence on her husband’s actions.³⁸ Atossa tells Darius that leading an expedition into Greece will promote confidence in him among his many subjects (Hdt. 3.134). Her ability to sway Darius could lead one to think that theirs is a relationship wherein they are equal partners, instead of having a marriage based on sexual hegemony.

Herodotus’ Atossa, however, defies this interpretation. Although the Persian men are represented as feminine, the language used by Atossa in her persuasion of Darius demonstrates a clear sexual hierarchy between them. As they lie in bed, Atossa says, “οἰκὸς δὲ ἐστὶ ἄνδρα καὶ

³⁵ Alexandre Tourrix, “La femme et le pouvoir chez Herodote,” *Dialogues d’Histoire Ancienne*, 2 (1976), 379.

³⁶ 1.10.3 marks the only instance where αἰσχύνη is used in relation to a man, as Herodotus says “ἄνδρα ὀφθῆναι γυμνόν ἐξ αἰσχύνην μεγάλην φέρει” (It is a great shame even for a man to be seen naked). This is yet another explicit difference between Greece and the East. In the *poleis*, men frequently were seen in the nude, whether at the gymnasium (the modern word itself deriving from γυμνός or “naked”) or participating publicly in the games. It is clear that Greek men felt very little shame for their bodies. Therefore, Eastern men being ashamed of their nudity is yet another indicator of their femininity.

³⁷ Josine Blok, “Women in Herodotus’ Histories,” in *Brill’s Companion to Herodotus*, ed. E. J. Bakker, I. J. F. de Jong and H. van Wees (Brill, 2002), 256.

³⁸ Carolyn Dewald, “Women and Culture in Herodotus’ *Histories*” *Women’s Studies* 8 (1981): 94.

νέον καὶ χρημάτων μεγάλων δεσπότην φαίνεσθαι τι ἀποδεικνύμενον, ἵνα καὶ Πέρσαι ἐκμάθωσι ὅτι ὑπ' ἀνδρὸς ἄρχονται” (It is good that a man who is young and the master of great wealth appears to better himself, so the Persians know well that they are ruled by a man, Hdt. 3.134.2). Herodotus is quick to remind his audience of the primacy of men, even Persian men, and relegates Atossa to an inferior position. Atossa’s insistence that her husband go to war is undercut by Darius’ claim that he had already planned to do just that. This interaction emphasizes that the original point of Atossa’s lesser status as a woman—undoubtedly unequal to a man—is a more accurate description of the gender roles.

Although Darius claims he was already preparing for war, his intended foe was the Scythians. His target only changes when Atossa says that she would prefer Greek lady’s maids. Darius replies that “κατασκόπους μοι δοκέει Περσέων πρῶτον ἄμεινον εἶναι ὁμοῦ τούτῳ τῷ σὺ λέγεις πέμψαι ἐς αὐτούς, οἱ μαθόντες καὶ ἰδόντες ἐξαγγελέουσι ἕκαστα αὐτῶν ἡμῖν: καὶ ἔπειτα ἐξεπιστάμενος ἐπ’ αὐτούς τρέψομαι” (It seems best to first send Persian spies with the man you whom you described, who will tell us all that they have learned and seen. Then when I am thoroughly informed, I will go against them, Hdt. 3.134.6). It appears that Atossa’s words do directly affect the course of history. A superficial reading of this scene would make Atossa seem powerful. However, Herodotus connects her influence with the *oikos*. Her home-centric, patently feminine desire for Greek maids is the foundation of her power. In accepting the unequal, inferior status of a woman, she also accepts that her irrationality and frivolity endow her with her own unique political sway, a power normally normally forbidden to women.³⁹

Yet Atossa was not acting on her own; her decisions are directly related to Democedes, and ultimately she is only a means by which he can achieve his own end. Atossa makes her

³⁹ A notable exception to this rule is Artemisia.

request of Darius at Democedes' instruction. In promoting a Persian expedition to Greece, with Democedes as a guide, Atossa facilitates the doctor's escape from Persian court. Atossa's status as not only a woman, but a Persian woman, makes her highly susceptible to Democedes' manipulation. After all, reason belongs exclusively to Greek men. The initial shame she felt for her body led her to wait until her illness had grown severe before seeking help, and her need for a cure made her willing to accept Democedes' conditions. Here, once again, Herodotus uses a woman as an agent of instability: her irrationality caused both a minor infection to grow worse and her acceptance of a bargain that no sensible man would agree to. Ultimately, Atossa is used much like the other women in the *Histories*, as an instrument of causation to explain the course of history.

Although Herodotus provides the first mention of Democedes of Croton, it is clear that the story is not a unique creation. One of its closest relations brings us back to Genesis and the story of Joseph.⁴⁰ Both tales involve the hero being separated from his original culture due to familial hostilities. The heroes both experience a brief period of growing renown in the new lands they inhabit. For Democedes, that was in Aegina, Athens, and finally Samos, while Joseph was under Potiphar's patronage in Egypt. Their fortunes quickly change and both end up imprisoned, yet emerge from their incarcerations ready to exercise their specific skillsets—medicine and dream interpretation, respectively—in order to assist a powerful ruler, who in thanks leads them to greater riches, and eventually reconciliation with their long-lost families.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Malcom Davies, "From Rags to Riches: Democedes of Croton and the Credibility of Herodotus," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 53 (2010), 25.

⁴¹ Malcom Davies, "From Rags to Riches," 26.

To biblical scholars, the story of Joseph is yet another example of the folk-tale type known as “The Success of the Wise Courtier.”⁴² This group of tales follow the same pattern:

1. A person of inferior rank is called upon to assist with a difficult problem.
2. The person who has a higher rank asks a question that no one else can answer.
3. The lower-ranked person solves the problem
4. The person is justly rewarded.

It is clear that this scheme fits quite closely with both Genesis and Herodotus, yet it does not account for everything. For instance, it does not address the beginnings of either story, instead focusing on a single scene of the narratives. In the case of Herodotus, the fact that Democedes assists with a medical issue, as opposed to a political or social one, is also ignored. There is another folk classification, however, which concentrates on the medicinal aspect of the narrative. It is known as “The Healing of the King,” and although obscure, requires a closer look. More commonly used by Shakespearean scholars, “The Healing of the King” can be summed up by the simple story pattern of a poor, scorned, or otherwise unwelcome person achieving their goal by possessing a secret knowledge of the king’s illness and curing him.⁴³

Democedes first meets Darius when the king is suffering from a sprained ankle, injured while participating in the quintessentially Persian activity of riding on horseback.⁴⁴ Ironically then, Herodotus draws heavily on Greek myth in his retelling of Democedes’ deeds. Detlev Fehling posits that Darius’ refusal to let Democedes leave is inspired by King Minos’ insistence

⁴² D. L. Ashliman, *A Guide to Folktales in the English Language: Based on the Aarne-Thompson Classification System* (Greenwood, 1987), 320.

