WOMEN IN THE *HISTORIES* OF HERODOTUS

BY

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Submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Department of Classics,
University of Natal, 2001.

Durban
2001

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the portrayal of women in the *Histories* of Herodotus against the backdrop of two influences, Greek mythology, and the social customs and thought pertaining to women in ancient Greek society. Herodotus' *Histories* are particularly wide-ranging and, unlike Thucydides' later account of the Peloponnesian War, not confined to the exclusively political and military spheres. As a result, Herodotus' female characters appear naturally in the course of the stories he is telling, stories he has found as the result of his inquiries. Since his researches are so wide-ranging, the information so acquired comes from many and varied sources, both chronologically and geographically. In the course of placing the information he has gathered before his readers or audience, Herodotus has to present it in terms that can be understood and readily assimilated by those receiving it. It is my contention that in order to achieve this end he naturally moulds his stories according to two systems of information with which he and his audience are familiar, that of mythology and that of the social practices and attitudes of his time concerning women, and that these two systems of information act as a backdrop against which the stories he has collected are viewed.

When dealing with information from societies very different from the Greek πόλις, Herodotus frequently has occasion to define such information in terms of its alterity or 'otherness' in comparison with what for him and his audience is accepted practice. In this way he is able to render strange, alien and foreign customs comprehensible for his audience by expressing them in terms of what they are not and for this purpose he uses Greek societal norms as his reference point. Conversely, he is also able to render stories from foreign lands familiar by recasting his tales using

mythological elements well known to his audience, elements which would enjoy instant recognition in the minds of those receiving the information he is imparting.

For ease in examining the social context against which Herodotus is telling his stories concerning women, his female characters have been assigned to the categories of daughter, sister, wife and mother, and in each chapter the customs, attitudes and beliefs pertaining to such categories in both societal and mythological terms have been laid out before examining the characters in each category in the text. There is a final category of Women in Power since the women in this category are an excellent example of alterity in relation to Greek thought and practice.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the course of preparing this thesis I have had cause to be grateful to many people who have willingly rendered assistance. As the person most closely involved with the actual work, I have to thank most warmly my supervisor, Professor E.A. Mackay, for a most rewarding and enjoyable association and for the friendship which grew from it. Our discussion sessions have been not only enjoyable and stimulating but also challenging on occasion. She has unstintingly shared with me her wide knowledge of Greek literature, and has been especially generous in giving me free access to her extensive library. I am particularly appreciative of the time and trouble she has personally taken to track down books and articles not available in South Africa while she was overseas. Not least, I am grateful to Professor Mackay for her high standards of scholarship. If I have failed to meet them, the fault is mine, not hers.

I would also like to acknowledge the help, direct and indirect, given to me by every member of the academic staff of the Classics Department of the University of Natal in Durban during the course of researching and writing this thesis. I have learnt a great deal from all of them, both from general discussion after papers given at the graduate *colloquia*, and from individual suggestions concerning references to pursue, and I would like to put my grateful thanks to them all on record. Not least, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Mrs. S.C. McGill, the secretary of the Department, not only for the innumerable occasions she has gone out of her way to assist me but also for her warm and generous friendship.

It is customary on these occasions to thank one's family and this thesis owes its existence in large part to the unfailing support and encouragement of my husband and four daughters. I hope they have enjoyed the classical education they have acquired from their close association with its preparation, and I thank them in

particular for their welcome assistance with computer skills and proof reading. Their comments were always thought-provoking and no doubt helped to limit the number of infelicities of expression. To my parents, who did not scoff at my interest in the ancient world when I was young but bought me books on the topic instead, I likewise owe a debt of gratitude.

The debt I owe to scholars in the field of Herodotean and women's studies will be obvious from the bibliography. While acknowledging all these contributory influences, the thesis itself is my own work.

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INTRODUCTION

This study[1] examines the women who appear in Herodotus' *Histories*, both as individuals and in groups. Women play a distinct part in the world of Herodotus, and indeed they appear in his work far more often than they do in that of his successor, Thucydides. Thucydides' most famous comment about women comes in what Weil terms 'les phrases glaciales'[2] of the Funeral Oration attributed to Pericles, where he claims that women's greatest glory is not to be spoken of by men at all.[3] Several studies have been made of individual women in Herodotus, such as Artemisia in particular,[4] or of individual stories in Herodotus, for example, the story of Candaules' queen[5] and those concerning Atossa and Amestris,[6] but few deal with women in general in Herodotus.[7] Dewald has made a study of 'Women and Culture in Herodotus' in which she classifies women as either active or passive, and further subdivides these categories into individuals or groups. In her study, Dewald argues that 'Herodotus' portrait of women emphasises their full partnership with men in establishing and maintaining social order,'[8] an assessment with which I cannot wholeheartedly agree. It is true that for Herodotus the world is not a male-only preserve, and women people his pages almost as much as they did the real world, but the phrase 'full partnership' is surely too sweeping and perhaps even somewhat anachronistic. This disagreement is not to deny the possibility that some women in the

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[1] Throughout this study Latinate spellings of Greek names and institutions has been adopted, except in quotations from other authors and in instances where a name does not occur Latin, in which case the transliterated Greek spelling has been adopted. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.
[2] Weil 1976: 221.
[3] Thucydides 2.45.
[4] For example Weil 1976 and Munson 1988.
[5] For example Stahl 1968. See also Konstan 1983 and Long 1987 but the story is only one of several examined in both these studies.
[6] For example Sancisi-Weerdenberg 1988.
[7] For example Tourraix 1976 and Dewald 1981.
[8] Dewald 1981: 92.

ancient world may have exercised considerable influence over their menfolk but rather takes account of the fact that women in Herodotus' world did not participate as a matter of course in the political arena nor act as legally independent *personae*. It is true that by restricting her study to 'the social order', Dewald can deflect such criticism, but by including such women as Artemisia and Pheretime in her study, she is including women who function in the male world of war and politics as well as in the social order. Living and writing in a world in which women were denied all political rights, Herodotus reflected the societies he investigated. Few of these accorded women equal status with men; those that did seem to do so in any way earned a mention from Herodotus simply because of their exceptional character. There is, for example, his tantalising reference to the Issidones, among whom, he says, ἰσοκρατέες δὲ ὁμοίως αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖσι ἀνδράσι – 'the women have equal powers to the men.'[9] Unfortunately, he does not elaborate any further.[10] Least of all is Herodotus a polemicist advocating the rights of women; rather he is an acute observer of humankind, approximately half of which is female, and the most we can say is that he reflects that situation in his writing more faithfully than many other Greek authors. Here I would agree with Dewald's comment that Herodotus' women 'tend . . . to occur incidentally, as part of the background of his main narrative themes. His portrait is for that reason likely to reveal aspects of feminine behaviour and social values that more aggressively argumentative accounts neglect.'[11]

One of the frustrating aspects of dealing with Herodotus is attempting to reveal some sort of theme or system of classification that will hold good for the whole

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[9] *Histories* 4.26.
[10] How & Wells 1928: 1, 312 comment as follows: 'The reference here is probably not to a system of primitive matriarchy, but to the fact that, in a low state of civilisation, men and women alike have to hunt, &c.; cf. Tac. Germ. 46.' Dewald 1998 does not comment on this at all.
[11] Dewald 1981: 92.

work. This is not to accuse Herodotus of inconsistency, but is rather a function of the variety of his material,[12] which in essence embraces the known world of the time. As an amazingly open-minded observer, Herodotus recounts what he finds, frequently noting divergences from Greek custom, even praising them on occasion, aware at all times that each culture regards its own customs as best. Indeed, this awareness of the importance of νόμος or custom for each society is entirely characteristic of Herodotus and is neatly illustrated in his retelling of Darius' experiment in confronting two groups of Greeks and Indians at his court each with the funerary practices of the other. The horror evinced by each group at the custom of the other elicits the authorial comment that ὀρθῶς μοι δοκέει Πίνδαρος ποιῆσαι νόμον πάντων βασιλέα φήσας εἶναι – 'it seems right to me when Pindar says that custom is king of all.'[13] Each time he notes a divergence from or a similarity to Greek practice, he is making a natural and perhaps inescapable comparison with what is, for him and most of his audience, their typical experience. Indeed, as a man of his time and place, Herodotus frequently follows the Greek custom of not naming women, particularly respectable Greek women, and merely refers to them as the daughter, sister, wife or mother of the man with whom he is concerned.

Given the multi-faceted nature of Herodotus' work, it is therefore my intention to examine Herodotus' portrayal of women as the product of his times and background, influenced and organised by two not necessarily opposing factors, the mythology of the Greeks and the concept of women as reflected in their societal practices. In the case of the former, this *modus operandi* is a deviation from

[12] Which Thomas 2000: 7 calls 'the polymorphous nature of the *Histories*, which seem in some respects to defy categorization.'
[13] *Histories* 3.38.

the usual approach to examining myth in the context of literature; the majority of such enterprises select one myth and trace its occurrence and development through literature and over time. This study will take the opposite approach by attempting to trace in a single author, Herodotus, at least some of the mosaic of myth patterns that underlies his worldview and that of his era, and to demonstrate how myth and societal practice are interwoven in his representation of his female characters.

In order to deal with the material in an organised fashion, Herodotus' female characters have here been categorised as daughters, sisters, wives and mothers, a model which allows for the examination of the life cycle of a woman and therefore for comment on how Herodotus and his contemporaries would have regarded the various stages of a woman's life. Of course, the individual women may in fact fall into several, if not all, of these categories but for the purposes of this study, the most important relationship in their stories determines the category to which they are assigned. It is not purely by chance that they are generally defined by Herodotus as daughters, sisters, wives and mothers of various men, but rather the result of the Greek male's way of looking at the world; rarely do we find his female characters defined in terms of another woman. After an examination of these four groups of women, the final group discussed is that of women in power, since such women have exercised a fascination over the millenia as exceptions to the rule that women do not in general wield political power over men.

As one who has come to be recognised as the first historian,[14] Herodotus was making his way into uncharted territory, guided only by the idea of doing something

[14] As Jacoby 1949: 221 puts it: 'Herodotus was the first who demonstrably fixed in writing a continuous piece of Athenian history of some length, viz. the history from Peisistratos until the Xerxes War.'

that had not been done before, the recording of a discrete part of the real rather than the mythological past. This recording process necessarily involves choice and manipulation of material, for as du Bois says,

> 'History cannot of course, be a pure, "real" account of what has happened – the telling of significant events in a community's past requires selection and shaping. Time passes second by second; the historian arranges a version, an account of time's passing, which interprets events, attributes causation to various factors, foregrounds certain characters in the infinitely varied and chaotic flow of time.'[15]

It is this process of selection and shaping in relation to Herodotus' female characters that is the focus of this study, in order to discover what conventions, ideas, patterns or parallels influenced the manner in which he presented the women he wrote about.

If Herodotus is generally judged to have been the first historian, indeed to have invented the genre of history - in that he was the first to examine a series of events in the past and to see in them a single phenomenon, in his case, the war between the Greeks and the Persians - what came before Herodotus? In terms of what has survived the passage of time, the Homeric poems were written in the eighth century BCE, and it is interesting to observe that these poems, like Herodotus' *Histories*, dealt with what was believed to be the past. Although we do not have any extant material from their predecessors, it is generally agreed among scholars that the poet of the *Iliad* came at the end of a long tradition of oral poetry, and his skill and brilliance in the genre may in fact be the reason for the non-survival of other examples

[15] du Bois 1982a: 1f.

as he eclipsed them with his artistry. What is important from the standpoint of this study is the belief common to all Greeks that the Trojan War, a portion of which was Homer's subject, was a historical event. Because the oral epic tradition as represented by the Homeric texts was so well known to every Greek, the version of the actions and relationships of the gods and heroes found therein became the standard one.

It is generally agreed that Hesiod also wrote in the archaic period and whether he is seen as the Boeotian shepherd, son of Dios and Pycimede and brother of Perses, who tends his sheep on the slopes of Mt. Helicon, as recounted in the ancient biographers,[16] or as a poetic *persona* to whom a corpus of oral poetry has been attributed,[17] does not really matter when attempting to set out the cultural background with which Herodotus would have been familiar - or at least as much of it as has come down to us. The works attributed to Hesiod include the *Theogony*, in which he codified the genealogy of the gods who figured so largely in the Homeric poems. In his other work, the *Works and Days*, which is purportedly a didactic treatise dealing with the agricultural year, Hesiod presents a brief account of the whole history of mankind as a succession of ages, gold, silver, bronze and iron, with an age of heroes placed between the last two; both of Hesiod's works, therefore, also dealt, at least in part, with the past. Around the works of Homer and Hesiod there grew up the various epic cycles which recounted the events before and after those narrated in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, dealing with the exploits of various heroes, some mentioned briefly in the Homeric epics. At the same time, the myths concerning various cities in Greece,

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[16] For example, Proclus (d. AD 485). See Lefkowitz 1981b for discussion of ancient biographies of Hesiod. Podlecki 1984: 20 belongs to the school of those who believe that Hesiod was a single historical figure saying, 'Hesiod is an altogether more solid historical figure than Homer' and goes on to list the items of ostensible biographical information found in the poems.

[17] For this view see Lamberton 1988: 10 where he says, 'To conclude that we have in Hesiod a poet who, in contrast to the anonymous Homeric narrator, incorporates his identity fully into his work and gives us the specificity of an individual personality and biography would be mistaken. What we do have here . . . is a poetic tradition parallel to the Homeric one. . .'

notably Thebes, were synchronised with those of the Trojan War to fill out what was considered by the Greeks to be a true reflection of their past.

Knowledge of, if not belief in, these various accounts of the past was common to all Greeks, a knowledge apparently underpinned by the presence in the landscape of various monuments, believed to be the tombs of the heroes mentioned in the epics, and temples honouring gods and heroes.[18] The period of time covered by these accounts is designated the 'mythical past' by van Groningen, which he says is 'wholly independent and does not fit in any way into our normal historical past.'[19] He goes on to argue that this mythical past is limited at both ends, by a myth of origin at the beginning and by the last story to be told at the end; by this reading, mythical time in Greek myth begins with Chaos, from which came the primeval deities, and ends with the events surrounding the returns of the various warriors from the Trojan War. In other words, mythical time encloses the system of stories concerning the gods, goddesses, heroes and heroines of myth, stories which remain essentially unchanged and unaffected by developments in historical time, but may be utilised to explain, examine, contrast or illuminate concerns in historical time. Nagy defines myth as representing

> 'a collective expression of society, an expression that society deems to be true and valid. From the standpoint of the given society that it articulates, myth *is* the primary reality ... Myth

[18] Vandiver 1991: 75 says, in commenting on the fact that Herodotus follows the general custom of using a hero's name as the standard identification of a landmark, 'This use reiterates once again the importance of the Heroic Age in the general world view of the time; the association of heroes' names with landmarks served to link the heroic past with the human present through visible, public reference points.'

[19] van Groningen 1953: 96.

describes a meaningful and important reality that applies to the aggregate, going beyond the individual.'[20]

Greek myth, therefore, can be seen as a backdrop common to all Greek literature, including the work of Herodotus.

For example, as other genres of literature succeeded oral-derived epic, this common body of knowledge could be referred to with confidence that the audience or reader would understand the allusion; Pindar made extensive use of the corpus of mythology in his epinician odes, as he celebrated the victory of various athletes in the four great panhellenic games and compared them to the heroes of old, particularly Heracles, who is the most frequently cited hero in the odes. Bacchylides, a contemporary and perhaps rival of Pindar, employed the same kind of material in his epinician odes; indeed in two cases, Pindar and Bacchylides celebrate the same victory.[21] In the fifth century development of tragedy, the playwright could be sure that the audience would know the outline of the story before the play began; the interest lay in discovering how various tragedians used the well known material of myth.

It is apparent, therefore, that the Greeks had a lively interest in the past, in what came before, partly because the past can be used as an educative tool, passing on social paradigms, or as an explanation of present institutions, or as a means of glorification when great deeds are retold. While the future is always unknown, the past can in part be recovered, even if only in family stories of earlier generations. In time, therefore, genealogies were devised linking the heroes of epic to the prominent

[20] Nagy 1990: 8.
[21] Bacchylides' *Ode* 5 and Pindar's *Olympian* Ode 1 both celebrate the horse race of the Olympian games of 476 B.C., and the chariot race at Delphi in 470 B.C. is commemorated by both Bacchylides' *Ode* 4 and Pindar's *Pythian Ode* 1.

families in various Greek city states, particularly as foundation accounts of the past of various cities came to be composed; in this way gods, heroes and mortals were connected through the passage of time, and myth shaded imperceptibly into history, with a kind of nebulous area between mythical time and historical time.

Given the Greek preoccupation with and respect for the past,[22] which can be exemplified by the telling and retelling of stories already known in both epic and tragedy, it is not surprising to find that when investigating the past Herodotus on occasion expresses his findings in terms of known paradigms. Indeed it has been said, with particular reference to women, that

> 'myths illustrate common attitudes more clearly and simply than history; but history too can be shown to follow the pattern of myth, in part because those were the only terms in which most writers could interpret human experience, and in part because ancient societies for practical reasons offered women little opportunity to act as individuals outside the context of their families.'[23]

In the case of Herodotus' characters, the paradigms are the figures from myth, that all-pervading background to every Greek's experience. In this study I shall focus particularly on the stories and incidents concerning the female characters in the *Histories* and investigate whether they conform to mythical types in any way, as well as how various mythical elements in the stories resonate with meanings unstated, but nonetheless understood, in the text. Taking for granted the general awareness of the gods and their exploits, Herodotus himself acknowledges the debt owed by all Greeks

[22] See van Groningen 1953:1-12.
[23] Lefkowitz 1983a: 49f.

to Homer and Hesiod in this respect when he says that οὗτοι δέ εἰσι οἱ ποιήσαντες θεογονίην Ἕλλησι καὶ τοῖσι θεοῖσι τὰς ἐπωνυμίας δόντες καὶ τιμάς τε καὶ τέχνας διελόντες καὶ εἴδεα αὐτῶν σημήναντες - 'it is they who made for the Greeks the genealogy of the gods, giving to the gods their names, distributing their honours and skills and telling of their shapes.'[24]

By isolating and identifying various mythological elements in the passages of Herodotus' work connected with women, it will be possible to show that, consciously or unconsciously, the historian drew on a vast fund of mythological story patterns, characters and themes found in Homer and other mythological sources, which I believe Herodotus used for their resonances within his own and his audience's minds; indeed such resonances may have led to the initial selection of the version Herodotus tells. These story themes can be likened to the formulae and themes of the oral poets; a repertoire of characters and situations available to the author as he composed, whether orally or in writing, which reverberate in the minds of the audience with all the previous instances, opening up a much wider backdrop of references for the reception of the current performance or reading. Blok says of the all-pervasiveness of the myth of the Trojan war: 'Not a single critic doubts that the main features of the entire Trojan epic were familiar and that in the course of a recitation of a part of it, the full context was implicitly assumed.'[25] In retelling the stories he received from his informants, it is almost a given that, even unconsciously, the historian should mentally compare them to those he already knew. Those that every Greek already knew were the stories from mythology and they acted as the backdrop for the information Herodotus was collecting, providing a point of reference for the similarities and

[24] *Histories* 2.53.
[25] Blok 1995: 294 n 9.

differences contained within the material he found in his researches.