⁴³ This pattern can also be seen in Hdt. 2.11

⁴⁴ Hdt. 3.291: συνήνεικε χρόνω οὐ πολλῷ ὕστερον βασιλέα Δαρεῖον ἐν ἄγρῃ θηρῶν ἀποθρώσκοντα ἀπ’ ἵππου στραφῆναι τὸν πόδα (Not long after, King Darius twisted his foot while dismounting his horse after hunting.)

that Daedalus remain in Knossos.⁴⁵ The fact that later historian Diodorus Siculus, writing between 60 and 30 BCE, weaves these two stories together is further proof of their connection in the folk imagination. In his version of the narrative, Pasiphae aids Daedalus and Icarus by providing them with a boat. It is assumed that she was driven by the traditional folk-tale emotion of gratitude in regards to Daedalus' earlier help with the issue of the bull (that ultimately resulted in the creation of the Minotaur). This provides a neat parallel with the story of Atossa and her gratitude for Democedes for removing the mass on her breast. In each case, the skilled foreign craftsman helps a woman with the sort of thing that she might feel shame about (breast tumor; bestial desire). As Davies puts it, "Diodorus' version may conceivably be a rationalization of the more familiar airborne escape of Daedalus, but such rationalization is very much in keeping with Herodotean narrative values."⁴⁶

Where Atossa wielded her influence indirectly, Artemisia, the ruler of Herodotus' native Halicarnassus, exercised an overt power. As the second Persian expedition gets under way, Herodotus begins an extensive catalogue of the Mede forces, and in the process introduces Artemisia:

τῶν μὲν νῦν ἄλλων οὐ παραμένημαι ταξίαρχων ὡς οὐκ ἀναγκαζόμενος, Ἀρτεμισίης δὲ τῆς μάλιστα θῶμα ποιεῦμαι ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα στρατευσαμένης γυναικός· ἦτις ἀποθανόντος τοῦ ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆ τε ἔχουσα τὴν τυραννίδα καὶ παιδὸς ὑπάρχοντος νεηνίεω ὑπὸ λήματός τε καὶ ἀνδρηίης ἐστρατεύετο, οὐδεμιῆς οἱ ἐούσης ἀναγκαίης.

Now I make no mention of the other commanders, as no one is forcing me, but Artemisia, whom I especially marvel, and who as a woman led an army against Greece. After the death of her husband, she herself ruled, though she had a son, and led an army in the expedition with her daring and manly courage, under no compulsion (Hdt. 7.99.1).

⁴⁵ Detlev Fehling, *Herodotus and his 'Sources': Citation, invention and narrative art* (Francis Cairns, 1989), 244.

⁴⁶ Davies, "From Rags to Riches: Democedes of Croton and the Credibility of Herodotus," 20.

Out of all the Persian allies mentioned, she is the only foreign leader named. This pattern continues, with Herodotus neglecting to give any other Persian ally the same consideration as Artemisia. It is an interesting exception to his usual inclusivity as a historian: she contributes only five ships out of the 1,207 that made up Xerxes' fleet (Hdt. 7.89.1, 99.2), "and yet, on the whole, she receives more coverage in the narrative of that expedition than any other individual fighting on the Persian side, after Mardonius."⁴⁷ But why this selectivity? Some scholars have argued that Herodotus is proud of his countrywoman's exploits, and in his narrative works to increase the status of Halicarnassus by demonstrating her importance. Yet this theory, which ignores the historical circumstances, actively denies her integral role in the battle and historical retelling, and in doing so questions Herodotus' handling of the material.

In this introduction, the word *andrēiē*, or "manly excellence," becomes paradoxical when referring to Artemisia. When read in conjunction with Xerxes' statement at Salamis that "οἱ μὲν ἄνδρες γεγόνασι μοι γυναῖκες, αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες ἄνδρες" (The men have become women and the women men, Hdt. 8.88.3), it seems to indicate that Herodotus views Artemisia outside of the traditional Greek dichotomies. Not only does she blur the lines between sexes, but also the distinctions between "barbarian" and Greek. Artemisia herself articulates these differences, saying "οἱ γὰρ ἄνδρες τῶν σῶν ἀνδρῶν κρέσσονες τοσοῦτο εἰσὶ κατὰ θάλασσαν ὅσον ἄνδρες γυναικῶν" (Their [Greek] men are much stronger than yours on the sea, as men are to women, Hdt. 8.68a). By depicting them as lacking the skills to engage in naval warfare, both Artemisia and Xerxes insult the very masculinity of Persian culture.

⁴⁷ Rosaria Vignolo Munson, "Artemisia in Herodotus," *Classical Antiquity* vol. 7 (1988): 92.

As a woman who embodies masculine ideals,⁴⁸ Artemisia is both antithetical and analogous to the Persians she surrounds herself with, which in turn affects her connection with Greece. Her status as an Asiatic invader and advisor to the king makes it clear that she identifies with the Persians, even if she herself is decidedly un-Persian. From the Greek view, however, she substantiates the bias of the East being a world turned upside down. In this land, the men act like women, the women act like men, and everyone is a slave to the king.⁴⁹ As living proof that a woman can indeed be a key military player, she threatens the very foundation of Greek culture. It should be no surprise then, that the Greeks made a special reward for her capture (Hdt. 8.93.2).

Despite the animosity that the Greeks clearly had for her, Herodotus emphasizes her Greek—and by extension “male”—side in the *Histories*. Unlike most of the queens that populate the work, Artemisia is Greek and commands a Greek army. The character that Herodotus presents is compatible to this classification, and he seems to ignore any reports or gossip of feminine weakness. In fact, Munson notes that Herodotus

Keeps her remarkably free of those barbaric traits which in the *Histories* tend to characterize the dominant females of the East. Foreign to bedroom politics and to feminine issues, the Herodotean Artemisia belongs to the "outdoors," and by virtue of her skill both in public council and in war she appears, not merely masculine like a wild Amazon, but the representative of a straight male world, like a cultured Athena.⁵⁰

In direct comparison to the “other” women presented, from Candaules’ wife to Atossa, there is no sexual impropriety associated with Artemisia. Her gendered impudence serves as a shield against bodily shame and other typically feminine problems. By taking on the characteristics of a

⁴⁸ Artemisia becomes a symbol of women who engage in warfare, even being compared to the Amazons in Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata* (672).