At this point some discussion of Herodotus' sources and methods of composition is called for. The problem of Herodotus' sources is a perennial one, and linked to it is the question of his travels; did he or did he not visit the places he says, given the fact that in several instances his information is demonstrably incorrect?[26] Fehling[27] contends that Herodotus' main source was his own imagination and that he never travelled further than Athens, but even he does not claim that Herodotus wrote complete fiction with no input at all from oral and written sources. Most scholars, however, take a less extreme view and believe that Herodotus certainly did travel[28] and question a variety of sources, but may have misunderstood his informants or indeed may have been misinformed by them, in some instances perhaps on account of language problems. It is during this process of information transfer that the opportunity most obviously exists for misinterpretation on the one hand and even manipulation on the other, and on this score it is important to take into account, as Thomas points out,[29] what Herodotus and his contemporaries might be expected to consider credible when obtaining information, instead of measuring the accuracy of his information by modern standards. Most of all, since Herodotus conceived the genre of inquiry and source citation which developed into history, it is difficult to believe that he would undermine his own work by wholesale invention. What is possible, however, is that on occasion he recognised stories or elements of stories from other sources as analogous to Greek ones and shaped or moulded them accordingly, even unconsciously. This does not preclude him from recording stories

[26] For example, *Histories* 2.13-14, where he envisages famine in Egypt as a result of a lack of rain and rising land levels caused by the deposition of silt by the river. It does rain in Egypt, though Dewald 1998: 617 gives the average as 1cm a year.
[27] Fehling 1989: 240-243.
[28] See for example Waters 1985: 24-27, Romm 1998: 50-52, Dewald 1998: x-xii, Thomas 2000:2.
[29] Thomas 2000: 8

that he personally did not believe, or even multiple versions of the same story, since his aim was to report what other people believed was true.

In addition to examining the techniques used by the author in the composition of the work, it is worth considering the other end of the process as well, its reception by the reader or audience, and indeed the composition of that audience. There is some controversy as to whether Herodotus gave public lectures, using portions of the *Histories* as his material.[30] It is as well to bear in mind that most reading in the ancient world was aloud rather than silent, so that Herodotus' work was most likely to be heard in any case. Thomas[31] convincingly situates the *Histories* against the backdrop of the fifth century ἀπόδειξις, or display piece, intended to persuade or convince an audience of the correctness of the author's viewpoint. This would not mean that Herodotus gave lectures identical to portions of the written text which has come down to us, but that he chose the most suitable parts of his material for oral performance; it is in these parts that Thomas finds the characteristic 'language of display and demonstration.'[32] Under these circumstances, it is possible that Herodotus gave such performances or lectures to a wide variety of audiences, though Thomas does position the ἀπόδεξις firmly in Greek society when she notes the 'ubiquity of oral performance and the needs for persuasion in Greek culture of the period.'[33] If the majority of his audience was Greek, he could certainly take for granted their knowledge of Greek myth and custom, though he may well have given lectures to audiences further afield and less homogeneous.

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[30] See Johnson 1995 for arguments against the idea while Waters 1985: 7 accepts it and Romm 1998: 119 finds the evidence inconclusive.
[31] Thomas 2000: 249-69.
[32] Thomas 2000: 260.
[33] Thomas 2000: 249.

In view of the sheer complexity of the work, the reader or audience of the *Histories* is faced with the problem of assimilating large quantities of information of varying kinds. Nor is that all; Herodotus' habit of digression means that the audience or reader has to remember information imparted before what in many cases may be an extended digression so that he can follow what comes afterwards. He therefore needs a simple means of fixing information in his memory for future reference. If within the stories he can recognise certain story patterns or characters familiar from his knowledge of mythology the process is immediately made easier. To illustrate this idea I quote from Foley, the scholar of oral tradition, who argues that each time a theme or a formula was used in epic, the audience drew on its experience of all the other occasions of its use to interpret the poet's purpose. Here Foley discusses formulae and other aspects of oral techniques as signs, or *semata*:

> 'Within the marked idiomatic language of the *epos*, and of other traditional oral works as well, many such signs or units - whether actually labelled *semata* or not - are specially licensed to bear more than their individual, unmarked lexical or semantic burdens. Enriched within the augmented discourse, these "bytes" of phraseology and narrative pattern serve to index traditional ideas, characters, and situations, standing by prior negotiation for much more than a literary reading alone can decode.'[34]

It can be argued that mythological story patterns, characters and situations perform the same function in the work of Herodotus, allowing his audience to

[34] Foley 1999: 13f.

recognise and internalise information which might on the face of it seem strange or new to them. If certain parts of Herodotus' material could be recognised as analogous to various themes in traditional Greek experience, the Greeks in his audience would be able to identify those parts unconsciously and therefore comprehend them immediately. Or, conversely, to come to terms with the material Herodotus presents on the basis of its difference from Greek practice or custom. This mythological quality in Herodotus' portrayal of characters has already been noted by Pearson, who says of Croesus,

> 'he is still more like a tragic character from mythology than a real historical character; he is a man pursued by his destiny, and his behaviour continually reminds us of mythological figures; he is warned by Solon (as Creon by Teiresias), but fails to heed the warning; he acts, as he thinks, with the full support of the Delphic oracle (like Orestes), and it leads him into disaster; he has to atone for the sins of his ancestors, like a member of the house of Atreus. To Greek readers these echoes of mythology would be even more obvious than they are to us . . .'[35]

There is no reason to believe that the same tendency towards mythologisation did not also operate in Herodotus' treatment of his female characters, perhaps even more so since in those cases information was likely to be even more limited than that concerning men. One of the features of Herodotus' work is its sheer volume, but by recognising the similarities and differences of its discrete elements in relation to a

[35] Pearson 1954: 140.

background common to all Greeks, the readers or audience would be able to organise their reception of it without becoming lost in a welter of detail and information.

I would argue that Herodotus, who, although he took giant strides in another direction,[36] stood firmly in the oral tradition and wrote for an audience steeped in Homeric and other oral poetry, used the familiar material of mythology to enable his audience to navigate their way through his work. By the material of mythology I do not necessarily mean the actual stories of mythology, since he specifically states that he will eschew mythological explanations[37] and confine himself to the facts that he has been able to ascertain, but rather the narrative elements and models of characters found in myth. Despite the superficially obvious differences between Homer and Herodotus, it cannot be denied that the Homeric tradition figures largely in the mind of the author of the *Histories*.[38] It is not a huge leap, then, to assume that some of the techniques and material of the epic would be used in a work that professed to preserve the deeds of men for posterity, a work that concerned itself with ensuring that the deeds of men did not become ἀκλεᾶ, without renown, a condition which the Homeric heroes spent their lives avoiding, since their κλέος was their only form of immortality. Since much of Herodotus' material came to him from the oral tradition and was imparted to him in the form of oral tales, it is only to be expected that characteristics of the best known oral tradition would be found in his work and that it would be received by his audience in like terms. Herodotus can be seen as performing the same function as the epic bard, disseminating the fame or κλέος of men in order to ensure their immortality, a function he specifically states in his

[36] For detailed discussion of Herodotus as part of the intellectual milieu of his time, see Thomas 2000: 4-16.
[37] *Histories* 1.5 and 2.3.
[38] Calame 1995: 95f characterises Herodotus' link to Homer thus: 'When he rescues the glorious past of Greece from the destructive effects of time, he upgrades the acts of men, as does Homer, to the rank of high deeds worthy to be remembered.' See also Romm 1998: 19.

proemium: ὡς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένεται, μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, τὰ μὲν Ἕλλησι, τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα, ἀκλεᾶ γένεται - 'so that the deeds of men might not be rubbed out by time, and that the great achievements and marvels, both of the Greeks and barbarians, should not be without renown.'[39] Brillante comments on the close identification between the historian and the epic poet thus:

> 'It will suffice to recall the decisive importance that the epic heroes attached to the attainment of *kleos,* even to the point of gearing all their actions towards its achievement, as well as the decisive role of the poet in conferring *kleos* upon the hero and his exploits. In order for the deed to become fixed in memory and handed down to later generations, the poet's narration and praise are necessary. In this case as well Herodotus appropriated a traditional requirement of the heroic epic.'[40]

It would seem reasonable, therefore, to assume that Herodotus is aware of his indebtedness to the oral tradition even while consciously breaking from it by recording not a mythical war but a real one, and we frequently find techniques of this tradition such as ring composition in his work. His relationship to the mythological backdrop which is the common material of epic and the oral tradition can be seen in similar terms, never specifically stated but present nonetheless.

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[39] Proem of the *Histories.*
[40] Brillante 1990: 99.

Whatever period or periods the Homeric poems are believed to represent[41] makes no difference to the idea that Herodotus was, like every speaker of Greek, familiar with the society portrayed in them,[42] and therefore with the picture of women given therein. Indeed, since the poems performed an important pedagogical function in society, women as well as men will have learnt from them what social behaviour was acceptable and what unacceptable.[43] Women are portrayed in Homer as leading a slightly freer lifestyle than their successors in the typical πόλις but they are nonetheless still under the protection of a κύριος or guardian for their lifetimes. Even Telemachus can order his mother to retire to her maids and her domestic occupations,[44] just as Hector bids Andromache do.[45] It is important to bear in mind at all times that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are male-authored poems, giving a man's eye view of women, their lives and their emotions, however sensitively this may be achieved on occasion.[46]

In the Homeric poems we find almost every kind of woman represented, from queens to slaves, young and old alike, as well as various divine and semi-divine female figures. In this 'great panorama of womanhood'[47] several figures stand out from the crowd: in the *Iliad*, Andromache, wife of Hector, Briseis, captive of Achilles, Helen, consort of Paris and ostensible cause of the war, Hera, wife of Zeus,

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[41] Graham 1995: 3.
[42] Just 1989: 219; Naerebout 1987: 127: 'We can thus use the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in reconstructing the mental universe of (a part of?) Greek society of the second half of the 8th century B.C. and beyond.'
[43] Havelock: 1978: 120 says 'finally there would be the continual indoctrination of the young in both tale and precedent through recital.' Also Lacey 1968: 31f: 'Homer was the basic educational medium in Greece, and hence the institutions and ideas of society he portrayed cannot but have been influential in shaping Greek thought in a way in which the historical Mycenean society did not.' See also Nagy 1990: 36f where he says that 'The explicitly narrative structure of epic, as is the case with myth-making in general, frames a value system that sustains and in fact educates a given society.'
[44] *Odyssey* 1.356-9. See Lacey 1968:47 where he uses Penelope and Telemachus as an example after the observation, 'nor does Homer provide a picture of equality between the sexes, or the possibility of women's participation in public life.'
[45] *Iliad* 6.490-93.
[46] See Naerebout 1987:111.
[47] Graham 1995:13 in referring to the *Odyssey*.

Thetis, mother of Achilles; and in the *Odyssey*, Arete, queen of the Phaeacians, Athena, the goddess and protectress of Odysseus, Calypso and Circe the enchantresses, Clytemnestra, faithless wife of Agamemnon, Eurycleia, nurse of Odysseus, Nausicaa, daughter of Arete, and last but by no means least, Penelope, faithful wife of Odysseus. It may seem odd to include goddesses and semi-divine female figures in this list, but the Olympians are generally regarded as humans writ large and their importance in the two epics demands their inclusion.

Let us look briefly at some of these figures and try to discover something of what the poems tell us about how women were viewed in their society. According to Adkins, the ἀρετή or excellence of women differed from that of men: 'The qualities demanded are beauty, skill in weaving and housekeeping, chastity and faithfulness.'[48] He goes on to say that the co-operative virtues become the circumstances of a woman more, since she is not compelled to defend herself and therefore has no need of the competitive excellences demanded for Homeric heroes. The family and οἶκος or household are nonetheless very important for the Homeric hero.[49] His purpose in life is to defend his own οἶκος and those who live in it, family and slaves, and to pursue its prosperity to the best of his ability. The duty of the wife of the hero, besides her household tasks, is to produce sons to carry on the defence of the οἶκος; in fact, this was such an important factor that heroes often have concubines as well as wives in order to perpetuate the line and the children of such unions are often treated in exactly the same way as the hero's legitimate children.[50] The following brief thumbnail

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[48] Adkins 1960: 36.

[49] See Lacey 1968: 33ff. Also Dowden 1995: 50, where he describes the οἶκος as 'that fundamental building block of their [Greek] society.' Also Cohen 1991: 76 says that 'In Greek the word *oikos* refers to both the house and the persons who inhabit it. The notion of a private sphere associated with the physical dwelling extends to the family which occupies it.'

[50] Cf. Odysseus' lying Cretan tale in which as the son of a concubine he is treated the same as his half-brothers (*Odyssey* 14.199-213). Also Menelaus' son Megapenthes by a concubine (*Odyssey* 4.11ff.).

sketches of some of the women in the Homeric poems will give some idea of the stereotypes with which Herodotus' audience would have been familiar, the broad brushstrokes of myth that would have found immediate recognition in their minds when meeting the women in the *Histories*.

Andromache is the wife of Hector and as such has great status, since her husband is the most prominent of Priam's sons and leads the defence of Troy against the Achaeans. Nonetheless, her sphere is the domestic one just as surely as it is that of every other mortal woman. After the farewell scene on the walls of Troy, Hector tells her to go inside and busy herself with the things of women, the loom and the distaff, since war is the preserve of men.[51] War may indeed be the preserve of men but women also suffer as a result of it; Andromache herself has lost all her family in Achilles' attack on her town, with the result that Hector is especially important to her and her son. The picture that Homer paints of their relationship is a sympathetic one, but nevertheless several vignettes featuring Andromache epitomise the male poet's view of women, as when he shows her weaving just prior to hearing of Hector's death,[52] when she appears veiled on walls of Troy,[53] and when she mourns the death of Hector with Hecuba and Helen, as women traditionally did in Homeric and later Greek society.[54]

Briseis, the captive of Achilles, is the focus of the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon, since Agamemnon seizes her from Achilles to replace Chryseis, who has been handed back to her father so that the plague can be removed from the Achaeans. She, too, is a war trophy, a prize awarded to Achilles as his share of the

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[51] *Iliad* 6.490-493. Aristophanes *Lysistrata* 520 is a parody of *Iliad* 6.492.
[52] *Iliad* 22.440-1.
[53] *Iliad* 22.468-70.
[54] *Iliad* 24.723-776. For in depth discussion of mourning see Alexiou 1974, Holst Warhaft 1992 and Fantham *et al.* 1994: 44-49.

booty of a raiding expedition, as was commonplace in heroic society. She has no say in what happens to her and is handed over to Agamemnon against her will.[55] It is worth noting the use of the word γέρας to describe Briseis;[56] the neuter noun reflects her objectivisation as booty or chattel. Her fate also foreshadows the fate of Trojan women; when the war is over they will be the booty of the victorious Achaeans. As Briseis laments the death of Patroclus she performs one of the typical duties of women in the ancient world. She has a special reason to mourn him since he had promised to arrange her marriage to Achilles after the war,[57] a marriage which would seem to have changed her status from a captive bedmate to a wedded wife.

Helen, wife of Menelaus, given to Paris as his reward for choosing Aphrodite as the most beautiful goddess, is conveyed to Troy despite the fact that she is already married to Menelaus. Even Helen spins and weaves, like all Homeric women, and is depicted weaving a cloth showing scenes from the war of which she is the cause.[58] She is aware that she has caused much suffering to others but is in thrall to Aphrodite herself. Much is forgiven her on account of her beauty, as when the Trojan leaders recognise her on the walls of Troy,[59] but they recognise, nonetheless, that it would be better for them if she were to depart on the ships of the Achaeans.[60] Since she was infertile after the birth of their daughter Hermione, Menelaus fathers a son with a concubine, attesting yet again to the frequency of the custom.[61]

Arete, queen of the Phaeacians, is the daughter of Rhexenor, grandson of Poseidon and Periboea. Her father died young, leaving his only daughter to be

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[55] *Iliad* 1.348.
[56] *Iliad* 1.185.
[57] *Iliad* 19.297-99.
[58] *Iliad* 3.125-8. Also *Iliad* 6. 323-4 and *Odyssey* 4.125-36.
[59] *Iliad* 3.156-58 and 3.161-165. See Dowden 1995: 51-53 and Griffin 1980: 6ff.
[60] *Iliad* 3.159f.
[61] *Odyssey* 4.11ff. See note 50 above.

married to his brother Alcinous, who honours her greatly as do the Phaeacians as she goes about the streets to decide controversies. She is therefore very influential at Alcinous' court and consequently Nausicaa advises Odysseus to approach Arete in his search for help to return home.[62] It is she who gives Odysseus clothing and gifts when he leaves Scheria.[63] Nonetheless, just like almost all women in myth, Arete is involved in the manufacture of textiles; when Nausicaa goes to ask her parents if she may go to the river to wash her garments, she finds her mother spinning.[64] Nausicaa, the beautiful, nubile princess, would like Odysseus to stay in Scheria and this delightful episode, just as much as those involving Circe and Calypso, threatens Odysseus' return, since the attraction of Nausicaa could conceivably weaken his resolve to return to Ithaca. Nausicaa, as the epitome of the Greek παρθένος, will become domesticated when she is married.

Clytemnestra, the unfaithful wife of Agamemnon, kills him on his return from the Trojan war and puts Aegisthus in his place. She is guilty not only of murder but of overstepping the bounds of society by selecting her own partner. She acts more like a man than a woman and is often held up as example to be feared and avoided since through her actions she gives all women, good or otherwise, a bad name.[65] In contrast, there is Penelope, model of domesticity in opposition to Clytemnestra, Calypso, Circe, and even Nausicaa. Her value as a wife is understood when Odysseus praises the ὁμοφροσύνη, likemindedness, of husband and wife, praise which must come from his own experience, and even Agamemnon admits that Penelope is a good woman.[66] Penelope's intelligence is perhaps her most striking characteristic, enabling

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[62] *Odyssey* 7.54-77.
[63] *Odyssey* 13.66-69.
[64] *Odyssey*. 6.50ff.
[65] *Iliad* 11.427-34.
[66] *Odyssey* 11.444-46.

her not only to outwit the suitors by unravelling her weaving each night but also to protect Telemachus from them by distracting their attention from him; when she says he is now old enough for her to remarry, she of course raises the expectations of the suitors and directs their attention towards her. On the other hand there is her own reluctance to remarry until she is sure all hope of Odysseus' return is gone. Winkler[67] discusses Peneplope's intelligence at length and demonstrates how she deals with each situation as it arises, always managing to leave open the possibility of Odysseus' return while at the same time maintaining extreme caution because of her uncertainty over the identity of the beggar. Although the trick of undoing her weaving by night has the best of motives, it illustrates not only Penelope's intelligence but also the capacity of the female nature, so frequently noted in Greek literature, for deceit. The ambiguity of the *persona* of Penelope is elucidated in Cantarella's observation:

> 'On the one hand, there was the need for epic poetry, given its function of cultural training, to propose a model of woman that was the symbol of all the virtues a woman could have. On the other, there was a misogynist ideology that mistrusted women profoundly. Penelope can be read as the product of these two opposing needs; she is an image of both the 'should be' and 'is' (in the eyes of men, of course) of the Homeric woman.'[68]

Eurycleia is the old nurse of Odysseus. She was bought by Laertes to be a slave-concubine, but became a trusted member of the family, although she is

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[67] Winkler 1990 129-161.
[68] Cantarella 1987: 29f.

specifically noted as not being Laertes' mistress.[69] In the footwashing episode,[70] Eurycleia recognises the scar Odysseus carries from a hunting incident because she has intimate knowledge of Odysseus both as his nurse and as a longstanding member of the household. Her fidelity to Odysseus is further illustrated by her identification of the maidservants who have collaborated with the suitors; for her loyalty to Odysseus comes before solidarity with others of her sex.[71]

Hera, wife of Zeus, queen of the gods, and Thetis, mother of Achilles, are, along with Athena, representatives of the female in divine form. Hera figures more as a wife than a mother; a wife, moreover, infuriated by Zeus' frequent infidelities, which he himself enumerates for her,[72] but unable to stop them. Her retaliation takes the form of persecution of his offspring by his other conquests. Thetis is always trying to aid her son, but is aware of the choice that faces him between glory and long life, and of the fact that she cannot save him from his fate. Since Thetis finds her marriage to Peleus unsatisfactory, as unions between mortals and immortals seem generally to be, she invests her emotional capital in her son and does whatever she can to smooth his path, approaching even Zeus on his behalf and calling in the favour Zeus owes her for bringing about his release from the bonds placed on him by Poseidon, Athena and Hera. Thetis provides a stereotype for the over-protective mother who sets her son's interests above all else. Athena, virgin daughter of Zeus, protects and advises Odysseus and Telemachus, appearing to them in disguise to proffer useful advice. As the perpetual virgin, she refuses the traditional female role of wife and mother but is associated with craftsmen and reason.