⁴⁹ Pierre Vidal-Naquet, “Slavery and Rule of Women in Tradition, Myth and Utopia” in *Myth, Religion and Society: Structuralist Essays*, ed. R.L Gordon (Cambridge University Press, 1982), 188.

⁵⁰ Munson, “Artemisia in Herodotus,” 94.

man, she is able to overcome the handicaps she was born with and gain respect in the same ways the men around her do.

There is another reason that Artemisia is held separate from her fellow commanders; unlike the other leaders, she served with daring and manly courage, and *under no compulsion* (οὐδεμιῆς οἱ ἐούσης ἀναγκαίης). The other generals, regardless of ethnicity, were slaves of the king, no better than any foot soldier and therefore not worthy of mention in the history of the war. Artemisia chose to advise Xerxes. She chose to lead an army. By most standards, this should make her decidedly less Greek, yet it does not. Self-governance was thought of as a privilege of the Greeks, especially the Athenians, not of the Eastern “other.”⁵¹

For an ally of Xerxes to have freedom and for a woman to have *andreia* is completely paradoxical. Yet but creating a character who is similar to no one, Herodotus is able to simultaneously relate her to both sides of the war. Almost as surprising is the claim made a short time later, that Artemisia commanded the “most famous” ships in the Persian navy, right after the Phoenician contingent (Hdt. 7.99.3). In that same sentence, Artemisia’s third—and arguably most important—contribution to the Persian cause is revealed: in addition to providing the best ships, Artemisia also has “γνώμας ἀρίστας,” the best opinions. It is through her seemingly sound judgement and ability to use reason (both Greek traits) that the tyrant of Halicarnassus is able to ascend to the rank of top military commander. She is an unknown quantity, neither completely Greek nor Eastern, a woman who acts like a man. These unique attributes make her the ideal

⁵¹ While some Greek *poleis* did choose to remain neutral or ally with the Persians, many others wished to be free (Hdt. 7.178.2). For other Greek choices, see Hdt. 7.136.1, 220.1, 228.3, and 8.4, 46-47, 49, 56, 79. Herodotus underlines the importance of political autonomy to the Athenians throughout his retelling (see Hdt. 7.139.5, 143.3, 8.62, 140-44, and 9.4-6). However, this is best exemplified in Themistocles’ speech to the Athenians before Salamis about choice (Hdt. 8.83).

character for Herodotus the author to use as a force of unpredictability.

For all the focus the focus on Artemisia's military feats, it is her "exemplary judgment" that awards her the most influence in the Persian army. Before Salamis, Artemisia warns Xerxes to avoid a battle at sea, stating that the unified Greek fleet is far superior to his own. Of the Persian navy, she says

δειμαίνω μὴ ὁ ναυτικὸς στρατὸς κακῶθεις τὸν πεζὸν προσδηλήσῃται. πρὸς δὲ, ὃ βασιλεῦ, καὶ τόδε ἐς θυμὸν βάλευ, ὡς τοῖσι μὲν χρηστοῖσι τῶν ἀνθρώπων κακοὶ δοῦλοι φιλέουσι γίνεσθαι, τοῖσι δὲ κακοῖσι χρηστοί. σοὶ δὲ ἐόντι ἀρίστῳ ἀνδρῶν πάντων κακοὶ δοῦλοι εἰσὶ, οἳ ἐν συμμάχων λόγῳ λέγονται εἶναι ἐόντες Αἰγύπτιοί τε καὶ Κύπριοι καὶ Κίλικες καὶ Πάμφυλοι, τῶν ὄφελος ἐστὶ οὐδέν.

I fear that if your naval fleet becomes scared, it will harm your soldiers on land. So, my King, take this to heart: As the slaves of good people are base, the slaves of dishonorable people tend to be good. You, who are the best of men, have base slaves that are regarded as your allies; the Egyptians, Cyprians, Cilicians and Pamphylians are no help (Hdt. 8.65c).

As nothing more than the poor slaves of a benevolent master, the Persian fleet is unequipped to handle the might of the Greek navy. Instead, Artemisia proposes that they attack the Peloponnese directly, which would cause the Greeks to flee back to their individual *poleis*. In her second word of warning, after the events of Salamis, Artemisia advises the now-defeated Xerxes to return to Persia, and leave his commander and land forces to finish the final skirmishes. After all, the army and all its leaders are no more than slaves, tools in the King's victory or scapegoats for his defeat (Hdt. 8.102).

These interventions follow a reoccurring pattern used by Herodotus: when sound advice is given twice, the first piece is ignored while the second is followed.⁵² On both occasions, Herodotus has her act the perfect Persian ally. She compliments the king and acknowledges the

⁵² Lattimore, "The Wise Adviser in Herodotus," *Classical Philology* 34 (1939), 29.

master-slave relationship between Xerxes and his subjects. Yet the format of the two scenes is fundamentally different. After the crushing defeat at Salamis, Artemisia meets with Xerxes in private, all the other advisors having been dismissed (Hdt. 8.101.2). This change of setting is significant, as it “dramatizes in a direct way the permanently operative fact of the king's absolute *arbitrium* and of his unaccountability vis-a-vis subjects, allies, and advisers.”⁵³ In many ways this a return to Eastern despotism, after the experiment in group deliberation and majority rule failed the Persian king (Hdt. 8.67-69).

As a democratic element tries to intrude on the war council, it highlights the autocratic elements of the Persian scenes. Here there are courtly formalities, the king is addressed as master, and most importantly, the final decision to attack Salamis corresponds to Xerxes’ preferences. All of his commanders, except Artemisia, are too afraid to offer dissenting opinions. Herodotus uses this scene as a historian to illustrate that democracy is an exclusively Hellenic form of governance. Not only can the Persians not understand it, but their failure to properly execute democracy directly causes their defeat at Salamis. As an author, Herodotus’ choice to include the first Persian war council does more than just corroborate cultural biases. These advisory interventions frame the Battle of Salamis, providing a clear narrative line from the decision to adopt such an unsound strategy, to its calamitous outcome and severe consequences. Artemisia’s speech provides an explanation for the systematic failure of the adopted stratagem, foreshadowing the destruction of the Persian forces, and cements her place as yet another of Herodotus’ ignored advisors.⁵⁴

⁵³ Munson, “Artemisia in Herodotus,” 96.