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[69] *Odyssey* 1.429-33.
[70] *Odyssey* 19.467-475.
[71] *Odyssey* 22.419-425.
[72] *Iliad* 14. 314-328.

Calypso and Circe, semi-divine enchantresses, are insidious and dangerous to Odysseus, in that they represent the greatest threat to Odysseus' successful return to Ithaca. They both deflect Odysseus from his purpose of getting home, particularly with the use of drugs that destroy men's minds and enslave their resolve; Odysseus' men become animals over whom Circe rules as πότνια θηρῶν, or queen of wild beasts, through the use of such drugs. Like all other women, both mortal and immortal, both Calypso[73] and Circe[74] can be found spinning and Calypso is described as being veiled.[75]

These brief notes on some of the most well-known women in Greek myth provide some of the patterns we will find upon examining Herodotus' depictions of various women. Daughters of powerful men, such as Nausicaa, wives who rule in their husbands' stead like Clytemnestra, mothers working tirelessly on their sons' behalf like Thetis, and women who suffer the consequences of war like Briseis will all be found in the pages of Herodotus. Although the gods and goddesses do not appear in the *Histories* personally as they do in the Homeric poems, Herodotus shows a lively curiosity concerning the religious beliefs and practices of other peoples and draws analogies between foreign deities and the Greek pantheon so that his audience will be the more easily able to grasp their attributes and functions through comparison with the familiar.

Two complete works, the *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, are attributed to Hesiod. The *Theogony* is an account of the genealogy of the gods and the *Works and Days* is a didactic poem concerning the tasks of the agricultural year. Although

[73] *Odyssey* 5.61-2.
[74] *Odyssey* 10.221-3.
[75] *Odyssey* 5.232.

certain gods and goddesses are mentioned in the latter, as well as the five ages of mankind, in general the subject matter is unlike the usual topics of epic poetry. Of interest in relation to the topic of women in the ancient world is the fact that Hesiod tells the myth of Pandora in both works.[76] Zeus and Hephaestus create a woman, the first woman, in retaliation for Prometheus' theft of fire and subsequent gift of it to men. Since the woman is intended as a punishment to men, it is not surprising that although all the gods give some gift to her,[77] hence the name Pandora, she is a curse upon men despite her beauty.[78] Pandora is represented by Hesiod as the mother of the 'female race', not as the mother of all mankind, and therefore essentially unrelated to mankind.[79] Hesiod's myth portrays her as one who lives on the labour of man, consuming all his substance, and to whom men are bound since the race of women is necessary for the begetting of children, without whom a man has no one to care for him in his old age nor any heirs to inherit his property. For Hesiod, at best a wife is a mixture of good and evil, and never an unalloyed blessing. In addition, Pandora opens the jar she carries, releasing all the evils previously absent from the world, leaving only hope inside to lighten man's burden. Hesiod is the misogynist *par excellence*; as Zeitlin says, 'It would be hard to overstate the degree of negativity in the Greek version of woman's creation. . . . In Hesiod, . . . woman remains a separate and alien being, whose presence in his household he both requires and resents. Even the good wife, the one who most resembles him, may turn out to be a burden just the same.'[80] Since the institution of marriage reflects the downfall of man from the

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[76] *Theogony* 535ff and *Works and Days* 47ff.
[77] Some of the gifts are the attributes which make her a trial to men, e.g. 'from the god Hermes mind of a bitch and a deceitful nature (*Works and Days* 67), lies and stealthy words (verse 78).' Walcot 1996: 95.
[78] *Works and Days* 373-75.
[79] Garland 1990: 21, in noting Zeus' appellation as the 'father of gods and men' says that Hesiod 'privileges man to a divine ancestry and woman to what is virtually a diabolical one', given her creation as a punishment for man by an angry god.
[80] Zeitlin 1995b: 59.

Golden Age without women, it is hardly surprising that Hesiod's picture of the first woman is almost entirely negative.

At this point it is instructive to examine a poem about women by Semonides, a mid-seventh century poet, two passages of whose work are preserved by Stobaeus. In one of these passages he describes various kinds of women by comparing them with animals. A lazy, dirty woman is compared with a sow, a fickle, hypocritical one with a vixen, a talkative, uncontrollable one with a bitch and a promiscuous, stupid one with an ass. Of the ten types he describes only one has any merit, and that is the bee woman, since she is industrious and sober-minded, and the man who finds this kind of wife is lucky.

τὴν δ' ἐκ μελίσσης· τήν τις εὐτυχεῖ λαβών·
κείνηι γὰρ οἴηι μῶμος οὐ προσιζάνει,
θάλλει δ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς κἀπαέξεται βίος,
φίλη δὲ σὺν φιλέοντι γηράσκει πόσει
τεκοῦσα καλὸν κὠνομάκλυτον γένος.
κἀριπρεπὴς μὲν ἐν γυναιξὶ γίνεται
πάσηισι, θείη δ' ἀμφιδέδρομεν χάρις.
οὐδ' ἐν γυναιξὶν ἥδεται καθημένη
ὅκου λέγουσιν ἀφροδισίους λόγους.
τοίας γυναῖκας ἀνδράσιν χαρίζεται
Ζεὺς τὰς ἀρίστας καὶ πολυφραδεστάτας·
τὰ δ' ἄλλα φῦλα ταῦτα μηχανῆι Διὸς
ἔστιν τε πάντα καὶ παρ' ἀνδράσιν μενεῖ.

(He made) another of a bee, and he who gets her is lucky.

For no blame comes near to her alone,

And on account of her, life abounds and increases.

Beloved, she grows old together with her loving husband,

Having given birth to beautiful children of famous name.

She is very distinguished among all women

And a divine grace surrounds her.

Nor does she enjoy to sit among the women

When they tell stories of sexual pleasures.

Such women are the best and wisest

With whom Zeus blessed men.

The other kinds are and remain, through the

Devices of Zeus, a misery to men.[81]

The fact that the bee woman is in a minority of one in an account that describes nine other sorts of woman points to the existence of a strong strain of anxiety, if nothing else, in Semonides' thought concerning women. Osborne situates the poem in the context of the drinking party, where men met 'to drink, display themselves, and outdo each other.'[82] It is in this context that he goes on to account for the preponderance of bad wives in the poem as follows:

'the husband needs the wife because he cannot be a husband without her, because in a world constructed around sexual conquest no one is a

[81] Semonides fr 7. 83-95.
[82] Osborne 2001: 53

> man without a wife, but he also needs an unruly wife because his own order rests upon the founding rejection of disorder.'[83]

Consequently, the passage about the bee woman is thrown into even greater relief, pointing up the ideal, but even the ideal is defined partly by what she does and partly by what she does not do, with the allusion to women talking among themselves about sex. This passage comes to mind when reading Herodotus' account of Periander's murdered wife, Melissa,[84] since her very name evokes the image of Semonides' single favourable portrait of a woman; although it does not qualify as myth, it speaks to a certain attitude of mind prevalent in the society that produced it.

Myth is not the only reference point used by Herodotus to facilitate the reception of his material by his audience. Assuming that he wrote for a Greek audience, Herodotus shared with his hearers or readers certain attitudes and expectations, merely by being part of the same society, and in the course of preserving the deeds of men, both Greek and barbarian, for posterity, he is continually making use of the oppositions and polarities in his material compared to his Greek experience, always examining non-Greek material in relation to general Greek practice. In modern scholarly parlance this practice is denoted by the term alterity, by which something is defined by stating what it is not.[85] Greek intellectual processes are imbued with this practice of polarity, exemplified even linguistically and stylistically

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[83] Osborne 2001: 57.
[84] *Histories* 3.50.
[85] For a brief discussion of the origin and use of the word 'alterity', see Cartledge 1993: 2f.

by the frequent use of the μέν . . . δέ opposition, on the one hand, on the other hand.[86] Lloyd notes the phenomenon of 'polar expressions' as follows:

> 'it is worth noting a stylistic trait which is common throughout early Greek literature from Homer onwards, namely the use of so-called polar expressions', i.e. such couplets as 'mortals and immortals', 'men and women', 'young and old', 'slave and free', 'land and sea', 'openly and secretly' and so on.'[87]

Hartog has devoted a whole book[88] to the examination of alterity in Herodotus, using the long digression on the Scythians as his example. In the course of his researches, Herodotus frequently has occasion to place barbarian and Greek material side by side, noting that on the one hand Greeks do one thing, while on the other hand, barbarians do something different, where the barbarian or non-Greek speaking world functions as the 'other'.

One of the givens used in this operation is the practice of Greek society in relation to women and therefore for each group of women dealt with, an attempt has been made to lay out what Herodotus' audience would have considered usual custom against which the alterity of the practices of other societies can be measured. In a recent publication Thomas examines Herodotus' work in relation to the intellectual and cultural milieu in which he wrote his *Histories* and explains her motivation in the following fashion:

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[86] For an exposition of the polarities of Greek thought, see Lloyd 1971 *passim* and Vidal-Naquet 1981: 141.
[87] Lloyd 1971: 90f.
[88] Hartog 1988.

> 'The *Histories* do have a contemporary context, though they relate to events of long before, and it is argued here that it is that contemporary world which must do much to clarify their background, whether it is the intellectual world of the natural scientists (*physiologoi*), 'sophists' and doctors, or the milieu of the Homeric rhapsodes which deserve more focus – or simply the Greek world of the mid to late fifth century.'[89]

It is therefore important to take cognisance of the 'contemporary context' of the *Histories* as an explicatory mechanism, just as we have noted Herodotus' assumption of mythology as common knowledge, and with regard to women, there can be no doubt that their legal position in classical Greece, perhaps excluding Sparta, was a subordinate one.[90] Its most striking characteristic was that every woman, whether daughter, sister, wife or mother, was a perpetual minor, always under the guardianship of a male κύριος and never legally competent in her own right. Indeed in Athens her own status as a citizen is a vexed question,[91] since women citizens, if they may be described as such, did not exercise the same rights as male citizens. For instance, they were not permitted to participate in the political life of the city by attending the ἐκκλησία or assembly to participate in debates on matters of current concern, participation in which was the essence of citizenship for men; in fact the feminine version of the noun for citizen, πολῖτις, is rarely found.[92] Male citizenship was a rigorously defined category which excluded slaves and resident foreigners, who made

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[89] Thomas 2000: 4.
[90] See Fantham *et al* 1994:74 '. . . but female citizens did not participate in governing the democracy. Indeed, before the Hellenistic period women were excluded from government and the military throughout Greece.'
[91] See Patterson 1987: 49-67.
[92] For a detailed discussion concerning the usage of the word πολῖτις see Patterson 1987: 54-56.

up a large proportion of the male inhabitants of the city. After Pericles' citizenship law which demanded that a citizen be born of two citizen parents (previously a citizen father had been enough) was passed in 451-450 BCE, the importance attached to female citizens as transmitters of the bloodline increased but the other restrictions on female citizens remained intact. This law is reported in Aristotle's *Athenian Constitution* in this way: διὰ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν πολιτῶν Περικλέους εἰπόντος ἔγνωσαν μὴ μετέχειν τῆς πόλεως, ὃς ἂν μὴ ἐξ ἀμφοῖν ἀστοῖν ᾖ γεγονώς – 'Because of the large number of citizens it was enacted on the proposal of Pericles that no one should share in the political life of the city unless he was born of citizen parents on both sides.'[93] Whether societal practices always followed the law is in itself a vexed question, since the law often represents an ideal to be wished for, if not always fulfilled, but it seems clear that the Greeks, and the Athenians in particular, must have seen women as a problem, otherwise they would not have attempted to regulate their lives so strictly. In this connection it should be noted that since the greater part of our evidence for societal practices concerning women comes from Athens, it can be understood that, unless specified to the contrary, Athenian practice is being referred to in this study. In Sparta, the situation was very different and Spartan women had a reputation in the Greek world for freedom and even licentiousness.[94] Spartan girls exercised in physical training in much the same way as men,[95] and the Spartan emphasis on military training necessitated by a standing army meant that male children left the home at the age of six to live in barracks with other males until the age of thirty,[96] resulting in a household which was predominantly female. Finally,

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[93] Aristotle *Ath. Pol.* 26.3.4.
[94] See Plato *Laws* 637c.
[95] Even if they did not do so in the nude, they certainly wore a form of dress, the Dorian *peplos*, which permitted greater freedom of movement than did the Ionian *chiton*.
[96] Plutarch *Lycurgus* 16.4ff

the fact that Spartan women could own and inherit property[97] contributed to the Athenian perception that women in Sparta exercised considerable power over their menfolk. Each group of women in Herodotus will therefore be examined from two perspectives, one being the practices that the majority of Herodotus' audience would have considered usual in relation to women, as evidenced by law and custom, and the other being the extent to which he makes use of mythological elements, story patterns and character types as aids to comprehension.[98]

Herodotus declares that he will begin his work, not with mythological accounts, upon which he will not pronounce either for or against, but with the man whom he knows first committed acts of aggression against the Greeks.[99] This determination to record historical events does not preclude the shaping of his accounts of real, or what he believed to be real, events in accordance with mythological story patterns. Every storyteller naturally shapes his stories according to his own mental processes and background; even if he does not actually say so, or is even unconscious of doing so, he automatically measures each story by those he already knows and classifies it as like or unlike. Those classified as like are easily told in the familiar idiom, those classified as unlike have to be manipulated so as to be told in terms the audience can understand, either by utilising similes or contrasts, or by casting the story in familiar patterns, or by making use of mythological elements as a kind of mental shorthand to empower his audience in their reception of his material. Lloyd recognises this process when he says

[97] Herodotus notes at 5.67 that the *patrouchos* was assigned a husband by the king, rather than by her *kurios*, if her father died without arranging her marriage.
[98] Gould 1980: 38-59 argues persuasively for this kind of multi-faceted approach, as he examines the women of classical Athens in relation to law, custom and myth.
[99] *Histories* 1.5.

that it is necessary for modern readers of Herodotus

> 'not only . . . to consider the people from whom information was obtained but also the mind which processed the data. It was suggested that this acts as a filter or a catalyst, rejecting, selecting, modifying and processing in such a way that new information can be reconciled with existing preconceptions and thereby assimilated.'[100]

In the *Histories* we do not find large numbers of individual women, nor a large group of detailed psychological portraits; there are no Penelopes or Andromaches, finely drawn and nuanced. Rather we find quick sketches and the occasional more detailed portrait, but taking the sheer bulk of the work and the vast cast of characters into consideration, there is just not the scope for depth of characterisation. But we do find mythological elements and situations in which the Greek knowledge of and background in mythology help in the comprehension of the story. For example, the daughter of the Egyptian pharaoh Mycerinus is seduced by her father and hangs herself from grief. A Greek would understand immediately that hanging is the most common form of suicide for women in mythology; we only have to think of Phaedra, Antigone, Oenone and even lesser known heroines from myth such as Aspalis and Erigone, all of whom hanged themselves to escape from an intolerable situation. So although Herodotus' audience may have had little or no knowledge of Egypt, they would have had no trouble accepting his story since it was a familiar motif in their mythology. Not only that, but the familiarity of the motif would lend credibility and poignancy to the story, a sort of instant recognition of the pathos of a young girl in

[100] Lloyd 1975: Introduction: 141.

such a desperate situation that the only way out was to take her own life, and in a manner that resonated with their previous experience.

Further mythological elements occur in various stories concerning women in the *Histories;* beauty, for example, is a given for mythological goddesses and heroines, and frequently leads to unforeseen consequences, as in the case of Helen, who is given to Paris because she is the most beautiful woman in the world. In the *Histories* Agetus' wife is so beautiful that Ariston is seized with passion for her and concocts a scheme worthy of Odysseus to take her from her husband. Likewise Candaules' obsession with his wife's beauty leads him to a course of action that eventuates in his own death; in neither case does the woman initiate the action but her beauty, and its effect on a man, is the catalyst that precipitates events, just as Helen's beauty makes her the prize given to Paris in return for his judgement of Aphrodite as the most beautiful goddess, thereby precipitating the Trojan War.

Attempts to circumvent the fulfilment of a dream or an oracle abound in myth, particularly through the exposure of an extraordinary child; in the *Histories* we have Astyages' attempts to frustrate the fulfilment of his interpretation of his dreams concerning his daughter Mandane by the same means. Feasting interrupted by violence is epitomised in myth by the wedding feast of Pirithous and Hippodamia, which ends in the battle between the Lapiths and the Centaurs; in the *Histories* the banquet given by the Macedonian king for the Persian ambassadors ends in violence when the Persians make advances to the women of the Macedonian court. The dangerous task motif of myth, of which the journey of the Argonauts is probably the most famous example, finds its counterpart in the *Histories* when Sataspes' mother sends him on a journey round Africa. And then there is the figure of the woman in power, most vividly and memorably portrayed in myth in the person of Clytemnestra,

a figure who excites intense interest through her inversion of what is considered in Greek thought to be the proper role of woman as wife and mother, firmly under the control of a man. There are several women in the *Histories* who reflect this mythological archetype, women who exercise power in a man's world and who refuse to conform to the 'normal' expectations of a woman's place in the world.

From all the examples adduced above it will be clear that Herodotus utilised mythological motifs and character types in shaping the stories that he tells in his *Histories*, while at the same time using contemporary Greek practices concerning women as a touchstone for comparison between the 'normal' and the unusual. The latter is particularly noticeable in those portions of the text in which he describes the customs of other peoples with reference to women; he notes that Egyptian customs and practices are the opposite of all other people and specifically makes mention of those whereby Egyptian women go to the ἀγορά to sell goods,[101] while the men do the weaving,[102] a division of labour diametrically opposite to that of the Greeks. Furthermore, Egyptian gods and goddess are served by men only, unlike the Greek custom,[103] and Egyptian daughters are compelled to take care of their elderly parents, whereas in Greek society it is the sons who are expected to undertake this duty.[104] Although material concerning the Persians and their lifestyle permeates the entire text of the *Histories*, there is a short, concentrated survey of their customs in the first book. There is little information in relation to women at this point, except for the

[101] Lloyd 1975: 147 notes that evidence for Herodotus' observation is inconclusive but 'it seems likely that H.'s comment correctly reflects a general trend in the 5th Century if nothing else.'
[102] *Histories* 2.35. For detailed commentary on the different types of loom used by Egyptians and Greeks see Lloyd 1975: 148f.
[103] Lloyd 1975: 151 provides details concerning the participation of Egyptian women in worship and concludes that 'There is, however, no evidence whatsoever that in H.'s time they would participate in rites and functions analogous to those which could be performed by Gk. priestesses and regarded as inseparable from that office.'
[104] Lloyd 1975: 151f agrees that male obligations to parents were not enforceable in law, while daughters, in later times at least, 'were bound by law to support their fathers if not their mothers.'

statement that every Persian man has a number of wives, but far more concubines, and the description of the Persian custom of keeping sons out of their fathers' sight until they are five years old so as to spare the father grief should the child die during the first five years of life.[105] Persian custom, baldly stated in this way, differs mainly in degree from Greek practice, since although a Greek would have only one wife, he might indeed have a concubine or παλλακή, and Greek children lived in the women's quarters until they were seven, although they were not kept away from their fathers. As the work proceeds, however, the individual Persian women portrayed do indeed differ from the Greek ideal of womanhood securely under the control of their menfolk. In his exposition of the customs of the Babylonians, Herodotus refers to two in particular concerning women, one of which he finds admirable and the other disgraceful. The admirable custom[106] concerns the marriage practices of the Babylonians,[107] who annually auction off all the young women of marriageable age, subsidising the ill-favoured girls with the money obtained from the high prices paid for the more attractive ones.[108] Herodotus emphasises the fact that the men of Babylon are not allowed to arrange the marriages of their own daughters, which is totally opposite to Greek custom. The distasteful Babylonian practice[109] is the one which requires every woman at some point in her life to go to a sanctuary of Aphrodite and wait until a strange man throws money in her lap and has sex with her. Herodotus also notes those peoples such as the Massegetae and the Nasamones who permit promiscuity,[110] as well as the Gindanes, whose women mark their conquests

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[105] *Histories* 1.135-36.
[106] *Histories* 1.196.
[107] This custom is, incidentally, according to Herodotus, also practised by the Illyrian tribe, the Eneti.
[108] McNeal 1988 discusses this Babylonian custom as reported by Herodotus extensively and concludes 'That Herodotus' story of the brides of Babylon is not just a factual description of a real Mesopotamian custom should be pretty clear. It appears, instead, to be a garbled account of marriage rites among the Greeks.' McNeal 1988: 70f.
[109] *Histories* 1.199.
[110] *Histories* 4.172.

with leather anklets so that the one with the most anklets is admired for having been loved by the largest number of men.[111] Such customs provide clear examples of alterity in relation to Greek practice where a woman is regarded as the property of one man alone[112] in order to guarantee the paternity of his offspring by her. It is true that a man could keep a concubine, or παλλακή, a practice which seems to give the lie to a definition of Greek society as a monogamous one, but it is also true that the children of such a union were not automatically legitimate and eligible for registration in the φράτρα, as were the children of the lawfully wedded wife. Such children could be legitimised, as was the son of Pericles by Aspasia, but the process had to be specifically undertaken. The Auseës' lack of concern with paternity, which allows them to wait until a child is three months old before attributing paternity on the basis of physical resemblance,[113] is especially incomprehensible in Greek terms. All foreign customs, particularly those concerning women, are compared with Greek modes of practice; even if the comparison is not directly stated it is assumed and taken for granted. Each time Herodotus makes a particular note of the strangeness of a foreign custom, he unwittingly defines Greek practice more clearly.