⁵⁴ Herodotus makes no secret of his Homeric inspiration, and during the Persian war councils, seems to paint Artemisia as his own Cassandra. Only she is able to see the ruinous effects that

Of course, it is impossible to ignore the fact that Xerxes' loss at Salamis was due, partly, to Artemisia herself. While caught up in the fighting, an Attic trireme began to pursue her ship. Artemisia is faced with a choice, and acts in such a way that "works out for her best advantage."⁵⁵ She rams a Calyndian ship, destroying the vessel and killing the entire crew, including the Calyndian king. Herodotus, asserting his own narratorial authority, notes that "I cannot say whether she had some quarrel with [Damasithymus, King of Calynda] while at the Hellespont, and she did this intentionally, or if the ship of the Calydnians was in her path by chance" (εἰ μὲν καὶ τι νεῖκος πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐγγέγονε ἔτι περὶ Ἑλλάσποντον ἐόντων, οὐ μέντοι ἔχω γε εἰπεῖν οὔτε εἰ ἐκ προνοίης αὐτὰ ἐποίησε, οὔτε εἰ συνεκύρησε ἢ τῶν Καλυνδέων κατὰ τύχην παραπεσοῦσα νηῦς, Hdt. 8.87.3).⁵⁶ Regardless of why the ship fell, the result is the same: Artemisia "has the luck of gaining a double advantage" (εὐτυχίη χρησαμένη διπλᾶ ἐωυτὴν ἀγαθὰ ἐργάσατο 8.87.4): The Athenian ship chasing her thinks she is his ally, and desists from its pursuit, while at the same time, Xerxes believes that she has just destroyed a Greek ship. It is a third stroke of luck that none of the Calyndians survived to expose her deception.

Upon seeing Artemisia's supposed prowess at sea, Xerxes reportedly exclaimed "The men have become women, and the women" (οἱ μὲν ἄνδρες γεγόνασί μοι γυναῖκες, αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες ἄνδρες, Hdt. 8.88.3). Unlike his earlier disdain for the Persians at Thermopylae ("There are many human beings, but few real men" Hdt. 7.210.2), Xerxes's statement is not based only on their actions at Salamis. Instead, Herodotus uses Xerxes as a mouthpiece, letting the audience know that Artemisia's prophetic warning during the first council was true. Yet in saying this,

an attack on Salamis would have, but the men around her pay no mind to her (accurate) predictions in favor of pleasing the king.

⁵⁵ Much like in the case of Gyges, Herodotus never presents dying as a legitimate choice for Artemisia.

⁵⁶ One should also not discount that Herodotus is just being ironic.

Xerxes proves that he is bested in military strategy by Artemisia not once, but twice, and now he is blind to her cunning in action. However, Artemisia's show of intelligence and daring at Salamis blatantly contradict any notions of heroic valor. Therefore, "the men-woman reversal mentioned by Xerxes, which at first inevitably suggests a Greek-Barbarian antithesis in the pattern of polarity between Persians and Spartans (7.210.2), is measured against Artemisia's actual achievement and helps to assign it to its proper sphere, far removed from both those other polar extremes."⁵⁷ Later on in the *Histories*, Herodotus tells us that "In Persia, it is the greatest of all taunts to be called worse than a woman" (παρὰ δὲ τοῖσι Πέρσησι γυναικὸς κακίῳ ἀκοῦσαι δέννος μέγιστος ἐστὶ, 9.107.1). In this case, however, it is a woman who has demonstrated cowardice, rather than his men. Although this irony is lost on the Persian king, he is well aware of the the insult that he levels at his fleet. This line is also indicative of the Greek cultural prejudices against the Persians, and it is easy to imagine that slipping it into the narrative would result in cheers and nods of approval from an Athenian audience.

It seems that Herodotus himself does not view cowardice as inexorably linked to femininity. There are approximately 375 passages in the *Histories* that involve women,⁵⁸ most of them concerning the life of the average woman in Herodotus' extensive ethnography. That being said, out of every mention of "γυνή" (woman), only four times is it used in a pejorative sense: when Cyrus conquers Lydia (1.55.4), Xerxes' exclamation at Salamis (8.88.3), the insults hurled by the Persians at Boeotia (9.20.1), and Masistes' mockery of Artayntes (9.107.1). In none of these instances are perpetrators of such language Greek. There is no one reason for this, but I postulate that, especially after the Persian Wars, Greek men did not need to compare themselves

⁵⁷ Munson, "Artemisia in Herodotus," 103.

⁵⁸ Dewald, "Biology and Politics: Women in Herodotus' *Histories*," 12.

to women in order to feel superior. The *Histories* is spotted with favorable comparisons between Greeks and the “others.” Everywhere Herodotus goes, he brings with him the idea of Hellenic culture as the standard for civilization, and unsurprisingly nowhere else comes to close to matching the military, intellectual, and cultural achievements of the *poleis*. The loss at Salamis meant for the Greeks validation of their own superiority both on the battlefield and off. For the Persians, at least in the Greek imagination, it represented a crushing blow to a dominant civilization, a massive kingdom defeated by a few assorted *poleis*. Therefore, it seems only fitting that as a *Greek* historian-cum-author, Herodotus saves his most explicitly gendered insults for the men on the losing side, those who have sunk so low that they are only better than women.

As a character, Artemisia presents a portrait of a woman who knows her own power. She is unlike the men and women who comfortably stay within the cultural norms and exists outside of the Greek-barbarian and man-woman dichotomies, instead inhabiting a place of her own within the *Histories*. Instead of being motivated by heroic glory or physical shame, Artemisia works to forward her own self-interest, disregarding those who are negatively affected by her actions. Luck, or in this case the narrator, are firmly on her side. Herodotus uses Artemisia to explicitly explain why Salamis was a Persian failure, and her actions in battle only reinforce the inherent superiority of the Greeks. Artemisia’s status as a woman allows her to flout the military ideals taught to men, thereby excusing her disloyalty to the Persian cause and making her an instrument of instability that ultimately can explain the Greek victory at Salamis.

Chapter 4: Dueling Narrators

In Book V of the *Histories*, before the great battles of Marathon and Salamis, the *poleis* in Asia Minor were faced with the rapidly expanding Persian empire. Some Hellenic leaders adapted to life under Persian rule, while others violently rebelled. This led to the Ionian Revolt. The largest of the *poleis* was Miletus, but even it could not face the might of the Persian army alone. As a result, the Milesian tyrant, Aristagoras, sailed to mainland Greece with the hopes of persuading the great *poleis* of Sparta and Athens to provide military aid.

Appeal for aid from the Spartan king Cleomenes, there are clear parallels between Aristagoras and Herodotus as inquisitors. Although his information is accurate, Aristagoras' information is also misleading, as his primary motive is to trick the Spartan king into going to war against Persia. He ultimately fails, however, due to being openly deceptive and to his inability to use the truth wisely. Herodotus, who prides himself on being able use the truth persuasively and knowledgably sets up the character to be a foil to himself. In doing this he is able assert his own narratorial authority.

Aristagoras begins his account to Cleomenes with an ethnography of the Asiatic peoples. Instead of mimicking Herodotus' own ethnographical presentation, it represents a negative iteration of the narrative technique. First and foremost, Aristagoras' intent is to mislead. He is acting wholly in his own self-interest and in the interest of his *polis*, seeking to goad Cleomenes into battle under false pretenses, with no regard to the Spartan sacrifices that would need to be

made. Additionally, Aristagoras' ethnographic account proves unsuccessful. Not only does he include falsities, but even the misinformation was not enough to convince the Spartan king. Lastly, Herodotus continues Aristagoras' account once he has been cut off. He confidently corrects and enhances it, promising his audience an account that is more "accurate" (Hdt. 5.54.1) than the one they had just heard. Scholars have noticed Herodotus' negative tone when describing Aristagoras, and have ascribed several reasons this. Some have said that the author was pushing his own thematic agendas, including anti-imperialism or the innate conflict between the Greeks and Persians. Others speculate that Herodotus' disdain for Aristagoras comes from the latter's degenerate morality in using ethnography as a tool for deception.⁵⁹

It is unfair to say that Aristagoras is the complete opposite of Herodotus, and that the former's portrayal is completely negative. The two narrators share many of the same characteristics. Superficially, they are both attracted to geography and ethnography. On a syntactic level, however, they prove even more similar. Herodotus imbues Aristagoras' accounts with almost identical expressions to those he himself uses throughout the *Histories*. Despite the fundamental problems with Aristagoras' account to Cleomenes, Herodotus even notes that the tyrant is "correct" (5.54.1) in his description of the journey to Susa. As a result, Aristagoras is portrayed as a complex narrator and opposing inquirer whom Herodotus alternatively identifies with and disassociates from.

The first instance of Aristagoras the inquirer comes when he gives an ethnological description of the military outfit and weaponry of the "barbarians" (Hdt. 5.49). He implores Cleomenes to free his people from slavery, appealing to their shared Greek culture, and when

⁵⁹ David Branscome, *Textual Rivals* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 111.

that does not work, he resorts to flattery. Aristagoras promises that the Spartans could easily accomplish this task, saying

εὐπετέως δὲ ὑμῖν ταῦτα οἶά τε χωρέειν ἐστὶ: οὔτε γὰρ οἱ βάρβαροι ἄλκιμοι εἰσὶ, ὑμεῖς τε τὰ ἐς τὸν πόλεμον ἐς τὰ μέγιστα ἀνήκετε ἀρετῆς πέρι, ἢ τε μάχῃ αὐτῶν ἐστὶ τοιήδε, τόξα καὶ αἰχμὴ βραχέα: ἀναξυρίδας δὲ ἔχοντες ἔρχονται ἐς τὰς μάχας καὶ κυρβασίας ἐπὶ τῆσι κεφαλῆσι. οὔτω εὐπετέες χειρωθῆναι εἰσὶ.

For this is something easy for you. The barbarians are not brave, while your great excellence in battle is well known. And as for their manner of fighting: they carry bows and short spears, and go into battle wearing trousers, and, on their heads, *kyrbasiai*. Therefore, they would fall without trouble (Hdt. 5.49.3-4).

In many ways, Aristagoras foreshadows Herodotus' description of the clothing and weaponry displayed by the different contingents of Xerxes' army, the Persians in particular (Hdt. 7.61-80).

In this case, archaeological evidence supports Aristagoras'—and by default Herodotus'—description.⁶⁰ In trying to persuade Cleomenes that the Spartans would easily defeat the “barbarians,” Aristagoras makes some interesting narrative choices. For one, he brackets his description of their military equipment with words meaning “easy” (εὐπετέως, Hdt. 5.49.3 and εὐπετέες, Hdt. 5.49.4). Doing this, Aristagoras tries to psychologically link the idea of an easy victory to the foreign military equipment. His careful word selection does not end there, however. In this account of the “barbarian” military uniform, Aristagoras relies on words that would be seen as pejorative or mocking by the Greeks. Short spears, trousers, bows, and *kyrbasia* (a turban-like headdress worn by the Persians) are all patently un-Greek, and therefore inferior. As Branscome points out, not only the narrator Herodotus associate the *kyrbasia* with

⁶⁰ Dyfri Williams, “Vase Painting in Fifth Century Athens” in *Looking at Greek Vases*, ed. Tom Rasmussen and Nigel Jonathan Spivey (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 108.

the exotic and Eastern, but “*kyrbasia* also seems to be a favorite word used by comic poets such as Aristophanes when they mention foreign headgear.”⁶¹

Foreign and barbarian, are, of course, the operative euphemisms here. Not once in this account does Aristagoras say that they are going to be fighting the Persians or Medes. While Aristagoras is not lying—many foreign peoples did carry bows and short spears, and wear trousers and *kyrbasia*—he purposefully allows Cleomenes to assume that there is only a possibility that it is the Persians being described. Furthermore, this portrait of the Persians is supposed to be of a comically ineffective army. In doing this, Aristagoras hopes to prod Cleomenes into action under the false pretense of an easy battle, when in reality, the Spartans would be facing much more impressive opponents.

Deception is not Aristagoras’ only motivation for withholding the true name of the enemy in 5.49. Although Herodotus was writing after the end of the Persian Wars, Aristagoras was making his own account at the onset of the Ionian Revolt. The Greeks would not even encounter the Persians until the Battle of Marathon in 490 BCE. Of these Athenians, Herodotus says

πρῶτοι μὲν γὰρ Ἑλλήνων πάντων τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν δρόμῳ ἐς πολεμίους ἐχρήσαντο, πρῶτοι δὲ ἀνέσχοντο ἐσθητά τε Μηδικὴν ὀρέοντες καὶ τοὺς ἄνδρας ταύτην ἐσθημένους: τέως δὲ ἦν τοῖσι Ἑλλήσι καὶ τὸ οὖνομα τὸ Μήδων φόβος ἀκοῦσαι.