The following chapters will deal with Herodotus' female characters under the rubrics of daughter, sister, wife, and mother, with a further chapter dealing with the anomalous figure of the woman in power, a figure of intense interest in all societies and periods by virtue of its singularity. It will become evident that Herodotus' presentation of his female characters is profoundly influenced by two aspects of thought common to every single Greek: mythology and societal practices in relation to women.

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[111] *Histories* 4.176.
[112] Though Plato at *Laws* 739 suggests that wives, children and goods should be held in common in the ideal state.
[113] *Histories* 4.180.

DAUGHTERS

The first category of women in the *Histories* to be examined is that of daughters,[1] since it can be assumed that all women have been daughters, even if they do not know the identity of their parents. The father[2] of a newborn infant, male or female, had the right to choose whether to raise the child or to expose it; in the latter case, the fate of the child was then in the lap of the gods and the οἶκος incurred no blood guilt if the child did not survive. It is generally accepted that female children were exposed more often than boys.[3] Even if the female child was accepted by her father, she was still valued less highly than her brother,[4] since she represented a drain on the resources of the οἶκος as she would have to be provided with a dowry and would on her marriage, generally at the age of about 15, leave the parental οἶκος for that of her husband. At that point, however, she would then act as a link between her natal and her marital οἶκος, and no doubt such considerations would influence her father when he made the choice of husband for her.

In examining the stories relating to daughters in Herodotus, it is interesting to note that they all feature the relationship between the young girl and her father, and

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[1] In collating all the references to daughters in the *Histories* it became clear that there are many examples in which a woman is referred to as X, daughter of Y, generally male. It is proposed merely to note these and to concentrate attention on those making fuller reference to particular women. For the present those references where the fact of being a daughter is not the most important role of the woman in question will be ignored; for instance, there is a reference in the list to Artemisia, daughter of Lygdamis. Artemisia will be examined in the category of a woman in power rather than as a daughter. It is hardly surprising to note that the references to daughters at least become less and less frequent as one progresses through the work; as Herodotus focuses more closely on his topic of the war, there are fewer digressions and therefore fewer stories of women. Nonetheless, one of the last stories in the work deals with Xerxes' affair with Masistes' daughter, Artaynte, while Artemisia, daughter of Lygdamis, figures quite largely - for a female character - in the previous two books.

[2] For a discussion of parental authority and the rights of children see Garland 1990:157f.

[3] For a full discussion of the practice of exposure see Garland 1990: 84-93, Lacey 1968: 164-67 and Patterson 1985: 103-23.

[4] For nutrition and practices of naming female children, which highlighted their lesser status, see Demand 1994: 7-9. Garland 1990: 108 notes that 'Given the fact that girls were probably less well-treated and well-nourished than boys, infant mortality is likely to have been higher among females.' See also Lacey 1968: 167.

the majority are concerned with the father's duty of choosing a husband for his daughter.[5] Of the others, one deals with a father who subverts this normal pattern by raping his daughter,[6] another with a father who betrays his daughter as a result of pressure from his second wife[7] while in contrast others demonstrate close father-daughter relationships, which survive beyond the marriage of the daughter.[8] Since the father-daughter relationship is obviously an important one, its incidence in myth and as part of the particularly Athenian social fabric will be examined before turning to the instances found in Herodotus, for it can be assumed that this is part of the knowledge he brought to his work.

Although daughters can be of all ages, the one that figures most in Greek myth is the παρθένος, the young girl who has just reached puberty and is considered ready for marriage. This is perhaps because in real life in antiquity the young girl is at the most significant age for her father at puberty, the age at which he is anxious not only to find a husband for her but also to ensure that she remains a virgin until she is safely married; taken in conjunction with the common belief in the rampant sexuality of the unmarried young girl, this is indeed the period when she would figure most conspicuously among her father's concerns. The status of παρθένος is a short-lived one, both in real life and in myth. In real life in fifth century Greece the girl is married off as soon as possible so as to keep this vulnerable period as short as possible; once a παρθένος is married off, she becomes a νύμφη or bride, and only upon the birth of her first child does she become a γυνή or wife. During this relatively short period, between puberty and marriage, the παρθένος is at her most

[5] For example, Mandane (*Histories* 1.107ff), Cleisthenes and Agariste (*Histories* 6.126) and Callias and his daughters (*Histories* 6.122).
[6] Mycerinus' daughter (*Histories* 2.129-31).
[7] Phronime (*Histories* 4.154.)
[8] For example, Nitetis (*Histories* 3.1) and Phaedymia (*Histories* 3.68-9).

attractive and powerful, and also at her most vulnerable, since virginity in the mortal world can be lost only once, though in the mythical world Hera was said to renew her virginity annually by bathing in the spring of Canathus.[9] In the mortal world no such remedies exist and this is the reason for such stringent control being exercised over a young girl in ancient Greek society, for if she is discovered to have lost her virginity before marriage, her worth is severely reduced and it may be impossible to marry her off, certainly without additional inducements.[10] Greek preoccupation with the legimitacy of heirs leads to the situation where young virgin brides are highly desirable to prospective husbands, and therefore the virgin daughter is at once a valuable asset to a father and a source of extreme concern to him in maintaining the integrity of this asset, employing what Dowden terms 'the unremitting vigilance of the parents.'[11] Indeed, the lawgiver Solon[12] retained only one set of grounds allowing an Athenian man to sell his daughter or sister into slavery: if he discovered that, while ostensibly an unmarried virgin, she had an unlawful sexual relationship with a man.

There is a Hippocratic treatise, Περί Παρθένιων,[13] which deals exclusively with this age group since it was felt to be subject to particular ailments and symptoms, for most of which marriage was prescribed as the cure.[14] It is interesting to note that the hymen did not feature in Greek thought about virginity; it was not considered to be the defining element of the *virgo intacta*, but rather an occasional physical abnormality. Sissa[15] notes that 'neither the eyes nor the hands of Greek practitioners told them that a membrane initially seals a woman's vagina. Anatomy, as it can be

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[9] Pausanias 2.38.2.
[10] See Stewart 1995: 76.
[11] Dowden 1989: 2.
[12] Plutarch *Solon* 23.2.
[13] The date of this treatise is uncertain, but King 1993:113 says 'it probably dates to the fifth or fourth century BC.'
[14] For further discussion of the treatise Περί Παρθένιων see King 1993: 113ff.
[15] Sissa 1990b: 110. For an extensive treatment of virginity in Greek thought see Sissa 1990a and 1990b, especially 105-123 in the latter.

result is early marriage for girls as a societal norm, determined, as Garland says, 'by an unhappy mixture of sexual politics, male pride and medical ignorance.'[21] The insistence on early marriage in the Hippocratic texts arises from the belief that the uterus was the source of many female conditions, including madness and suffocation. It was believed to wander round the body causing many and varied symptoms and the most efficacious cure was generally believed to be found in early marriage and sexual intercourse, although various techniques such as fumigation[22] were employed in an attempt to return the wandering organ to its rightful place. Herodotus himself makes mention of medications used in such situations in speaking of the Budini in the course of his excursus on the Scythians when he says that the Budini capture otters, beavers and other square faced animals whose fur is used for trimming mantles and οἱ ὄρχιες εἰσι χρήσιμοι ἐς ὑστερέων ἄκεσιν – 'their testicles are useful for the healing of wombs.'[23] The sooner the uterus was filled with a pregnancy the better, in the eyes of male physicians.

The παρθένος or young girl ready for marriage is symbolised by the untamed young animal who must be yoked, harnessed or governed by a man to achieve her potential as a mother of citizens. This idea is exemplified in a love poem by the early lyric poet Anacreon, where the young girl is likened to a filly:

πῶλε Θρηικίη, τί δή με
λοξὸν ὄμμασι βλέπουσα
νηλέως φεύγεις, δοκεῖς δέ
μ' οὐδὲν εἰδέναι σοφόν;
ἴσθι τοι, καλῶς μὲν ἄν τοι
τὸν χαλινὸν ἐμβάλοιμι,

[21] Garland 1990: 213.
[22] Thomas 2000: 73 notes various ingredients of such fumigations.
[23] *Histories* 4.109.

ἡνίας δ' ἔχων στρέφοιμί
σ' ἀμφὶ τέρματα δρόμου·
νῦν δὲ λειμῶνάς τε βόσκεαι
κοῦφά τε σκιρτῶσα παίζεις,
δεξιὸν γὰρ ἱππορείην
οὐκ ἔχεις ἐπεμβάτην. [24]

Thracian filly, why do you cruelly avoid me, looking askance
and thinking that I have no skill at all?
Know that I could put a bridle on you correctly, and hold the reins,
and turn you round at the end of the racecourse.
But now you graze on the meadows, and play about, skipping lightly;
for you have no able horseman to mount you.[25]

Larson also points out the connection between Artemis, as the goddess associated with transitions, and παρθένοι in myth who do not make the transition to the adult status of wife and mother successfully; Artemis either punishes the παρθένος for her misdeed, which is usually pregnancy before marriage,[26] or renders her immortal because she dies young as a result of childbirth or suicide, which the heroine commits 'because rape or attempted rape is substituted for legitimate sex.'[27] Here the correspondence of the ending of maidenhood with the death of a maiden in myth is most obvious; since the mythical παρθένος did not attain marriage, the state considered in real life to be the end of maidenhood, the only alternative was death.

The original παρθένος, one emblematic of the misogynistic trend in Greek thought, is Pandora, the first mortal woman. As Rudhardt[28] points out, sexuality and

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[24] Page 1962: 207, no. 417.
[25] Translation by C.A. Trypanis 1971: 159.
[26] E.g., Callisto who was seduced by Zeus. Likewise Ctesylla who ran off with her lover but later died in childbirth.
[27] Larson 1995: 117. For example, Aspalis, who committed suicide to avoid rape and whose cult statue was worshipped in the temple of Artemis.
[28] Rudhardt 1986: 237.

femininity have been present since the beginning of the cosmos, in the persons of Eros and Gaea, and there are 'des entités masculines et des entités féminines à chaque génération,' so that Pandora cannot be defined as the first 'être feminin.' Nonetheless, in that she is created in the course of events leading to the establishment of human societies, Pandora can fairly be termed 'la première femme véritablement humaine.'[29] Hesiod tells the story of her manufacture twice, both in the *Theogony* and in more detail in the *Works and Days*.[30] She is created as a punishment for men after Prometheus stole fire from the gods to give to man; why men should pay for Prometheus' crime is never explained so it must be assumed that their fault is to be beneficiaries of the crime.[31] Hephaestus fashions Pandora as a beautiful maiden, designated a παρθένος in both poems, from earth and water, while Athena dresses her as a bride in silver robes, with a veil and a golden crown, the whole being characterised as a καλόν κακόν or 'beautiful evil'. In the *Works and Days*, various details are added, notably the gift of the skill of weaving from Athena, and a thieving nature and shameless mind from Hermes.[32] When arrayed in all her finery, this gift is given to Epimetheus, brother of Prometheus, who has been warned not to accept any gifts from the gods, but in his foolishness he takes Pandora in. From this, according to both of Hesiod's works, flow all mankind's ills, partly because Pandora has with her a jar, which she opens and thereby releases all the evils and diseases to which men are subject, leaving behind only Hope.

One of the most striking aspects of this myth is the assumption that men seem to have existed before Pandora's creation without women, and therefore with some

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[29] Rudhardt 1986: 239.
[30] *Theogony* 535ff and *Works and Days* 47ff.
[31] Pucci 1977: 83 and West 1966: 307 agree that the three parts of the tale, the quarrel between Zeus and Prometheus, the creation of Pandora and the opening of the jar, do not hang together easily as a whole.
[32] It is interesting that a male god gives her her maleficent characteristics.

other form of reproduction, though Hesiod does not go into any detail. Before the arrival of Pandora men lived in some sort of blessed existence with the gods, without having to work for anything and without suffering any of the ills of the flesh. While Hesiod does not state specifically the manner of man's creation, he does emphasise the Eden-like quality of his existence. This pre-Pandora paradise is the expression of the Greek dream of a world without women; the contrast with the Biblical Eden, where, although woman is also a later creation than man, she is brought into being as a helpmeet and companion for Adam, rather than as a punishment for all mankind as in the Greek myth, is illuminating, since the manufacture of woman as a punishment for man puts a totally different perspective on the relationship between the sexes.

At this point mention must be made of the Athenian theory of autochthony, according to which the original Athenians were born from the soil of Attica. According to one version of the myth,[33] Cecrops, a half man, half snake being who sprang from the earth, was the first king of Athens. He is credited with bringing to the people the benefits of civilisation such as the worship of Zeus and the abolition of blood sacrifices,[34] as well as the building of temples, the institution of monogamy and the abolition of blood sacrifices. After Cecrops, Erichthonius came to the throne. The story of his birth further strengthens the claims of the Athenians to autochthonous birth. According to the myth,[35] Athene visited the smithy of Hephaestus to obtain arms. Overcome by lust, Hephaestus pursued Athene, caught up with her despite his lameness and ejaculated semen on her leg. She wiped the semen off with a piece of wool and threw it to the ground. Erichthonius sprang from the impregnated earth and was brought up in secret by Athene who concealed him in a chest. Nor are these the

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[33] Apollodorus 3.14.1.
[34] Pausanias 8.2.3.
[35] Apollodorus 3.14.6.

only examples in Greek myth of reproduction without women; apart from the two earth-born kings of Athens, there is also in mythology the story of the birth of the Giants, who sprang from the blood of Uranus' severed genitals[36] as well as that of the the men and women who sprang from the stones that Deucalion and Pyrrha threw over their shoulders after escaping from the flood that Zeus to destroy the race of bronze.[37] It is clear that the pre-Pandora paradise described by Hesiod is not the only example in Greek mythology of reproduction without women.

There is also the strange method of Pandora's creation, the fact that she is manufactured, albeit by a god, but the product of a technical process nonetheless.[38] Stewart calls attention to the fact that Pandora is clothed even before life is breathed into her,[39] underlining the artificiality of her creation and her total passivity. The emphasis placed on the adornment of Pandora prefigures the dressing of the Greek bride for her wedding[40] and perhaps also has resonances with the arming scenes in epic, where war and marriage are the defining experiences for the respective genders. Even her name is ambiguous, since it lends itself to two contrasting meanings; either, as Hermes says, she who is given gifts by all the gods, or conversely she who brings all gifts, with the irony that the gifts she brings destroy the previously existing paradise of mankind, and, as gifts of the gods, cannot be refused.[41] This beautiful παρθένος belies her attractive exterior when she is given as a wife, an aspect that will be dealt with later under the rubric of wife.

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[36] Apollodorus 1.1.4 and 1.6.1.
[37] Apollodorus 1.7.2.
[38] In contrast to the account of the creation of woman given in Genesis 2.21. For helpful insights see Zeitlin 1996: 59.
[39] Stewart 1997: 41.
[40] Lévêque 1988: 55 makes the comparison between the adornment of Pandora and 'les hiérogamies d'Héra dans l'*Iliade*, d'Aphrodite dans l'*Hymne homérique*.'
[41] For the impossibility of refusing the gifts of the gods, see Pucci 1977: 2f.

Greek myth is replete with παρθένοι, always beautiful, intelligent, courageous and frequently physically active. They often participate in spheres generally reserved for men; Atalanta joins the hunt for the Calydonian boar,[42] Cyrene wrestles with a lion[43] and Daphne hunts with her sisters.[44] Often the mythical παρθένος is either raped by a god or dies before she can make the transition to the status of wife. One of the most famous rapes, certainly the one with the most widespread repercussions, is that of Persephone by Hades.[45] Persephone, daughter of Demeter and Zeus, is gathering flowers in a meadow when Hades abducts her and takes her to the Underworld, an instance where the end of maidenhood is at one and the same time marriage and death. The cases of divine rape are too abundant to enumerate, with Zeus, Poseidon and Apollo frequently being the gods in question, and the girl may only live long enough to give birth to her divine child.[46] At this point it is not possible to avoid some consideration of the choice of terms to describe the situation between the god and the παρθένος. The choice is of course between the terms rape and seduction. Lefkowitz believes that the sexual encounters between gods and παρθένοι should be characterised as seduction rather than rape because 'the gods see to it that the experience, however, transient, is pleasant for mortals'[47] and goes on to argue that the beautiful outdoor settings of the encounters and, more importantly, the remarkable offspring of such unions tilt the balance in favour of classifying them as seduction. She adduces as one example the case of Polymele, who attracted the attention of Hermes while she was performing in a choral dance, but there is no specific evidence

[42] Apollodorus 3.9.2, Pausanias 8.45.2.
[43] Pindar *Pyth.* 9.17-28.
[44] Pausanias 8.20.2-4.
[45] *Theogony* 912-16.
[46] Larson 1995: 137 notes the 'distinction between mortal and divine rape stories: the young woman raped by a mortal man commits suicide, while women raped by gods live at least long enough to bear the god's offspring.'
[47] Lefkowitz 1993: 17.

in the text of the *Iliad* at this point[48] to indicate Polymele's willing submission to the god. Lefkowitz can only argue that 'since there is no mention of violence, and Hermes and Polymele made love "in secret" (λάθρῃ) in the women's quarters, the implication is that she did not strenuously resist the god's attentions.'[49] It is equally possible to argue that whether it was rape or seduction, the encounter would have taken place 'in secret' and also that the women's quarters would have provided a venue unfrequented by men in any event. Lefkowitz' other example is Tyro whom Poseidon seduced by assuming the appearance of the river Enipeus,[50] her beloved, but this surely is evidence of her passion for Enipeus, not of her acquiescence in an encounter with Poseidon. Given the power imbalance between the protagonists, there seems to be a dubious distinction between the terms rape and seduction; the god could indeed make the girl a willing participant if he so wished, as in the case of Poseidon just noted, but if he did not, his divine strength meant that the girl had no chance of resisting him successfully in any event. To characterise the event as seduction does have the advantage of providing a rationale for the frequent punishment of the παρθένος by her κύριος, generally her father or grandfather, since young girls were not supposed to succumb to the blandishments of any man before marriage. Since the myths are a product of an androcentric society, however, there is in fact almost no information concerning the feelings of the παρθένος about her experience and it is only in the cases of Persephone, Cassandra and Daphne that the myth pays any attention to their reaction to the god's advances; as far as all the other παρθένοι are concerned, their reactions are irrelevant; what matters is their impregnation by the god. Indeed, the fact that the παρθένος is assumed to be adequately recompensed for

[48] *Iliad* 16. 180-86.
[49] Lefkowitz 1993: 22.
[50] *Odyssey* 11.235-59.

the experience by bearing a remarkable child is further evidence of the androcentric origin of the myth; such an assumption depends on the acceptance by the girl that childbearing is her main means of complete fulfilment and her recognition that she is especially fortunate to bear the offspring of a god, in short, her acquiescence in the androcentric worldview. Most divine rapes do end in conception and successful birth;[51] indeed, Poseidon says to Tyro after their encounter:

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>
> 'χαῖρε, γύναι, φιλότητι· περιπλομένου δ' ἐνιαυτοῦ
> τέξεαι ἀγλαὰ τέκνα, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἀποφώλιοι εὐναὶ
> ἀθανάτων·
>
> Rejoice woman, in our love, for when the year has run
> its course, you will bear glorious children, for the unions
> of the gods are not fruitless.[52]

Frequently the παρθένος suffers the consequences of her encounter with the god and on occasion she is responsible for her own end: Semele foolishly asks to see her lover in his real form and dies as a result of Zeus' thunderbolt, so that the infant Dionysus is sewn up in Zeus' thigh until it is time for him to be born.[53] On the other hand, the nymph Callisto, follower of Artemis, is raped by Zeus, and in one version is changed into a bear by Artemis,[54] from whom she might expect sympathy for her plight, but who is instead angered by Callisto's apparent breaking of her vow of chastity.[55] Callisto's child, Arcas, is rescued by Hermes,[56] whose mother Maia acts as

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[51] Though not, seemingly, the one mentioned above perpetrated on Persephone by Hades.
[52] *Odyssey* 11: 248-250.
[53] Apollodorus 3.4.3.
[54] Pausanias 8.3.6.
[55] In other versions of the myth, either Zeus or Hera changes Callisto into a bear, the former to conceal his misdemeanour from Hera, the latter to punish Callisto for being raped by Zeus.
[56] Pausanias 8.3.6.

κουροτρόφος.[57] Arcas, as the ancestor of the Arcadians, is an example of the illustrious child that is generally the product of such unions. Mortal παρθένοι are frequently persecuted by their fathers when it is discovered that they are pregnant and the child is exposed at birth, as in the case of Auge, who is seduced by Heracles and later gives birth to Telephus.[58] Only the fortunate few, like Polymele and Tyro, go on to marry in the normal way.

Other young girls fail to make the transition to adulthood because they sacrifice themselves for a cause, displaying great courage in the process. Macaria, daughter of Heracles, willingly sacrifices herself when an oracle declares that the Athenians will be victorious only when one of the children of Heracles dies voluntarily.[59] Self-sacrifice instead of the normal feminine destiny of marriage distorts the normal social progression of the παρθένος from young girl to wife to mother and death takes the place of marriage. The correspondences between the marriage ceremony and funeral rites have long been noted[60] and indeed in tragedy are highlighted.[61] Iphigenia is sacrificed by her father, Agamemnon, in order to placate Artemis who has becalmed the Achaean fleet about to sail for Troy and although hers is not a case of self sacrifice, she too is prevented from making the transition to the expected adult role of wife and mother.[62]

One of the most extended and delightful literary portraits of a παρθένος is Homer's treatment of Nausicaa in the *Odyssey*.[63] Nausicaa is the daughter of the king and queen of Scheria, where Odysseus has been washed ashore, and she epitomises

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[57] Apollodorus 3.8.2.
[58] Apollodorus 3.9.1.
[59] Pausanias 1.32.5.
[60] See, for example, Rehm 1994: 11-29.
[61] For example, particularly in the Cassandra scene in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* 950-1354.
[62] See the discussion in Rehm 1994: 50-52 where he says, in part, '(Iphigenia) also assumes the role of an ersatz bride who drops her wedding veil only to look into the eyes of her killers, acknowledging that her marriage will not be realized, except insofar as death is a consummation.'
[63] *Odyssey* 6 *passim*.

the qualities of the παρθένος in every respect; she is an unmarried virgin, and her appearances in the text show that she is beautiful, intelligent, courageous and physically active.[64] Her meeting with Odysseus is everything that the father of such a girl would fear, since she is unveiled as she and her attendants have been playing a ball game when Odysseus appears, and her natural courage causes her not to flee from the stranger, unlike her attendants. As a princess she knows the customs of hospitality to which she is supposed to conform and orders her handmaidens to provide Odysseus with clothing, food and drink. Nonetheless, she is fully aware of all the conventions that surround her as a young, unmarried girl and intelligently suggests that she and Odysseus go separately to the palace where he should approach her mother for help. The possibility exists that she might detain Odysseus in the same way as Circe and Calypso; indeed since marriage is her goal, she perhaps presents an even greater threat to Odysseus' νόστος or return home than the two goddesses. Her dreams of marriage to the stranger do not materialise, but it is clear that Odysseus will not forget her, despite his determination to return to Ithaca and Penelope. We do not know how her story ends but no doubt a suitable, if less romantic, husband is found for her in due course.

Even in Hesiod's *Works and Days* there is an uncharacteristically sympathetic reference to a daughter where he describes the innocent young daughter in terms quite different from those he uses in connection with the figure of the wife.

> καὶ διὰ παρθενικῆς ἁπαλόχροος οὐ διάησιν,
> ἥ τε δόμων ἔντοσθε φίλη παρὰ μητέρι μίμνει,
> οὔπω ἔργα ἰδυῖα πολυχρύσου Ἀφροδίτης,
> εὖ τε λοεσσαμένη τέρενα χρόα καὶ λίπ' ἐλαίῳ

[64] See van Nortwick 1979: 270f.

χρισαμένη μυχίη καταλέξεται ἔνδοθι οἴκου,
ἤματι χειμερίῳ, . . .

Nor does he (Boreas, the north wind) pierce the softskinned maiden
Who remains within the house beside her loving mother
And is not aware of the works of golden Aphrodite.
She washes her tender skin carefully and anoints it with oil
And going to an inner room of the house, goes to sleep
On a winter's day. . . [65]

It is perhaps not surprising to find that even when he is using less harsh terms than he is accustomed to employ in connection with the female of the species, Hesiod depicts the daughter as attending to her toilette and sleeping in the daytime; taking care of her looks is obviously an important feature of her life in the period before a husband is found for her, while sleeping in the daytime prefigures the idleness he attributes to the wife whom he compares to the idle drones in the beehive in the *Theogony.*[66]

The very first pages of the *Histories* of Herodotus feature the three daughters of kings that the Persians say were the cause of the enmity between Asia and Europe: Io, daughter of the king of Argos, Europa, daughter of the king of Tyre, Medea, daughter of the king of Colchis, as well as Helen, whom Herodotus does not identify either as a daughter or a wife.[67] These figures are, for Herodotus and the Greeks, part of a far distant but real past.[68] Herodotus acknowledges this by declining to comment on the truth or otherwise of the tales and preferring to begin his account with a historical figure for whom he can vouch. It is sufficient to note at this stage the rape and abduction motif of the mythological tales, as well as the Phoenician comment that Io

[65] *Works and Days* 519-24.
[66] *Theogony* 590-602.
[67] *Histories* 1.1-5.
[68] How & Wells 1928: 54 note that Herodotus 'rationalises the old myths into plain matter of fact.'

became pregnant by the ship's captain in Argos and sailed away with him willingly so as not to be found out. There are enough stories in myth of daughters persecuted by their fathers on being discovered to be pregnant for the expectation of a father's rage in such circumstances to be a commonplace . Rape, abduction, pregnancy, shame and escape in various forms will figure again and again in the stories dealing with women in the *Histories.*

The first story dealing with a daughter is that of the daughter of Megacles,[69] who is married off to Pisistratus by her father, one of the many daughters in the work given in marriage by her father for dynastic, or, as in this case, political reasons. Pisistratus and Megacles between them then conspire to restore the sovereignty of Athens to Pisistratus through an ingenious scheme involving Phya, a woman of the deme of Paeania, whom they dress in full armour to impersonate Athena and thereby persuade the whole populace that Athena favours Pisistratus.[70] Phya's complete passivity in the exercise of dressing her to resemble the goddess calls to mind Hesiod's descriptions of the adornment of Pandora before she is given to Prometheus. Pisistratus and Megacles use Phya for their own ends just as surely as Zeus and the other gods use Pandora to carry out Zeus' plan to punish mankind.

Because he already has sons by a previous marriage Pisistratus does not wish to father any more children and so refuses to have sex with Megacles' daughter in the usual way. The unnamed daughter eventually tells her mother, who tells the girl's father and the political alliance is broken as Pisistratus flees to avoid his father-in-law's wrath. Since the purpose of every female's life was to give birth, albeit under strictly controlled conditions, Pisistratus is denying Megacles' daughter the fulfilment of her function in society. If women were exchanged between men in marriage for

[69] *Histories* 1.61.
[70] *Histories* 1.60.

the purpose of begetting children, as specified in the formula used in Athenian marriage, 'I give you my daughter for the purpose of producing legitimate children,'[71] then Pisistratus is wilfully flouting the conventions under which he accepted Megacles' daughter as his wife. Indeed, he could be said to have entered into the marriage contract in bad faith, if he never intended to have children with Megacles' daughter or to forge blood ties with Megacles' family. If Megacles' daughter does not produce children, she runs the risk of societal disapproval, since it will be assumed that she is either incapable of doing so, or worse still, that her lack of fertility is the result of some crime, since sterility or barrenness in myth is sometimes associated with divine punishment on an individual or community for an offence against the gods.[72] The story of Creusa,[73] daughter of Erechtheus, king of Athens, illustrates the strength of the desire for children particularly in aristocratic couples; Creusa and Xuthus go to Delphi to ask the god for children. The irony of this tale is that Creusa has already borne a child to the god Apollo and knows that she is fertile. Although the mechanics of conception were not known to the Greeks, generally infertility was blamed on the woman. Therefore Pisistratus is exposing his bride to widespread obloquy for something that is in fact his doing. For Herodotus' audience, then, the action of Megacles in breaking off his political alliance with Pisistratus is understandable, since Pisistratus has broken the terms of the marriage contract, in which he received Megacles' daughter for 'the producing of legitimate children.' This political marriage illustrates the gift-exchange aspect of marriage, whereby the father gives his daughter in marriage to a man from whom he can then expect special consideration in his turn. By abusing Megacles' gift, Pisistratus flouts the

[71] Menander, *Perikeiromene* 1012-1015; *Samia* 897-900; *Dyskolos* 842-845.
[72] For example, Hesiod, *Works and Days* 240-45.
[73] The subject of Euripides' *Ion*.

conventions of this reciprocal arrangement.[74] There are no mythological parallels for Megacles' support for his daughter against her husband; the story is rather a reflection of contemporary *mores*, according to which a father retained his interest in his daughter even after her marriage.

Mandane,[75] the daughter of Astyages, is part of the highly mythologised tale of Cyrus, which is an excellent example of how very quickly, in a largely oral culture, the life story of an exceptional person becomes assimilated into the pattern of myth. On the topic of mythologisation, it is worth noting that Herodotus himself seems to be aware of the process when he says ὡς ὧν Πέρσέων μετεξέτεροι λέγουσι οἱ μὴ βουλόμενοι σεμνοῦν τὰ περὶ Κῦρον, ἄλλα τὸν ἐόντα λέγειν λόγον, κατὰ ταῦτα γράψα, ἐπιστάμενος περὶ Κύρον καὶ τριφασίας ἄλλας λόγων ὁδοὺς φῆναι - 'I will write my account according to the evidence of the Persians whose desire is not to make solemn miracles of all that concerns Cyrus but to tell the very truth. But I know three other ways to tell the story of Cyrus.'[76] One can assume from this that the other three versions are even more highly mythologised than the one that Herodotus recounts. This brings to mind the theory of the 'floating gap' proposed by Vansina[77] in which he suggests that oral tradition cannot go back accurately further than three generations, or roughly eighty years, since as time passes the tradition is always being adjusted to include the recent past. The floating gap is thus the period between the eighty years of accurate memory and the time of origin. Since Cyrus' life falls just within that eighty year period in relation to Herodotus, one could expect that some

[74] Herodotus makes specific mention of the use of marriage as a political bond in his account of the long drawn-out war between the Lydians and the Medes. He records that the mediators brokering a peace agreement between the two sides decided that Alyattes should give his daughter Aryenis to Astyages, ἄνευ γὰρ ἀναγκαίης ἰσχυρῆς συμβάσιες ἰσχυραὶ οὐκ ἐθέλουσι συμμένειν – 'for without firm compulsion treaties are not accustomed to be strong or to hold good.' *Histories* 1.74.
[75] *Histories* 1.107ff.
[76] *Histories* 1.95.
[77] Vansina 1985: 23f.

accurate information would be preserved, but that also the process of mythologisation within the oral tradition had begun and this is indeed obvious from the account of his life that Herodotus recounts. The premonitory dreams and the exposure of the infant Cyrus are surely mythological, and secure evidence for the rest of the story is hard to find. For example, after examining several versions of Cyrus' birth and upbringing, Brosius comes to only one conclusion concerning the story of Cyrus: that 'all versions acknowledge the importance of the marriage alliance between the Median royal house and a Persian noble. They do so because the alliance signalled the legitimacy of the Persian succession to the Median throne.'[78]

Mandane is the daughter of Astyages who, according to Herodotus, dreams that his daughter urinates so copiously that she floods not only the city but the whole of Asia.[79] The magi to whom he recounts his dream frighten him so much with their interpretation[80] that when the time comes for Mandane to marry he marries her to a Persian by the name of Cambyses considered to be inferior in rank to a Mede of middle rank. This inferior Persian is in fact a king and descended from Cyrus I himself, but that information is only found in other sources. Brosius maintains that 'the marriage between Cambyses I and Mandane is described in this narrative to construct a link between Astyages and Cyrus, and thereby between Media and Persia so as to justify Cyrus' claim to be a legitimate successor to the Median throne.'[81] Whether Herodotus is responsible for this manipulation of the story we cannot tell; we do know that he had other information at his disposal. When Mandane is married,

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[78] Brosius: 1996: 43.
[79] *Histories* 1.107. For a discussion of the significance of urine in dreams see Pelling 1996: 70-72.
[80] How & Wells 1928: 107 describe the 'interpreters of dreams' as a genuine Oriental feature.
[81] Brosius 1996: 42.

Astyages' dream recurs in a slightly different form; this time he dreams that a vine grows from Mandane's genitals and overshadows the whole of Asia.[82]

In Herodotus' story the magi interpret the dream to mean that Mandane's child will displace Astyages[83] who, exercising the same prerogative as a Greek father, marries her off, but to an inferior Persian, so as to minimise the possibility of her offspring posing a threat to his royal grandfather; it is a given that, in order to pose such a threat to Astyages, the child will be a son. In the same way, Zeus marries Thetis to a mortal when Themis declares that she is fated to give birth to a son more powerful than his father.[84] Though Zeus desires Thetis himself he marries her to Peleus so that her son will be mortal and therefore be unable to rival Zeus himself. Similarly, Euripides adapts the mythological story in his *Electra* by having Clytemnestra and Aegisthus marry off Electra to a poor peasant so that any children she may produce will not be in a position to avenge the family honour against them. Being mortal, Astyages is not able to prevent the prediction from coming to pass, but like Laius, Priam, Pelias and Acrisius he makes the attempt. Unlike Thetis, Mandane is unable to protest at her marriage even if she wants to; like Mandane, even Thetis

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[82] Pelling 1996: 69 notes 'the frequency of the vine as an Achaemenid royal symbol.'

[83] The motif of some sort of prophecy forecasting the displacement of the older generation by the younger is a frequent one in mythology, sometimes in the form of a dream but more frequently in the form of an oracle. The successive generations of Uranus, Cronus and Zeus among the Olympians provide the archetype of sons usurping the position of their fathers by force, and the theme of violent succession and attempts to forestall it is further exemplified in the myths of Laius, Priam and Jason. Laius is warned that if he has a son the child will kill him (Apollod.3.5.7), while Priam's wife Hecuba has a dream of a firebrand that destroys the whole city of Troy just before the birth of Paris (Apollod.3.12.5). Generally it is sons who replace fathers but in the case of Jason and Pelias, the prophecy warned Pelias (Apollod.1.9.16) that he would be killed by a man with one sandal, a descendant of Aeson, his half-brother. There is also the oracle which foretells that the son of Danae will kill his grandfather Acrisius (Apollod. 2.4.1), a prophecy which parallels the story Herodotus tells of Astyages and Mandane. All these myths deal with inter-generational stresses, embodying the natural fear of the older generation of being eclipsed by its own descendants. Bremmer 1987a: 49 commenting on parricide says 'It is therefore well to remember that in ancient Greece sons were totally dependent on their fathers for their later status, and that parents looked to their children as a kind of pension. The great stress Greeks laid on honouring parents is a clear indication of a situation in which an underlying tension between fathers and sons must always have existed. An ever-present possibility, parricide was considered to be one of the most appalling of crimes.'

[84] Pindar *Isth.* 8.26a-46a, Apollodorus 3.13.5.

the Nereid is finally unable to refuse the marriage arranged for her, though she attempts to do so. As Pelling points out, it is the fact that Mandane is now married to an inferior Persian, an outsider, 'that makes the dream such a disturbing one: now any succession of Mandane's offspring to the throne could only, once again, be a distorted one. Hence the experts interpret this, not as suggesting that his grandson will inherit, but that he will "rule *instead of* him" (1.108.2), a suggestion of violence and usurpation rather than natural inheritance.'[85] Astyages is not the characteristic pitiless father of most exposure stories; by marrying Mandane off after the first dream, he tries to ward off whatever worrying consequences the magi have imparted to him concerning his dream without harming his daughter and it is only after the second dream that he is fully cognisant of the threat to himself. Although he exposes his grandson in time-honoured fashion, when the child is discovered many years later, he returns him to his real parents, believing, wrongly as it turns out, that the threat has been successfully avoided, and the scene is then set for the dreams to come true. Although the story of Astyages and Mandane is set in Media, Herodotus portrays them just as he would a Greek father and his daughter; the father arranges the marriage of his daughter with the man of his choice, whatever the parameters of such a choice, and the daughter acquiesces.

The daughter of the Egyptian king Mycerinus is another unnamed daughter of a powerful man. According to one version of her death that Herodotus is told, her father rapes her and she hangs herself in shame.[86] Garrison notes that 'Herodotus here uses the word ἄχος to describe her state of mind, a word infrequent in prose but common in tragedy' and in a footnote comments that 'when the word occurs in prose,

[85] Pelling 1996: 73.
[86] *Histories* 2.129-31.

it appears in contexts concerning tragic and/or mythical figures.'[87] This would appear to confirm the contention that Herodotus casts the story in a mythological pattern and that both the rape by a father and the suicide of a young girl by hanging are mythological elements. Such a contention does not necessarily militate against the veracity of the account, but rather maintains that the story told by Herodotus fits a mythological pattern: the young girl who is denied the chance to fulfill her proper destiny of legitimate motherhood as a result of rape and who therefore takes her own life in shame. Here we have the direct correspondence of the end of maidenhood with death, a rupture of the normal pattern where the end of maidenhood coincides with marriage. There are various examples in myth of fathers who rape or seduce their daughters: Gorge, daughter of Oineus and Althaea, is said to be the mother of Tydeus by her own father[88] and Nyctimene likewise is said to have been seduced by her father King Epopeus of Lesbos.