These were the first of all Greeks we know to run at their enemies, and first to endure the sight of the Medic clothing and the men wearing it; for until then even hearing the name of the Medes was a source of fear for the Greeks. (Hdt. 6.112.3)

Aristagoras knows that (at this point), no Greek has met the Persians on the battlefield,

⁶¹ Branscome, *Textual Rivals*, 115.

much less defeated them handily⁶². In fact, most Hellenes still shudder with fear at the name of the Medes. Their expansion was seemingly unstoppable, and a Persian conquest of the Greek *poleis* seemed imminent. So when Aristagoras knowingly withholds the name of the enemy, it is an action born out of fear rather than malice.

Herodotus is not constrained by the same fears, and throughout the *Histories*, provides a relatively unbiased representation of the Persians. He agrees with Aristagoras that the weaponry and military garb of the Persians were lacking when compared to the Greeks, but considering how most of the battles ended, that is not necessarily a prejudiced claim. In his catalogue of the Persian contingent, Herodotus comments that the Persians themselves “were the best furnished, and were the best [soldiers] of them all” (κόσμον δὲ πλεῖστον παρείχοντο διὰ πάντων Πέρσαι, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἄριστοι ἦσαν, Hdt. 7.83.2). As the best and bravest (ἄριστοι) in the Mede forces, they present an actual challenge to the Spartans on land. Of course the Lacedaemonians ultimately prevail, but Herodotus explains that “λήματι μὲν νυν καὶ ῥώμῃ οὐκ ἦσσαν οἱ Πέρσαι, ἄνοπλοι δὲ ἐόντες καὶ πρὸς ἀνεπιστήμονες ἦσαν καὶ οὐκ ὅμοιοι τοῖσι ἐναντίοισι σοφίην” (The Persians had neither inferior strength or courage, but were without armor and unskilled [in hoplite warfare] Hdt. 9.63.2). The “barbarians” were equal in strength and valor to the Greeks, but were unprepared for the phalanx.

The narration given by both Aristagoras and Herodotus opens up the discourse of the *Histories*, allowing for the text to operate on different levels for additional meanings.⁶³ In the scenes of Aristagoras and Cleomenes, Aristagoras is understood as the intradiegetic (or internal)

⁶² John Dillery, “Reconfiguring the Past: Thyrea, Thermopylae, and Narrative Patterns in Herodotus” *American Journal of Philology* 117 (1996): 234.

⁶³ Ryan Schellenberg, “‘They Spoke the Truest of Words’: Irony in the Speeches of Herodotus’s *Histories*.” *Arethusa* 42 (2009): 140.

narrator, and Cleomenes his intradiegetic audience. Herodotus, meanwhile, is the extradiegetic (or external) narrator and his readers—either in the fifth-century or today—are the extradiegetic audience.

That being said, Aristagoras is understood one way by Cleomenes, who seems to seriously consider aiding the Milesians. This goodwill evaporates, however, when Cleomenes finds out that the trip would take over three months (Hdt. 5.50.2).⁶⁴ Yet Aristagoras will not be deterred, and follows the king to his home. Once there, he resorts to bribery, offering upwards of fifty talents as an incentive to fight (Hdt. 5.51.2). Just as Cleomenes is about to accept the deal, his nine-year-old daughter, Gorgo interrupts. She warns “πάτερ, διαφθερέει σε ὁ ξείνος, ἢν μὴ ἀποστὰς ἴῃς” (Father, the stranger will corrupt you, unless you go away from him, Hdt. 5.51.2). In this instance, once again are the plots of men thwarted by a woman. Gorgo’s presence in this scene is a direct result of Aristagoras’ doggedness in pursuing Cleomenes. When it seems like the King is about to accept the bribe—after all fifty talents is no small sum—and set off for Ionia, Gorgo warns her father against it. She is both female and a child, yet paradoxically, she is the only rational person in the room. In her refusal to sell the army to Aristagoras, she embodies the core Spartan values of discipline, self-reliance, and *polis* loyalty just as much as—if not more than—most men. As a result, Sparta refuses to send aid and Cleomenes banishes Aristagoras from the *polis*.

Naturally, the extradiegetic audience perceives Aristagoras’ speech differently. As Schellenberg says, “The disjunction between the evaluation of discourse by an internal addressee

⁶⁴ As a whole, the Spartans rarely left their lands. This is due mostly to the fact that the economy and culture of their *polis* was based on the continual subjugation of the Helots. These slaves greatly outnumbered citizen Lacedaemonians, and the Spartans feared that if the army were to stray too far from home, there would be a violent slave uprising.

and by the reader who overhears it is often a function of the reader's possession of knowledge that the internal addressee lacks."⁶⁵ The main point of disconnect here is the outcome of the Ionian Revolt and the Persian Wars. Herodotus' audience knows how it all ends, while Cleomenes does not. Regarding such an inconsistency of information, Schellenberg further notes

Extradiagetic resonances do not suppress but instead coexist with the speech's intradiegetic function. Indeed, it is precisely the reader's simultaneous apprehension of a speech's evaluation by its internal addressees and that reader's own evaluation creates the potential for irony.⁶⁶

The external audience understands the ironic implications of Aristagoras' claims that the Spartans could easily defeat the Persians. This audience, unlike Cleomenes, knows just how the revolt ended, and more importantly, how "easily" the Persians beat the Ionians instead. In this way, irony becomes another way for Herodotus to assert his own narratorial authority over Aristagoras. Using irony, he can challenge the ethnographic account presented by Aristagoras, while simultaneously distancing his own ethnography from this intentionally deceptive one.

Although Herodotus seeks to distance himself from Aristagoras, the two resemble each other most during Aristagoras' cataloguing of the Asian peoples under Persian rule. In the following passage, Aristagoras' rhetoric begins to mimic that of Herodotus, as he tells

Cleomenes

κατοίκηνται δὲ ἀλλήλων ἐχόμενοι ὡς ἐγὼ φράσω, Ἴωνων μὲν τῶνδε οἶδε Λυδοί, οἰκέοντές τε χώραν ἀγαθὴν καὶ πολυαργυρώτατοι ἐόντες.' δεικνὺς δὲ ἔλεγε ταῦτα ἐς τῆς γῆς τὴν περίοδον, τὴν ἐφέρετο ἐν τῷ πίνακι ἐντετυμημένην. 'Λυδῶν δέ' ἔφη λέγων ὁ Ἀρισταγόρης 'οἶδε ἔχονται Φρύγες οἱ πρὸς τὴν ἡῶ, πολυπροβατώτατοι τε ἐόντες πάντων τῶν ἐγὼ οἶδα καὶ πολυκαρπώτατοι. Φρυγῶν δὲ ἔχονται Καππαδόκαι, τοὺς ἡμεῖς Συρίους

⁶⁵ Schellenberg, "They Spoke the Truest of Words" 135.