Shame felt on the occasion of rape is felt in such acute form in the myth of the rape of Caenis by Poseidon that she asks Poseidon to change her into a man so that she will never feel the same emotion again.[89] Shame at her rape by her father drives Mycerinus' daughter to hang herself, the method of suicide most common among heroines. As Larson says, 'Suicide is the only possible feminine response to outrage.'[90] Phaedra,[91] Antigone[92] and Arachne[93] all hang themselves to escape an intolerable situation as does Oenone after the death of Paris.[94] When Jocasta realises

[87] Garrison 1991: 14 and footnote 46.
[88] Apollodorus 1.8.5.
[89] Apollodorus 1.22.
[90] Larson 1995:135.
[91] Apollodorus 1.18-19.
[92] *Antigone* 1186.
[93] Arachne not only commits suicide by hanging herself but her very 'crime' highlights the strong connection between women and the production of cloth, since her transgression is to weave a perfect cloth and thereby to incur the wrath of Athena.
[94] Apollodorus 3.12.6.

that Oedipus, the father of her children, is also her son, she too hangs herself.[95] Aspalis, daughter of Argaeus, hangs herself to escape the attentions of a tyrant.[96] Although Erigone, daughter of Icarius, hangs herself from grief rather than shame on discovering the body of her father,[97] it would seem nonetheless that hanging is regarded as the most frequent method of choice for suicide of women in myth.[98] Loraux argues that 'hanging was associated with marriage – or rather, with an excessive valuation of the status of bride (*nymphē*) – while a suicide that shed blood was associated with maternity, through which a wife, in her "heroic" pains of childbirth, found complete fulfilment.'[99] Since most suicides of women in myth are those of maidens who have been raped or fear rape, a circumstance which compromises their future status as brides, this explains the preponderance of hanging as the means of taking their lives. Although Herodotus is telling the story of an Egyptian princess, the method she chooses to end her life would in the circumstances have seemed entirely acceptable to his Greek audience. Likewise the reason for it, since loss of virginity before marriage was the worst thing that could happen to a young Greek girl, and much time and energy was spent on maintaining this asset. Whether the same strictures applied for an Egyptian princess is not the issue; the point is that Herodotus' audience would have felt completely at home with the story. There is a postscript to the story in which Herodotus says that the dying girl asked her father to let her see the sun once a year, which Lloyd characterises as 'an aetiological legend based on a complete misunderstanding of the Khoiak ritual.'[100] It is tempting to see

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[95] Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* 1070.
[96] Antoninus Liberalis 13.
[97] Apollodorus 3.14.7.
[98] According to Bremmer 1987a: 52 'weapons were the realm of men, and women seem to have respected their monopoly.' Hanging is carried out with a cloth (Phaedra) or a knotted veil (Antigone), underlining the association of women with textile artefacts. See Reeder 1995: 201.
[99] Loraux 1987: 15.
[100] Lloyd 1988: 81.

here echoes of Eurydice, Persephone and Alcestis who all return from the Underworld, with varying degrees of success, Eurydice momentarily,[101] Persephone for a few months of the year[102] and Alcestis, with the help of Heracles, for the rest of her allotted life.[103]

Rape is the theme of another story with mythological overtones. The Persian Sataspes, son of Teäspes, rapes the unnamed unmarried daughter of Zopyrus.[104] Xerxes orders him to be impaled as a punishment but his mother pleads for his life, promising to impose a harsher penalty on her son than Xerxes had. Her request is granted and she demands that her son should sail round Libya (Africa) until he arrives back at the Arabian Gulf. The idea of a dangerous journey is frequent in mythology as a means of expiating a crime, ridding oneself of a bothersome hero or reclaiming a patrimony that has been usurped by someone else.[105] The rape of an unmarried girl was certainly a heinous crime in Greek and presumably Persian eyes, given the horrendous punishment imposed by Xerxes, although the punishment in this case may also be a function of the power of the girl's family since Zopyrus conquered Babylon for Darius and was the son of one of the original seven conspirators who regained the throne from the false Smerdis. The rape itself, however, rendered the girl unsuitable for marriage in the same way as it did for the many young girls in mythology who are raped or seduced by Zeus and other male deities and suffer the consequences. In just one example, Danae is locked up by her father in a tower to protect her virginity, but Zeus comes to her in a shower of golden rain and impregnates her.[106] When her father

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[101] Apollodorus 1.3.2.
[102] Apollodorus 1.5.3.
[103] Apollodorus 1.9.15.
[104] *Histories* 4.43.
[105] For example, the series of tasks set Bellerophon by Iobates, each one potentially fatal, and Pelias' despatch of Jason in search of the Golden Fleece.
[106] Pindar *Pyth.* 12.20, Apollodorus 2.4.1.

finds out he places her and the child in a chest and puts them adrift at sea because she can no longer be married off in the usual way. Herodotus does not tell us the fate of the unnamed παρθένος in his story since his interest is centred on Sataspes but it is certain that the rape changed her life.

There are two tales featuring deception revealed by daughters. Nitetis, daughter of Apries, reveals to Cambyses that Amasis has deceived him by sending her to Cambyses instead of his own daughter when requested to do so, since he realises that Cambyses does not intend to make her his bride, but his concubine.[107] Herodotus' brief description of the adorning of Nitetis to make her seem like a royal princess calls to mind Hesiod's depiction of the beautification of Pandora with fine clothing and jewellery before the gods give her to Epimetheus. Herodotus states that her revelation to Cambyses was the reason for his invasion of Egypt: τοῦτο δὴ τὸ ἔπος καὶ αὕτη ἡ αἰτίη ἐγγενομένη ἤγαγε Καμβύσεα τὸν Κύρου μεγάλως θυμωθέντα ἐπ' Αἴγύπτον – 'This was what she said and the reason that drove Cambyses son of Cyrus in great anger against Egypt.'[108] Since Amasis has overthrown and murdered her own father, Apries, Nitetis has plenty of reason to betray his deception to Cambyses, and in this way engineers revenge for her father's death.

In the second tale of deception revealed by a daughter, Phaedymia discovers that the false Smerdis has no ears and so reveals his deception to her father Otanes.[109] Brosius[110] examines in great detail Herodotus' version of the events involving Phaedymia and Otanes in conjunction with the corresponding text of the Bisitun Inscription, the monumental *Res Gestae* left by Darius, and notes that there are several

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[107] *Histories* 3.1.
[108] *Histories* 3.1.
[109] *Histories* 3.68-9.
[110] Brosius 1996: 51-60.

discrepancies between the two accounts, not least the fact that 'the crucial role Otanes and Phaidyme played in the conspiracy against Gaumata . . . (was) not mentioned in the appropriate passages of the Bisitun Inscription.'[111] She bases her enquiry on evidence relating to the marriage policy of Darius, which on her reading was an attempt to ensure his own and his sons' rights to the throne by a series of marriages which left him in control of any progeny who might have a better claim than his. Her conclusion is that 'Herodotus created a role for Otanes which was that of a counterpart of Darius; Phaidyme extended that role, yet factual evidence only allows the conclusion that Darius controlled the entire episode of the seizure of the Persian throne and that neither Otanes nor his daughter had anything to do with the identification of the imposter, if there ever had been one.'[112] As in the case of stories concerning Cyrus, it would seem that there were several versions of Darius' accession to the throne of Persia in circulation so that with constant retelling the truth became harder to identify and Herodotus either retold the only one he knew or chose the one that suited his purposes. If, as Brosius suggests, Darius was in control of the whole episode, it is certain that the version he left behind in the Bisitun Inscription is the one he wanted known. Herodotus' version may not be the truth either, but it does point to the existence of variants. In his version, Phaedymia is another of those 'liminal' figures noted elsewhere, a woman who has ties with both her natal and marital families, and does not cast off the first on entering into the second. The revelation of secrets or deeds that are not meant to be made public, generally because the perpetrator is trying to hide his wrongdoing, such as that illustrated by the stories of Phaedymia and Nitetis, is a mythological element highlighted in the myth of Procne

[111] Brosius 1996: 55.
[112] Brosius 1996: 62.

and Philomela.[113] Procne is given to Tereus in marriage by her father as a reward for military assistance, and she soon gives birth to Itys. On the way to visit Procne, her sister Philomela, who is presumably a παρθένος, is raped by her brother-in-law and her tongue cut out so that she cannot reveal what has been done to her. She manages to weave her story into a garment that she sends to Procne, who then rescues her sister and between them the sisters kill Itys and serve his flesh to Tereus in revenge. Weaving is the archetypal occupation for women, both in myth and in real life; it is only fitting that a literally silenced woman such as Philomela should employ this means to make herself heard.

In the *Histories* Polycrates' daughter[114] suffers the same fate as Priam's daughter, Cassandra, that of not being believed when accurately prophecying the future. Although Polycrates has been frequently advised by oracles and friends not to accept Oroetes' invitation, he is taken in by Oroetes' offer to share his wealth and prepares to leave on his journey. Polycrates' daughter has a dream of her father high in the air being anointed by the sun and washed by Zeus, and, in the tradition of strong father-daughter ties, tries her best to dissuade her father from undertaking the journey. But like Cassandra, her predictions of doom fall on deaf ears and her father sets off, only to meet the disaster his daughter has foreseen. Oroetes has him crucified and his body is at the mercy of the elements just as foretold in his daughter's dream. Cassandra is another παρθένος who attracts the attention of a god, in this case Apollo; having been given the gift of prophecy in childhood, she is cursed by the god to have her accurate predictions disbelieved, as a punishment for having changed her mind about sleeping with him.[115] It is interesting to note that Polycrates threatens his

[113] Apollodorus 3.14.8.
[114] *Histories* 3.124.
[115] Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* 1202-13.

daughter that she will remain unmarried for a long time if he should come back safely, as a punishment for trying to dissuade him from his intended course of action. This highlights the father's complete control over his daughter's marriage prospects and the manner in which a threat not to arrange a marriage for her was intended as a form of discipline .

Marriage for daughters in ancient Greece was arranged between their fathers and the husband he chose for them. Cox notes that there is little material in the primary sources concerning the emotional aspect of the father-daughter relationship but that 'the emphasis in the texts is rather on the role of the father as the daughter's κύριος.'[116] Given that the choosing of a husband for his daughter was obviously one of a man's most predictable duties, there are nevertheless in the *Histories* occasional examples of variation in the manner of the choice, which Herodotus probably notes precisely for their exceptional nature. Cleisthenes of Sicyon summons any man who wishes to come and offer himself as a candidate for the hand of his daughter, Agariste.[117] Many young men take him up on the offer and for a year he tests them, hoping to find the best man in Greece as a husband for his daughter.[118] This testing of the suitors brings to mind the athletic contest set by Danaus[119] for the suitors of his fifty daughters, as well as the footraces the suitors of Atalanta are forced to run with her in an attempt to win her hand;[120] likewise the chariot races set by Oenomaus for the hand of his daughter, Hippodamia, won eventually through trickery by the wily Pelops.[121] Obviously Cleisthenes would reap tremendous prestige from entertaining

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[116] Cox 1998: 92.
[117] *Histories* 6.126.
[118] Garland 1990: 214 suggests that this procedure would 'spare the bride's father the invidious task of having to discriminate between highly born youths on purely personal grounds, since his role was hereby limited to that of impartial judge in contests of skill.'
[119] Pindar *Pyth.* 9.111ff.
[120] See Vidal-Naquet 1986: 119f for a more detailed discussion of Atalanta and Melanion.
[121] Pindar *Ol.* 1.67-89.

so many young men for a year and each of them would be in his debt. The return of the suitors to their homes after the competition would spread Cleisthenes' κλέος throughout Greece, and do no harm to the prestige of the eventual winner, Megacles of Athens. The mass wooing[122] of Helen may have been in Cleisthenes' mind when he hit on the idea of summoning suitors for his daughter's hand; certainly the list of Helen's suitors reads like a Who's Who of mythology.[123] There is a distinct difference between the competition among prospective bridegrooms, as illustrated in myth as well as in the story of Cleisthenes and Agariste, and the practice in classical times, where 'it was now the fathers who had to compete to get their daughters married,'[124] hence the institution of the dowry, which added to the attraction of the daughter for an anticipated husband, although the passing of Pericles' citizenship law of 451-450 B.C. would have placed a premium on citizen daughters as prospective wives.

In the final analysis, however, in the competition for Agariste's hand it is her father who makes the ultimate choice, as is the normal practice, but only a short while earlier Herodotus has reported an instance in which the normal roles are reversed. Callias, victor in the Olympian and Pythian games, settles generous dowries on his three daughters and allows them to choose their own husbands.[125] There are some mythological precedents; it is said that Odysseus suggested that Helen be given the final choice of her husband from all the suitors wooing her and that all the other suitors should support her decision; the result is that when she is abducted by Paris, Menelaus calls on the suitors to come to his aid in restoring her to her rightful place,

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[122] Apollodorus 3.11.8-9.
[123] Apollodorus 3.11.8.
[124] McNeal 1988: 70.
[125] *Histories* 6.122.

as required by the oath described in Hesiod's Catalogue of Women.[126] Marpessa too is allowed to make her own choice of bridegroom. Courted by both Apollo and Idas,[127] who are about to come to blows to decide which of them should wed her until Zeus intervenes, Marpessa chooses Idas, since being mortal he will grow old with her. Vernant suggests that the decision to allow his daughter to make her own choice of husband was the means the father used to obviate the neccessity of making a decision he did not want to make according to the normal rules of marriage.[128] This is indeed a distortion of the normal practice, where men make the decisions and their daughters are expected to comply, regardless of personal preferences. Exceptional circumstances must obtain where a father abrogates his authority in choosing his daughter's husband in this way.

There are of course peoples whose customs regarding marriage are different to those of the Greeks. Herodotus mentions the Adyrmachidae of Libya, who live closest to the Egyptians and who present their daughters to the king when they are about to marry.[129] The king then exercises his *droit de seigneur* in taking the maidenhead of the girl who pleases him most. Various elements of this custom can be seen as 'other' in relation to Greek practices; kingship in itself is alien to much of Herodotus' audience while the idea of offering a daughter to any man before her marriage would not be countenanced by any Greek. Herodotus does not say whether the people of this Libyan tribe consider it an honour to be chosen but it would seem that daughters, Greek or barbarian, do not have much choice in these matters.

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[126] Hesiod *Catalogue of Women* fragment 204.78. Also Apollodorus 3.11.9.
[127] *Iliad* 9.557-60. Also Apollodorus 1.7.8.
[128] Vernant 1980: 62.
[129] *Histories* 4.168.

Phronime is a daughter and stepdaughter simultaneously and her tale[130] has both mythical and folkloric resonances. Stepmothers seem to have the same negative image the world over[131] and ancient Greek myth is no exception. It is perhaps understandable that anyone attempting to take the place of a natural mother in any family would be looked upon with suspicion and would hardly be greeted with open arms, except in unusual circumstances, but it is interesting that stepfathers do not have the same universal bad press. This dichotomy can no doubt be explained by the fact that in general mothers, including stepmothers, are the primary care givers and therefore have more to do with the day-to-day nurturing of the child. The stepmother can only suffer in comparison with the lost natural mother, and will generally be seen as a usurper, while the stepfather, being at one remove from the children, so to speak, does not seem to engender such universal repugnance.[132]

The story of Phronime runs true to type.[133] Her father Etearchus, the king of Oäxus on Crete, takes a second wife after the death of his first wife, expressly to have another woman to take care of his daughter. No mention is made of Phronime's age at the time, but in the light of subsequent events it seems to be clear that she was not a babe in arms. The stepmother is intriguingly unnamed; intriguingly because although in Greek custom, which Herodotus does not always follow, respectable women are not named, disreputable ones frequently are.[134] If Herodotus had known her name, one might have expected him to use it in these circumstances. The stepmother conforms to type by making the child's life a misery; Herodotus does not motivate her actions so one assumes that typical stepmotherly resentment of her husband's child by

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[130] *Histories* 4.154

[131] The wicked stepmother of fairy tales and the *saeva noverca* of Latin literature are only two examples of the stereotype.

[132] Cox 1998: 89ff examines cases of both benevolent and malevolent stepfathers.

[133] *Histories* 4.154-155.

[134] See Schaps 1977: 329

his first marriage is to blame, although one may speculate that jealousy of an older woman for a pretty young girl might have played a part. There is no mention of any children of the second marriage, which rules out potential inheritance disputes as a contributory factor.

Whatever her motivation, the stepmother finally accuses the daughter of promiscuity, lending weight to the idea of sexual jealousy of an older woman, and easily persuades the father of the truth of her accusations. The ready acceptance by the father of the unjust accusation against his child seems to be a feature of these stories; in this case the father himself comes up with the method of disposing of his daughter, a particularly bitter betrayal for a girl who has already lost her mother. Etearchus proposes to subvert the bonds of ξενία, that particularly Greek institution of guest-friendship, in which ties bind individuals and families of different cities. He invokes the ties of ξενία to obtain a promise from Themison, his ξένος, that he will perform any service for Etearchus; having obtained the promise, Etearchus divulges the service he requires, the drowning of his daughter. There is a parallel here with the story of Bellerophon, a guest in the house of Proteus, whose wife accused the young man of trying to seduce her, when in fact he had refused her advances. Proteus does not wish to transgress the code of hospitality and sends Bellerophon to Iobates, who sets Bellerophon a series of tasks in the hope that he will die in attempting to carry them out.[135] Both Etearchus and Proteus fashion a scheme in which someone else will be responsible for a death they wish to bring about without undertaking the killing directly themselves. Drowning features as a mythological punishment in the story of Auge, whose father attempts to have her drowned by Nauplius[136] when he discovers

[135] Apollodorus 2.3.1-2.
[136] Pausanias 8.48.7.

that she has given birth to a child by Heracles, while water features again as a mythological element when in similar circumstances Acrisius consigns Danae and Perseus to the waves in a chest.[137]

Themison turns out to be too honourable to carry out a promise to harm an innocent girl; he stands in a long line of what Thompson[138] has called the 'compassionate executioner' who cannot take the life he has been ordered to end. He carries out the letter but not the spirit of his promise by immersing her in the sea and pulling her back on board. He then sails on to Thera, his homeland, where an eminent citizen takes her as his concubine.

Besides having many parallels in folktale, such as Snow White and Hansel and Gretel, this tale has many counterparts in myth. Watson identifies the tale as myth as a result of its function as part of the foundation myth of Cyrene,[139] but there is no doubt that it contains many features of folktale and could be said to straddle both traditions. In myth, the stepmother figure is exemplified by Sidero, who persecutes Tyro,[140] Ino who does likewise to Phrixus and Helle,[141] and Medea who tries to bring about the death of Theseus,[142] to name but a few. Although Hera is not strictly a stepmother, her longstanding hostility to the children sired by Zeus with other partners is in the same vein.

Sidero is the only mythical stepmother to persecute a stepdaughter; the majority of victims are stepsons, and the motive is generally jealousy on the part of the stepmother for the children of a previous wife, generally as a result of anxiety over inheritance. Tyro, the daughter of Salmoneus, is seduced by Poseidon in the form of a

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[137] Apollodorus 2.4.1.
[138] Thompson 1957: K512.
[139] Watson 1995: 27 n 29.
[140] Apollodorus 1.9.8.
[141] Apollodorus 1.9.1.
[142] Apollodorus 1.9.28.

river and gives birth to twin sons, whom her father orders to be exposed. As punishment for bringing disgrace upon the family, Tyro is thrown into prison where she is persecuted by Sidero. As is usual in myth, the exposed children are rescued and reared by a peasant and eventually avenge their mother by killing Sidero. Once the paternity of the children is known Tyro is betrothed to her uncle Cretheus. It is interesting to note that in the version of Tyro's story contained in the *Odyssey*,[143] there is no mention of stepmotherly persecution; the story given is that Tyro bore illegitimate twins to Poseidon while married to Cretheus. As the only stepmother to persecute a stepdaughter alone, it is tempting to read some jealousy of a younger, prettier girl as competition for the favour of Salmoneus into Sidero's motives.

The other mythical stepmothers persecute their stepsons, or stepdaughters in conjunction with stepsons, since they see the sons of a previous marriage as threats to the position of their own children, particularly in the matter of inheritance. In the case of Ino, her malevolence is mainly directed at Phrixus[144] and only incidentally at Helle; certainly the false oracle that she fabricates demands only the sacrifice of Phrixus. Medea[145] persuades her husband to send Theseus, whom she recognises as his true son, on what is thought to be an impossible mission against the Marathonian bull; when this plan fails she attempts to poison him but his father recognises him at the last minute and he is saved.

The death[146] of Phronime's mother is directly in the mythical and folktale tradition; divorce does not figure in these tales in the same way as in real life, either ancient or modern. Although her father appears to have her interests at heart when he

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[143] *Od.* 11.235-59.

[144] The two lost plays of Euripides, *Phrixus I* and *II*, dealt with the hostility of Ino towards Phrixus.

[145] Plutarch *Theseus* 12.

[146] See Watson 1995: 50 for the fact that mythical stepmothers were generally the result of the first wife's death, while from the evidence available it would seem that in real life divorce and remarriage accounted for stepmothers more often.

marries another woman to take care of her, the fact of her mother's death isolates her and renders her vulnerable to the machinations of her stepmother, who if nothing else may see her as a rival for the affections of the same man. The anonymity of the stepmother, noted above, is a feature of folktale, where the stepmother is a stereotype, unlike myth, where the stepmother is always named.

The device of the false accusation[147] is likewise a feature of both myth and folktale, as is the ease with which the stepmother persuades the father of his child's misdemeanour. There are several myths concerning stepsons falsely accused by their stepmothers of rape; the example of Phaedra and Hippolytus springs to mind, as well as that of Philonome and Tennes. Apart from a late variant in the Phaedra and Hippolytus story,[148] all the stepfathers take the stepmother's accusations at face value and proceed to punish or banish their children.

Phronime's father is no exception, and accepting the stepmother's accusation of Phronime's promiscuity at once he plans her murder himself. The subversion of the institution of ξενία is an interesting feature of Herodotus' re-telling of this story. The ancient Greek world had developed the idea of ξενία or guest-friendship to express a relationship of reciprocity between citizens of different cities.[149] Herman defines ξενία as 'a bond of solidarity manifesting itself in an exchange of goods and services between individuals originating from separate social units.'[150] Thus the relationship could exist between Greeks from different cities, or different tribes as well as between Greeks and non-Greeks, and between different non-Greeks. The

[147] For more typical 'false accusations,' see Watson 1995: 30.
[148] According to Diodorus Siculus (4.62.3), Theseus does not at first believe the accusation against his son and sends for him for questioning. Phaedra kills herself through fear and Hippolytus is killed in a chariot accident.
[149] Bruit 1990: 170 puts it succintly: 'The term *xenia* describes in itself a type of relation founded on mutual recognition and reciprocity.'
[150] Herman 1987: 10.

basic factor seems to be the distinctly different origins of the participants; other words, such as φίλος or ἑταῖρος, were used to refer to a friend within one's own social unit. Finley describes the relationship in the following terms: 'The stranger who had a *xenos* in a foreign land - and every other community was foreign soil - had an effective substitute for kinsmen, a protector, representative and ally. He had a refuge if he were forced to flee his home, a storehouse on which to draw when compelled to travel, and a source of men and arms if drawn into battle. These were all personal relations, but with the powerful lords the personal merged into the political, and then guest-friendship was the Homeric version, or forerunner, of political and military alliances.'[151] The resonances in the minds of the Greek audience at the betrayal of the ideals of the relationship by Etearchus would have been tremendous.

Phronime's father subverts the relationship in more than one way, since he not only establishes his ties with Themison specifically to carry out the task of removing his daughter by murdering her, but he also intends to displace the guilt of killing his daughter on to another, someone whom he should in terms of the institution be eager to help. To ask his ξένος to commit a murder is not in tune with the spirit of the partnership expressed in the word ξενία. Asking a ξένος to murder a helpless girl is in no way commensurate with calling on the help of a ξένος to exact vengeance for a wrong done by a male enemy. The tale continues with the mythical element of the child being sent away with orders for someone else to kill her, as in the myths of

[151] Finley 1956: 102. Cartledge 1993: 47f characterises the relationship as 'ritualised guest friend' or 'spiritual kinsman' and goes on to say that 'the solemnly binding relationship of *xenia* in this technical sense involved specified rituals of contract and reciprocal obligations, and . . . implied equality of usually aristocratic status. Above all, it by definition crossed not only *polis* lines, so that one could not be the *xenos* of a fellow citizen, but also national or ethnic lines, so that one could be the *xenos* of a *barbaros*.'

Oedipus,[152] Paris[153] and Telephus[154] and although Bellerophon[155] was a young man rather than a child when he was sent to the palace of Iobates with a sealed letter containing instructions for his death, the pattern is the same.

Just as in the latter myths, the child who is to be disposed of survives instead, often because the appointed killer cannot bring himself to carry out the deed. In Phronime's case, Themison cannot bring himself to drown her as ordered, largely because of his anger at her father's deception in extracting an oath from him that he would perform any service for him under the terms of their agreement as ξένοι and then asking him to commit murder. He immerses her in the sea so that technically he has fulfilled his obligation but pulls her up again immediately and sails to Thera with her. Here we have internal resonances within the work itself, since Amestris perverts the Persian custom of the monarch being unable to refuse requests made at his birthday feast when she asks for the wife of Masistes;[156] this instance is a further example of the mythological element of the gift which should not be asked for. In addition, the figure of the 'compassionate executioner' is also found in the story of Labda and her son Cypselus.[157]

The final mythical element in the story of Phronime occurs when an eminent citizen of Thera takes her as his concubine and she bears the son who goes on to found Cyrene. This happy ending is more typical of folktale than myth, where happy endings are not mandatory; in the myth of Phaedra and Hippolytus, for example, Phaedra hangs herself, a typical form of suicide for women in myth, and Hippolytus is

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[152] Apollodorus 3.5.7.
[153] Apollodorus 3.12.5.
[154] Apollodorus 2.7.4.
[155] *Iliad* 6.155-97.
[156] *Histories* 9.111.
[157] *Histories* 5.92.

killed in a chariot accident.[158] Since this is a foundation myth, however, Phronime must survive to have the child who will found Cyrene. Watson notes, 'As it appears in Herodotus, the story is to be classed as myth rather than folktale because of its function as a foundation legend. Nonetheless, this myth is basically a folktale which has been transferred into a mythical setting.'[159]

Phronime's story is not the only one to illustrate the fact that fathers do not always serve as protectors to their daughters; on occasion fathers can even prove fatal to their offspring. Herodotus tells the story of the Persian, Boges, governor of Eïon, a city beseiged by the Athenians under Cimon, son of Miltiades.[160] Boges puts his children, wife, concubines and house slaves to death when supplies in the city run out and then throws himself on to their pyre. Herodotus does not specifically mention that there were any daughters among his children but it is possible that there were. This horrifying family murder recalls the madness of Heracles, which prompts him to kill his wife and children. Even madness does not excuse Heracles and he has to expiate his crime by serving Eurystheus.[161] In other examples of intra-familial murder in myth, Idomeneus is forced by the terms of a vow he made during a storm to sacrifice his own son on his return from the Trojan war and of course, there is the sacrifice of Iphigeneia by Agamemnon[162] which leads to such disastrous consequences for himself. Despite the fact that both these instances occur in circumstances relating to interactions with the gods, nonetheless even in myth the harming of those one should protect leads to dire consequences; Idomeneus is driven into exile, and Agamemnon is murdered by Clytemnestra on his return from the

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[158] Apollodorus 1.18.
[159] Watson 1995: 27 n29.
[160] *Histories* 7.107.
[161] Apollodorus 2.4.12.
[162] Pindar *Pyth.* 11.22.

Trojan war. In Boges' case his family suffers from his determination not to be seen as disloyal to the Persian king; he refuses to leave the city under truce and return to Asia. Perhaps he has good reason to believe that suicide was the preferable option to being suspected of cowardice by Xerxes. If so, this story serves as a further example of the alterity of the Persian empire in comparison with the Greek form of government, where honour and courage are no less valued, but the citizens are not at the mercy of the whim of an absolute monarch. The Greek male's relationship to his family was that of protector and Herodotus' audience, aware of the myths of Heracles and Idomeneus, where the heroes are punished for harming those who should be under their protection, would have found the actions of Boges towards his family extreme, particularly as his motivation is loyalty to the Great King. Greeks of the Athenian democracy would have found the privileging of his relationship with the king over that with his family to be the essence of 'otherness'.

A daughter who proves to be of invaluable assistance to her father is Gorgo, daughter of Cleomenes, king of Sparta. When Aristagoras is looking for help to stage the Ionian revolt he goes to Sparta and puts his case before Cleomenes. Unfortunately he thoughtlessly tells the truth about how long it will take to get to Susa and Cleomenes turns down his request. Aristagoras tries again as a suppliant,[163] this time adding greater and greater bribes to tempt Cleomenes, at which point the child Gorgo, aged about 8 or 9 years old, tells her father to leave the room before Aristagoras corrupts him. Cleomenes follows her advice and Aristagoras leaves Sparta without achieving his purpose. Gorgo appears to be the original precocious child in this episode and when she appears later in the work as an adult woman in an incident concerned with a hidden written message her cleverness does not come as a surprise.

[163] *Histories* 5.51.

Demaratus sends a message to the Spartans when he discovers that Xerxes is planning to invade Greece. For safety reasons, Demaratus writes the message not on the wax tablet but on the wooden base and covers it with wax. When it arrives in Sparta, no one knows what to make of it until Gorgo, now the wife of Leonidas, guesses that the message might be under the wax. Gorgo's association with writing and secret messages recalls the sealed message Proetus sends with Bellerophon to Iobates.[164] Again the message is inscribed on a folded tablet and one must presume that Bellerophon cannot read it or he would not have handed it over to Iobates. This written message is also associated with a woman since Proetus' wife has tried unsuccessfully to seduce Bellerophon and in retaliation has accused him of trying to seduce her. Her husband sends him off with the message since he does not want to kill Bellerophon himself.[165] Even if Gorgo cannot read Demaratus' written message herself, and Herodotus does not make it clear whether she can or not, her association with cleverness and trickery marks her as a daughter of Pandora, whom Hermes filled with deceit, lies and trickery.

On occasion, however, fathers' relationships can prove of inestimable value to daughters, as in the case of the unnamed daughter of Hegetorides of Cos, concubine of the Persian Pharandates.[166] She is captured by the Persians and taken as a concubine, a frequent fate of women during war, and one which calls to mind the story of Briseis, the captive awarded to Achilles as war booty. Briseis is the concubine Agamemnon demands from Achilles to replace Chryseis, whom he has had to return to her father to avert the plague decimating the Achaean forces. Briseis is

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[164] Apollodorus 2.3.1.
[165] Bassi 1997: 315-40 makes much of the relationship between direct speech and masculinity and reported or written speech and feminity or lack of masculinity in Greek epic and in footnote 37 makes mention of the story of Gorgo and the hidden written message.
[166] *Histories* 9.76.

completely powerless, first of all to ward off her initial capture and then to avoid being seized by Agamemnon from Achilles in his desire for reparation; she epitomises the predicament of women in war.[167] The daughter of Hegetorides, however, enjoys a better fate than Briseis thanks to her father's connections. After the battle of Plataea she dons all her finery and goes to Pausanias in supplication to ask him to save her from slavery. It transpires that Pausanias and her father Hegetorides are ξένοι, guestfriends, and on account of this relationship she is sent safely to Aegina. This story is a much better example of the workings of the institution of ξενία than the previous one concerning Phronime, because here the ties between Pausanias and his ξένος extend to another family member and provide her with protection in the absence of her father himself. The most famous incident involving ξενία occurs in the *Iliad*, when Glaucus and Diomedes discover just prior to engaging each other in battle that their grandfathers were ξένοι, whereupon they decline to fight each other and exchange armour instead.[168] The story of Hegetorides' daughter shows that the institution was still functioning centuries after its most well-known example was recorded.

Herodotus cites several instances of foreign peoples who do not have the same customs as the Greeks concerning their daughters, in one case even sending them out to prostitution to earn a dowry. These are the daughters of Lydian commoners who earn a dowry by prostituting themselves,[169] but Herodotus also mentions the Thracians who allow their daughters complete freedom but keep a strict watch on their wives.[170] Then there is the story of the Pharaoh Rhampsinitus who involves his daughter in prostitution in order to ensnare the thief who robbed the king's treasury

[167] *Iliad* 19.282-300.
[168] *Iliad* 6.144-262.
[169] *Histories* 1.92.
[170] *Histories* 5.6.

and rescued his brother's body from beneath the eyes of the king's guards.[171] Shortly thereafter Herodotus tells the story of the Pharaoh Cheops who, when in need of money, dispatches his daughter to a brothel having instructed her upon how much to charge for her services. Such practices are totally 'other' in relation to Greek custom regarding daughters. In the same vein there is also the tale of Rhodopis,[172] the Thracian slave brought to Egypt by Xanthes of Samos. We are told that Charaxus, brother of the poet Sappho, bought Rhodopis' freedom so that she could ply her trade as a courtesan. Herodotus argues that the popular Egyptian belief that she built a pyramid with the fortune she gained from plying her trade is incorrect but he does credit her with dedicating iron roasting spits at Delphi as her memorial.[173] But Rhodopis was originally a slave and therefore not identifiable as anybody's daughter.

The stories concerning daughters related by Herodotus cover a wide spectrum, from daughters who are raped or otherwise badly treated by their fathers to a daughter whose father breaks a political alliance because of ill treatment of his daughter, but as daughters they are all defined in one way or another by their relationship with their fathers. In the Greek world familiar to Herodotus, fathers loomed large in the lives of their daughters, mainly as the person who would choose their future husbands, since marriage was considered to be the only destiny available to a girl. Mythology, as it mirrors the concerns of the society which produces it, deals particularly extensively with the problematic figure of the παρθένος, the young girl ready to be given in marriage by her father to the man of his choice.

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[171] *Histories* 2.121.
[172] *Histories* 2.134-5. For a detailed discussion of the identity of Rhodopis, see Lloyd 1988: 84ff.
[173] According to Lloyd 1988: 87 'In the Argive Heraeum a cache of probably 180 (spits) was unearthed bound together in bundles of 32 by iron bands at each end. . . As found, the cache would have fitted H.'s συννενέαται admirably.'

SISTERS

The second category of women in the *Histories* to be examined is that of sisters, since this allows the consideration of childhood in ancient Greek society, which is the period when such bonds as existed between siblings would have been formed. It goes without saying that there would have been variation in degrees of affection or otherwise between siblings, but it is possible at least to consider what the societal expectations permitted and deemed desirable. The sibling relationship does not enjoy the same importance in our sources on the ancient Greek family as those between father and daughter, mother and son or husband and wife, perhaps because initially at any rate neither participant is an adult with authority over the other. In other words, unless and until a brother becomes his sister's κύριος it is not an asymmetrical power relationship as the others are; even the mother-son relationship is initially an adult-child one where the mother is the authority figure in its beginning stages. Furthermore, not every brother becomes the κύριος of his sister, so the authority component is not paramount nor necessarily universal, except insofar as the male is the privileged sex in ancient Greek society as a whole.

Children were important to Greek society in that they secured the future of the οἶκος, most particularly in the case of sons, who would one day inherit the family property and the position of its κύριος. Daughters too provided fathers with a means of securing links with other families, and in the case of daughters who had no brothers, they were a means of keeping property within the family, since an ἐπίκληρος or brotherless daughter could be married to her father's closest male relative in the hopes of producing a son to inherit. For these reasons the procreation of children was regarded as the goal of each family and was essential to its survival as a self-perpetuating unit. The importance of producing offspring is reflected in the

formula a father used when giving his daughter in marriage: 'I give my daughter to you for producing legitimate children' and in the fact that a young girl did not become a woman or γύνη until the birth of her first child. Not only did the procreation of children ensure the continuity of the family or οἶκος, it performed the same function for the city-state or πόλις which was attempting 'to guarantee the permanence of its own institutions and form across the generations.'[1]

It can be assumed that included among the children (τέκνα) listed in Appendix B[2] there must have been some girls at least. However that may be, it is interesting to note that in thirteen out of seventeen examples the word for children, τέκνα or παῖδες, precedes that for γυνή , woman or wife.[3] The phrase τέκνα καὶ γυναῖκες, 'children and women,' may indeed be an idiom in Greek, just as 'women and children' is in English, but it does give pause for thought about the attitude of mind that produced it. Taken in conjunction with other evidence, particularly legal evidence, it does not seem too far fetched to consider that this idiom indicates a society where children, particularly sons, are a top priority and perhaps more important to a man than the woman who produced them. There is an interesting variation in this phrase when Herodotus mentions that the Athenians requested the Greek navy to put in at Salamis after leaving Artemisium, ἵνα αὐτοὶ παῖδας τε καὶ γυναῖκας ὑπεξαγάγωνται ἐκ τῆς Ἀττικῆς – 'in order that they might remove their children and women from Attica.'[4] In the following chapter Herodotus goes on to say that the rest of the Greeks made for Salamis but the Athenians made for Athens where a proclamation was issued that every Athenian should save τέκνα τε καὶ τοὺς

[1] Vernant 1980: 51.
[2] Appendix B: list of occurrences of the phrases 'children and women' and 'women and children'.
[3] See Lacey 1968: 78.
[4] *Histories* 8.40.

οἰκέτας – 'his children and members of his household'[5] as best he could. It is interesting that the official proclamation which Herodotus is reporting here includes wives merely as members of the household, while the children are not only mentioned separately in both cases but also precede the wives or members of the household in both instances. This would seem to indicate the high degree of importance attached to children in the Athenian mind.

There are three incidents reported by Herodotus concerning children, among whom we may admit the possibility that some are girls and therefore sisters, which demonstrate the importance of children among the Greeks and perhaps provide examples of boys and girls spending their time together before age and social custom separated them. The first concerns a siege the Spartans conducted against the Athenians.[6] The Pisistratid children were captured by the Spartans when they were being conveyed out of the country and in order to effect their return the Pisistratids were forced to agree to any terms the Athenians wanted. The Athenians demanded that the Pisistratids should leave Attica within five days and their demands were met. As they had been ruling the city for thirty-six years, according to Herodotus, the incident shows just how important their children as a group were to them. Secondly, in an interesting historical footnote concerning children, Herodotus records that only one out of 120 children survived an accident on Chios when the roof fell in on them while they were learning their letters.[7] In neither of these cases does he specify whether the groups of children were all boys or all girls, or a mixed group, but certainly in the case of the Pisistratid children it is safe to assume that there may well have been some girls in the group. It is harder to know whether girls would have been

[5] *Histories* 8.41.
[6] *Histories* 5.65.
[7] *Histories* 6.27.

attending lessons in the incident on Chios. Be that as it may, Herodotus classifies the incident as a portent of a disaster about to happen, so that we can safely infer that the loss of children was regarded as a severe blow. The third incident[8] recounted by Herodotus specifically involves children of both sexes; the Athenians justify their expulsion of the Pelasgians from the area around Mount Hymettos because they assaulted the Athenian boys and girls who went to the Nine Springs to fetch water in the days before Athenians had house slaves to carry out this task. Whether or not the reason given is the true one does not matter here; what is clear is that Athenians valued their children enough for it to be a plausible one. The story also provides an example of boys and girls carrying out household tasks together during childhood, the period when bonds between sisters and their brothers would have been forged. Before turning to the *Histories*, certain aspects of childhood which promoted the creation of sibling bonds will be examined, along with examples of the same bond in myth.