⁶⁶ Schellenberg, "They Spoke the Truest of Words" 144-45.

καλέομεν. τούτοισι δὲ πρόσουροι Κίλικες, κατήκοντες ἐπὶ θάλασσαν τήνδε, ἐν τῇ ἦδε Κύπρος νῆσος κέεται: οἱ πεντακόσια τάλαντα βασιλεῖ τὸν ἐπέτειον φόρον ἐπιτελεῦσι. Κιλικῶν δὲ τῶνδε ἔχονται Ἀρμένιοι οἶδε, καὶ οὗτοι ἐόντες πολυπρόβατοι, Ἀρμενίων δὲ Ματιηνοὶ χώραν τήνδε ἔχοντες. ἔχεται δὲ τούτων γῆ ἦδε Κισσίη, ἐν τῇ δὴ παρὰ ποταμὸν τόνδε Χοάσπην κείμενα ἐστὶ τὰ Σοῦσα ταῦτα, ἔνθα βασιλεύς τε μέγας δίαιταν ποιέεται, καὶ τῶν χρημάτων οἱ θησαυροὶ ἐνθαῦτα εἰσὶ: ἐλόντες δὲ ταύτην τὴν πόλιν θαρσέοντες ἤδη τῷ Διὶ πλούτου πέρι ἐρίζετε.

“They live next to one another, as I shall show: next to the Ionians are the Lydians, who live in a good land and are rich in silver,” he said this while pointing to a map of the earth, which he carried engraved on a tablet. “Next to the Lydians, said Aristagoras, “these are the Phrygians, to the east, the richest men I know in flocks and fruit. Nearby them are the Cappadocians, whom we call the Syrians. Their neighbors are the Cilicians, whose land reaches to the sea there, in which the island of Cyprus lies. They pay five hundred talents to the king as a yearly tribute. Next to the Cilicians are the Armenians, who I know are also rich in flocks, and after the Armenians, the Matieni, who have this land. Next is the land of Cissia, in which, near the Choaspes river, lies Susa, where a great king lives and where his stores of wealth are. If you bravely take this city, you will rival Zeus in riches.” (Hdt. 5.49.5-7)

This entire speech sounds considerably like Herodotus’ own ethnographical accounts.

Aristagoras goes through peoples, one after another, pointing out which nations are where on his map. In his depiction of Libya earlier, Herodotus did much the same thing, albeit rhetorically, not literally pointing to a map.

Both narrators start their accounts with the declaration that they intend to enumerate each people as one would encounter them, moving out from a set point. Where Aristagoras begins in Ionia and moves eastward, Herodotus starts with the Libyans near Egypt and moves westward. They both interject reminders of what direction they are moving into their accounts, providing a rhetorical compass that aids the audience in imagining an accurate map. The similarities between the two narrators do not end there. Herodotus infuses much of his own vocabulary and phraseology into Aristagoras’ account. For instance, they both often use the middle voice of the verb ἔχειν (“to be next to”) in order to denote one people bordering another. The phrase “κατήκειν ἐπὶ θάλασσαν” (“to reach to the sea”) also occurs in both catalogues.

Looking at these rhetorical similarities, it is easy to think that Herodotus just made a mistake; he unwittingly took over Aristagoras' ethnography and replaced it with his own account. While these syntactical commonalities should not be ignored, there still remains one fundamental difference between Aristagoras and Herodotus: how each of them interacts with the truth. Herodotus strived to present himself as an unbiased reporter of the facts, while Aristagoras cunningly tried to deceive Cleomenes. This intent is emphasized by Herodotus, who comments that “ὁ δὲ Ἀρισταγόρης τᾶλλα ἐὼν σοφὸς καὶ διαβάλλων ἐκεῖνον εὔ” (Aristagoras had been clever and fooled him well, Hdt. 5.50.2). What Aristagoras is doing best—deceiving—is the very opposite of what an inquirer should be doing. With this comment, Herodotus lets the the extradiegetic audience in on another secret, which allows for Aristagoras' actions in 5.49-51 to be read with even more irony, therefore elevating Herodotus as a narrative authority. He has, in essence, turned irony into a weapon. As Schellenberg elaborates

Irony is a delicate matter: if one is too explicit, clever subtlety quickly degenerates into dull and artless polemic; if one is too subtle, the barb easily goes unnoticed. The trick, then, is to provide one's readers with sufficient cues without being overbearing—that is, to give one's readers the satisfaction of “discovering” the irony themselves while also ensuring that they take the time to look for it. Thus Herodotus' ironic use of discourse is necessarily a matter of winks and elbow nudges, small cues that prompt the readers of these speeches to disengage somewhat from their identification with the intradiegetic audience [i.e., Cleomenes in 5.49-51] and thereby make room for their own extradiegetic evaluative perspective.⁶⁷

In this way, Herodotus allows Aristagoras to display some accuracy in his accountings, only for that authority to be undercut by scheming motivations.

Aristagoras' plot did not fail because of his deception, but because of his honesty. The ruse is foiled when Aristagoras makes the mistake of telling Cleomenes the truth about how long

⁶⁷ Schellenberg, ““They Spoke the Truest of Words’: Irony in the Speeches of Herodotus’s *Histories*,” 142

it takes to get to Susa. He “σφάλλεσθαι,” or literally, “trips up,” as in wrestling. In essence, Aristagoras grapples with the truth and loses. His mistake is in ignoring what variety of inquirer he is, for Aristagoras is not a real inquirer by any means. He is simply playing a role in order to deceive Cleomenes. This charade is ruined because he tells the truth. In contrast, for Herodotus the truth is never a mistake. Honesty is an obligation. For a known liar, the truth is devastating, and by this logic, a pretender such as Aristagoras telling the truth is as horrible as a consummate inquirer like Herodotus deceiving his audience

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Herodotus, in taking it upon himself to write down the history of the Persian Wars, unwittingly appointed himself a literary author as well as historian. His desire was to recount the events as accurately as possible, but unsurprisingly, instances of authorial intervention lace the *Histories*. These episodes have caused historians and scholars alike, from Thucydides to today, to question the veracity of Herodotus' version of events. However, to reduce Herodotus down to the "Father of History" or "Father of Lies" is unfair to both the author and his work. It is clear that Herodotus strayed from known fact, and supplemented his report with folktale and myth, but that does not destroy its historical significance. By examining the episodes where Herodotus would have had to have used oral traditions or his own inventions, a gendered version of history begins to emerge, wherein women act as forces for instability and rapid change. Contrary to these agents of volatility are male characters, such as Aristagoras, whom Herodotus uses as an extension of and foil for his own narratorial persona.

Book One begins with a series of kidnappings between the Greeks and the Persians. In order to provide the most accurate representation, Herodotus retells the Persian, Phoenician and Greek accounts. All agree that the taking of women is not so serious as to cause a centuries-long enmity. It is not simply the wives and daughters of kings who are being kidnapped, but the mythical women who defined Greek legend. Io, Europa, Medea, Helen; Herodotus includes

them all as paradoxical objects of exchange, simultaneously changing and remaining the same, both passive and active in their own lives, but altogether subordinate to a greater narrative.

These inconsistencies mirror the difficulties that Herodotus faces while trying to assert causality before the existence of a written record, leaving him with only legend and his own notions with which he can fill in the gaps of recorded history.

As Herodotus approaches his own time, he has less of a reliance on myth. Instead, he is able to augment his history with local folktales and observations from his own travels. In the story of Gyges and Candaules, Herodotus the historian is faced with a task: describe how a thriving Heraclid family fell from power and how the Mermnad dynasty began. Here, Candaules' nameless wife acts as an instrument for instability; her shame at being seen naked by Gyges drives her to plot her husband's death and succession. Using the tale of Potiphar's wife as a guide, Herodotus' story only works if Candaules' wife adheres to her feminine values, which of course she does. Her shame as a woman is stronger than any wifely obligation, a point which is emphasized with her marriage proposal to Gyges (Hdt. 1.9). By using Candaules' wife as the agent of change, Herodotus allows Gyges to keep his hands relatively clean (he did still do the killing, after all) as he ushers in the final dynasty of Lydian kings.

The Greeks viewed the world as a series of dichotomies: man and woman, Greek and barbarian, citizen and slave. In each of these pairs, there is a superior option. So when discussing the Greeks, or even the Lydians who served as a Proximal Other, Herodotus operates under the assumption that the Greek male citizen is better in all ways. When discussing the women in Persia, this is not the case. The Greeks imagined Persian men to be no better than women, a prejudice which Herodotus plays up time and time again. As a result, the women in those episodes are allowed more influence than their Greek counterparts.

Herodotus' third book features Atossa, daughter of Cyrus, wife of Darius, and Queen of Persia. After allowing a cyst on her breast to burst, she is forced into a foolish agreement with the Greek doctor Democedes in exchange for its removal. He begs her to convince her husband to invade Greece. So begins Atossa's attempts to persuade Darius. When she initially fails, Atossa falls back on her status as a woman, insisting she needs Greek handmaidens and perfumes to enhance her womanly status. When that does not work, she resorts to veiled insults, intentionally using phrases to attack her husband's masculinity, telling him that a real man would invade Greece, and that his people need to be reminded of his manliness (Hdt. 3.134.2). Of course, these conversations are private, kept almost exclusively in the bedroom, and Herodotus would have no way of knowing what was actually said. Once again, he must play the part of author and use his own preconceived ideas to deduce how Atossa was able to successfully convince her husband to invade Greece. Because Atossa *does* succeed in persuading him. The First Persian invasion is proof of that she was able to manipulate Darius using her feminine wiles and irrationality. In this way, Herodotus makes Atossa into a force for instability, as only by embodying the virtues of a woman, and by reminding her husband his of duties as a man, can she instigate change.

In direct contrast to Atossa is Artemisia. As a member of the second Persian expedition, Artemisia exists outside of the traditional dichotomies. She is a woman who asserts her power by acting like a man, a Greek tyrant allied with the Persians but who embodies Athenian ideals. In many ways, she is a paradox. Yet her inclusion in the *Histories* is crucial. She demonstrates what happens when "The men have become women and the women men" (Hdt. 8.88.3), where a woman abandons modesty and participates in war. Unlike the women who preceded her, Artemisia never experiences sexual shame or any other typically feminine problem. By taking on

the characteristics of a man, she is able to overcome the handicaps she was born with gain respect in the same ways the men around her do. Although she gained renown from her actions at Salamis, Artemisia's most masculine trait is her ability to reason. After all, she offers Xerxes the best opinions of all his fleet commanders (Hdt. 8.65), and is the only one to argue against a battle at sea. Her logical arguments and the Persians' vote against her plays at the idea of Eastern men being inferior to Greek women. However, Artemisia's femaleness cannot be completely denied; her ultimate betrayal of the Persians during the battle goes against the masculine ideal of the soldier. In the end, Artemisia's own self-interest proves more important than any political loyalties, making her a worthy pawn in Herodotus' orchestration of the Persian defeat.

It is not only with the female characters that Herodotus' authorial voice is evident. The male inquirers who litter the *Histories* end up serving as extensions of the narrator himself. Nowhere else is this as evident as in Aristagoras' speech to Cleomenes. As the Milesian tyrant works to deceive the Spartan king, his own narrative choices are called into question. By doing this, Herodotus can point out the ways in which Aristagoras fails as a reliable source, while simultaneously strengthening his own narratorial authority. The most powerful tool at Herodotus' disposal is irony, and he uses it well. It is here that the different textual levels become even more important, as Aristagoras' words to Cleomenes end up being ironic to the extradiegetic audience. In using Aristagoras as narratorial foil, Herodotus seeks to improve his own credibility as narrator whose account is characterized by logic and accuracy.

As Herodotus chronicles the saga of the Persian Wars, the gaps in history and knowledge force him to serve as author as well as historian. Using his own beliefs and cultural biases, Herodotus molds the players in the *Histories* into his own characters. As a result, many of the

women depicted in his account act irrationally and unreasonably, just as the Greek cultural biases say they should. The mythological women who begin the *Histories*, Candaules' nameless wife, Atossa, and Artemisia, all adhere to the strict norms of femininity, and as a result, Herodotus can use the illogicality inherent to their femaleness to instigate seemingly unexplainable historical events. In contrast, Herodotus' use of Greek male characters, in particular Aristagoras, allows the author to create an extension of himself. These parallel narrations allow Herodotus to assert his own authority as a narrator in order to strengthen the integrity of his work as a whole.

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