Childhood was an atypical stage of life for Greeks since it was the one period in their lives when males and females spent a significant amount of time in each other's company, when children of both sexes lived mainly in the women's quarters side by side. In stark contrast to their adult lives, when their spheres were rigorously separated and delimited, their early years were spent in a heterosexual group, overseen on a day to day basis mainly by female adults. Until the boys were removed at the age of seven to continue their education in the wider world of men, boys and girls lived and played together.[9] Golden suggests that the ties formed in these early years continued into adulthood,[10] particularly since it is possible that older children helped in the care of younger ones, and consequently felt some sort of affection and

[8] *Histories* 6.137.
[9] For iconographic evidence see Golden 1990: 123-128.
[10] Golden 1990: 128.

sense of responsibility towards them. Sisters may feel affection towards younger brothers for whom they have cared in infancy and brothers are often conditioned to protect sisters from insult or worse, and to come to their aid in defence of the family honour.[11] During the childhood years the distinction between male and female was less rigid; when Vernant notes the importance of war and marriage as goals for boys and girls respectively, he goes on to remark that 'these mark the fulfilment of their respective natures as they emerge from a state in which each still shared in the nature of the other.'[12]

Children of both sexes took their place in the daily tasks of family life, both household and agricultural, depending on the circumstances of the family, although all girls could be expected to share in household tasks as a matter of course as part of the preparation for their later role in marriage. The custom of men dining together without their wives[13] meant that the women and children generally ate together, with their main meal probably at midday when the man of the house was out, so that in early childhood at least, the sexes mixed freely; brothers and sisters might then well be each other's only friends of the opposite sex throughout their lives, though they might have met cousins at family gatherings such as weddings or funerals. Since cousins could, however, be considered as future marriage partners, the relationship would not be as free as between siblings. Children took part in religious activities with their families[14] and these common experiences would also serve as bonding mechanisms for brothers and sisters. While there were rituals in which children of both sexes participated, there were others restricted to one sex; as Cole says, 'Certain

[11] Cox 1998: 114. Although most of her evidence comes from the orations, there is no reason to believe that attitudes were different in the time of Herodotus.
[12] Vernant 1980: 23.
[13] Just 1989: 143: 'It is, for example, one of the better known conventions of Athenian social life that a man's wife, sisters, or daughters did not attend when he entertained his friends at home.'
[14] Golden 1990: 41ff.

rituals associated with childhood and adolescence were sex specific.'[15] She goes on to point out that the rituals associated with the maturation process of girls and young women, in contrast to those for boys and young men, 'prepared the girls not for public life, but for marriage, motherhood and domestic duties.'[16] Large numbers of young women participated in choruses, 'with their ritual, pedagogical and social functions.'[17] Calame characterises the instruction given to chorus members as follows:

> 'The recitation of mythical legends was an introduction to the mythological and religious patrimony upon which the city's institutions were founded. The importance of the gnomic element in these poems corresponded to the requirement to transmit the norms of behaviour that kept the body politic together.'[18]

Choruses of adolescents of both sexes took part in the great civic festivals of many Greek cities where they sang, danced and took their place in the processions. Generally the choruses were single sex but there is an instance in the *Histories* where Herodotus recounts the origin of a festival of the Samians which involved χοροὺς παρθένων τε καὶ ἡιθέων – 'choruses of girls and young men.'[19]

Regardless of whatever festivals or ceremonies a young girl may have participated in during the course of her childhood, every girl expected to take part in the ceremony of marriage. In some cases, of course, a brother may have had to serve as κύριος to his sister as a result of the demise of the father, and this might entail not

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[15] Cole 1984b: 233.
[16] Cole 1984b: 238
[17] Zaidman 1992: 346. For detailed discussion of choruses of young women see Calame 1997.
[18] Calame 1997: 261.
[19] *Histories* 3.48. See Calame 1997: 26 n 29 for instances of mixed choruses elsewhere in literature.

only finding a suitable husband, but providing a dowry from his paternal inheritance as well. One of the reasons for positing close brother-sister ties is the fact that in general girls received their dowry as a '*pre mortem* inheritance which was crucial for making a good marriage but which tended not to be equal to the wealth inherited by a young woman's brothers.'[20] This custom would lead to a lack of tension between brothers and sisters over inheritance issues since the early marriage of girls would in many cases mean that a girl was established in the οἶκος of her husband when the time came to divide up the family property on the death of her father and she would not therefore be a rival for a share of the estate. If she was not married, the dowry would come from the same estate, whether her father or her brother was her κύριος. As Cox points out:

> 'The Athenian emphasis on downward devolution of property on to males actually encouraged male attention toward the welfare of women – in our case sisters – in particular: concerns focused on whether or not the sister was dowered adequately, or the widowed or divorced sister would return to the brother's house with an intact dowry, or the sister had children after marriage. The care devoted to the dowry and the contracting of a suitable marriage for the sister went hand in hand with a family's concern for its prestige and its maintenance of ties with trustworthy allies.'[21]

[20] Cox 1998: 105.
[21] Cox 1988: 391.

Tension between brothers over the division of the patrimony is much more likely as they would be entitled to equal shares in a system which practised partible inheritance for brothers, but not for sisters, and did not feature primogeniture.

There are various stories in myth concerning sisters who privilege their bonds with their siblings over other relationships. For example, we have only to think of Althaea who brings about the death of her son in revenge for his killing of her brothers,[22] and Antigone who brings about her own death by defying Creon's edict that her brother's body should not be buried.[23] Procne butchers her own son in order to avenge the wrong done to her sister by her husband Tereus,[24] and Iliona, eldest daughter of Hecuba and Priam, protects her brother with her son's life.[25] There is also Helle[26] who accompanies her brother Phrixus when he escapes from their wicked stepmother on the golden ram sent by their mother Nephele, but she falls off into the waters of the Hellespont, which are then named after her. This latter case would seem to be an example of the responsibility felt by a brother for a sister's welfare, since Phrixus does not abandon his sister to the tender mercies of their wicked stepmother.

There are relatively few stories in the *Histories* with sisters as important participants, as compared with the other categories of women under consideration. We are generally concerned, however, with women for whom being a sister was the most important characteristic in terms of the story Herodotus is telling; for some of whom it may indeed have been a motivating relationship.[27] It is also worth noting that only the priestesses abducted from Egyptian Thebes form a sister-sister pair; all the other

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[22] Apollodorus 1.8.2-3.
[23] This story is the subject of Sophocles' *Antigone*.
[24] Pausanias 1.5.4, Apollodorus 3.14.8.
[25] Hyginus *Fables* 109, 240.
[26] Euripides' two lost plays, *Phrixus I* and *II*, dealt with the story of the jealousy felt by Ino for her stepchildren, Phrixus and Helle.
[27] There are, of course, many women who are referred to as sister of X, or men who are noted as being married to the sister of Y, but these will be ignored except to note that frequently the women are unnamed and identified rather by their relationship to their menfolk.

sisters examined form part of a sister-brother relationship. This is hardly surprising in an androcentric society like ancient Greece where women are often unnamed and generally identified by their relationship with a man, whether father, brother or husband. Since both parties in a sister-sister pair are women and therefore lifelong minors under the guardianship of a κύριος who acts on their behalf, it is unlikely that many such relationships would make their mark in the wider world.

The first sisters[28] to be examined are not mentioned as being related to any particular man, but are rather the pair of priestesses said to have been abducted from Thebes in Egypt by Phoenicians and sold separately, one in Libya and one in Dodona in Greece. The contemporary priestesses in Dodona told Herodotus that a black dove flew to Dodona, settled in an oak tree, and in a human voice said that an oracle of Zeus should be founded there. The dove then flew to Libya and did the same thing. Herodotus gives his own rationalisation of the story: that the two priestesses were indeed sold separately and the one sold in Dodona set up a shrine to Zeus there as she had been 'a deaconess' (to use Powell's translation of the word, ἀμφιπολεύσαν, that Herodotus uses) in the temple of Zeus in Thebes. Once having learnt the Greek language, she set up an oracle. Herodotus believes that the local inhabitants described the priestess as a bird because they could not understand her until she learnt Greek, and as black because she was an Egyptian. Having set up the oracle, she told the people of Dodona that her sister had been sold in Libya by the same Phoenicians who had sold her in Dodona. The sister relationship in this story is not what was earlier termed a motivating factor, but Herodotus' rationalisation of the story is an example of his engagement with the intellectual milieu of his time. Thomas comments on such

[28] *Histories* 2.54-6.

engagement with particular reference to Herodotus' arguments about Greek gods having originated in Egypt thus:

> 'The idea of extensive borrowing – not only of gods, but of whole religious rituals – may not have gone down well with many in Herodotus' audience. . . We may be tempted to wonder if the machinery of argument, proof and personal enquiry is particularly evident here precisely because these ideas needed all the persuasion they could get: this was part of the lively, ostentatious and persuasive style which belonged to a particular kind of intellectual discourse in the latter part of the fifth century.'[29]

Her comments apply equally to the story of the origin of the priestesses of Dodona and Libya and the historian's personal intervention at this point.

The next sister to claim our attention is the sister of Cambyses who also happened to be his wife.[30] She is one of the three daughters of Cyrus and Cassandane, of whom the other two are Atossa and Artystone. The fact that Cambyses married his sister prompts Herodotus to recount how Cambyses intimidated the Persian judges into rubber-stamping his desire to marry his sister by finding a law which allowed the ruler of the Persians to do anything he wished.[31] In fact, Herodotus states that Cambyses' desire to marry his sister is οὐκ ἐωθότα, against usage, and therefore Persian custom, like Greek custom, did not normally allow marriage between full

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[29] Thomas 2000: 282.
[30] *Histories* 3.31-2.
[31] In a footnote Visser 1986: 163 n.35 notes that 'In many societies sibling incest has been enjoined upon kings: when there is enough power already, marrying one's sister prevents its dispersal, and also maintains hierarchy.'

siblings. Homometric siblings were not allowed to marry in Athens, though they were in Sparta. On the other hand, homopatric siblings could do so, a marital strategy which allowed for the paternal property to remain completely within the οἶκος.[32] In myth, of course, the most obvious brother/sister marriage is that between Zeus and Hera;[33] some sources[34] make Hephaestus and Aphrodite both children of Zeus by different mothers, so theirs would be an example of a homopatric marriage,[35] such as it was.

To return to the *Histories*; the unnamed sister of Cambyses follows him to Egypt and meets her death at the hand of her brother/husband. Herodotus gives two accounts of her death, one favoured by the Greeks, the other by the Egyptians, but in both tales she makes a remark to Cambyses which he interprets as critical of his actions. In his anger, he attacks her and her injuries result in a miscarriage and her death. Herodotus describes her death as one of the acts resulting from Cambyses' madness, which he links either to the killing of the sacred calf Apis or to the 'sacred disease,' epilepsy. The mythological element of madness which leads to the killing of close kin has resonances with the madness of Heracles, who murdered his wife and children. Cambyses murders his wife, who is also his sister and is carrying his child. As in the myth of Heracles, Herodotus attributes such close kin murder to madness, whatever its cause, since a wife or sister would fall into the category of those whom a man should protect, both in myth and in human society. Likewise the madness of both Heracles and Cambyses can be said to have a divine origin; the madness of Heracles was induced by Hera, who wanted to bring about the enslavement of Heracles to Eurystheus by forcing him to commit a crime which would demand

[32] On the frequency of close-kin marriages in Athens, see Just 1989: 78-81.
[33] Apollodorus 1.3.1.
[34] Apollodorus 1.3.5 and 1.3.1 respectively.
[35] *Odyssey* 8.266-358.

expiation,[36] while one explanation for the madness of Cambyses was his impiety against the gods of the Egyptians in his slaying of the sacred calf.

The next sister to be encountered is the sister of Lycophron and daughter of Periander, who is, not surprisingly, unnamed in the text.[37] Periander has had second thoughts after banishing his son, Lycophron, following the boy's refusal to speak to his father on being led to believe by his grandfather that Periander is responsible for the death of his mother, Melissa. After the passage of time, Periander invites his son to return to Corinth but to no avail. Unwilling to give up in his determination to have his son succeed him, Periander sends Lycophron's sister to plead with him, believing that he would listen to her above all others, an observation which perhaps supports Golden's contention that ties between siblings formed in childhood frequently survived into later life.[38] Tourraix attributes to Herodotus 'une explication mythique de l'Histoire,'[39] in which 'la femme, reflet humain des grandes déesses anatoliennes, ne se contente pas de légitimer le pouvoir, elle en assure aussi la pérennité et la prospérité bienfaisante.'[40] His contention is that the murder of Melissa is the reason for the succession problems of Periander on the mythical plane, as it is in reality. On this reading, Periander sends his daughter to Lycophron as a substitute for Melissa, and here she acts as an example of the more frequent father-daughter bonds already noted, since she is entirely her father's mouthpiece. She acts her part as her father's well-primed intermediary, but even as the daughter of Melissa she is unsuccessful in her attempt to render the succession regular and peaceful, since her brother refuses to take her advice. In Lycophron's case, whatever affection he felt for his sister is

[36] Apollodorus 2.4.12.
[37] *Histories* 3.50-3.
[38] Golden 1990: 128.
[39] Tourraix 1976: 369.
[40] Tourraix 1976: 371.

outweighed by his anger at the outrage perpetrated against his mother. Even though Tourraix' reading is based upon an outdated belief in matriarchy, where power is legitimated and guaranteed by women, the parts played by Melissa and her daughter in the story highlight the function women often fulfil as links between men, as a locus of either contention or conciliation. It is the links that Melissa maintained with her natal family and her father which precipitate the action in this story since it is her father who alerts her son to the identity of her murderer. Therefore Melissa, or rather her murder, provides the initial point of discord between Periander and Lycophron, while the daughter, Lycophron's sister, attempts to reconcile the two men, her father and her brother, albeit unsuccessfully.

Another example of a sister is the wife of Intaphrenes,[41] and it is interesting to note that, being unnamed, she is defined by yet another man, her husband, and even more so that her brother is not named at all in the episode. Indeed, Herodotus does not refer to her as a sister at all, even though it is this relationship that is at the heart of the story that he is recounting. Intaphrenes is one of the conspirators who overthrew the Magus and in recognition of his services is accorded the privilege of going to see the king unannounced, unless he is in bed with a woman. On one occasion, on presenting himself at the royal apartments, he is told that Darius is in fact so engaged, but he does not believe the gatekeeper or the message-bearer. He cuts off their ears and their noses, which he threads on to his bridle, ties the bridle round their necks and lets them go. Naturally the men go to Darius and explain what has happened, with the result that he imprisons Intaphrenes and all his male relations, after an investigation which satisfies him that none of the other five co-conspirators are involved.

[41] *Histories* 3.118.

Enter Intaphrenes' wife, who takes to stationing herself at the entrance to the palace and lamenting loudly. Lamentation is a particularly female occupation, and normally occurs on the occasion of a death. Lamentation in the Homeric poems is wholehearted,[42] as exemplified by Achilles' lament for Patroclus[43] and that of Andromache, Hecuba and Helen for Hector.[44] Intaphrenes' wife may be anticipating slightly, but Herodotus does tell us that Intaphrenes and his male relatives are imprisoned to await their deaths.[45] Thetis, mother of Achilles, hears his lament for Patroclus in the depths of the sea and she and her companions begin to lament too,[46] even though Achilles is not yet dead, for Thetis knows that he is fated to die young. No doubt the lament of Intaphrenes' wife follows much the same pattern as those of Andromache, Helen and Hecuba on the death of Hector, since they are left in a parlous position with the imminent defeat of the Trojans by the Achaeans. Andromache and Hecuba face an uncertain future of concubinage, slavery and probable ill-treatment at the hands of the victors and this is the focus of their lament, rather than praise for the dead, while Helen laments the loss of Hector's kindness to her. Intaphrenes' wife faces the same sort of uncertainty as Andromache and Hecuba, and as a woman without a single male relative left, her situation is dire. She has more than enough reason to blame Intaphrenes for his arrogance and presumption.

Eventually Darius takes pity on her and sends out a messenger to tell her to choose one member of her imprisoned family to save. She chooses her brother and Darius is intrigued by her choice, sending a messenger to ask why she has chosen him

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[42] See Holst-Warhaft 1992: 108-114. Later sections in the same chapter deal with changes and restrictions in mourning and lamentation from the sixth century onwards, and explore some possible explanations for these changes.
[43] *Iliad* 18.79-126. For an extended discussion of male mourning from Homer to classical times, see van Wees 1998: 10-53.
[44] *Iliad* 22.486-514 and 24.725-775.
[45] Andromache also anticipates the death of Hector when she laments for Hector while he is still alive at *Iliad* 6.500.
[46] *Iliad* 18.35-64.

rather than her son or her husband. Her reply is succinct; she can probably find another husband and have more children, but since her parents are dead, there is no way she can replace her brother. Darius releases not only her brother but also her oldest son. The valuing of natal ties over and above other ones is found also in Sophocles' *Antigone*, where Antigone goes against the decree of the king that her brother's body should not be buried. Unlike Antigone, who by disobeying Creon's edict condemns herself to death and thereby refuses to accept the normal role of wife and mother, Intaphrenes' wife recognises that she may well marry again and have more children, but she too values her relationship with her natal family, choosing to save a member of that family in preference to a member of the family into which she has married. Admittedly Intaphrenes' wife is not faced with quite the same decision as Antigone, but she does share Antigone's emotional ties to a brother. Dewald notes that 'Many think that the story of Intaphrenes' wife in H. is the source of Sophocles' *Antigone* 905-12.'[47] She points out, moreover, that Intaphrenes' wife shows keen political insight in 'choosing to save a member of her natal family rather than her politically compromised husband.' Although this story concerns a Persian brother and sister, it is possible to read into Herodotus' account an example of the strong ties of affection he would have expected to find between siblings in a Greek family, with the result that his audience would find the tale convincing.

In the long digression on the Scythians we find a story with mythological reminiscences. Scyles, the king of the Scythians whose Greek mother introduced him to Greek language and customs, has himself initiated into the rites of Bacchic Dionysus and upon his return home to Scythia finds that his brother is leading a rebellion against him.[48] He flees to Thrace, but the Scythian army pursues him. The

[47] Dewald 1998: 640 note to 3.119.
[48] *Histories* 4.78-80.

Thracian and Scythian armies meet on either side of the Ister, ready for battle, but the Thracian Sitalces sends a message to the Scythian Octamasades who is in fact his nephew, or as he terms it 'my sister's son.' The upshot is that Scyles, Octamasades' brother, is exchanged for Sitalces' brother and fighting between the armies is averted. The part played by family ties in avoiding fighting recalls the famous scene between Glaucus and Diomedes in the *Iliad*, where the two warriors refuse to fight each other because of the ties of ξενία between their two families.[49] As might be expected, the sister in question in the Herodotean episode is not named, but the relationship she represents is important enough for the two leaders involved to negotiate a solution to their differences rather than settle them on the battlefield. The reception of such an episode by Herodotus' audience would have been facilitated by their familiarity with the Homeric precursor and accepted as an acknowledgement of the importance of such ties in contemporary society, where the woman served as a link between two families. In this example the link served its purpose well, with both sides respecting their joint relationship with a woman.

The sister of Pigres and Mastyes is the focus of a later story concerning the Paeonians and Darius.[50] The two brothers want to rule as tyrants and concoct a plan to attract the attention of Darius, presumably to enlist his aid. They wait till Darius is settled outside Sardis and then having dressed their sister in the best clothes they can find, send her to fetch water. Not only does she carry the water jar on her head but she is also leading a horse and spinning flax at the same time. Needless to say Darius cannot help noticing the industrious girl and sends for her. It is interesting to note that Herodotus informs the reader that when the girl is brought before Darius, her brothers

[49] *Iliad* 6.119-236.
[50] *Histories* 5.12-15.

accompany her and answer the questions put to her by the Great King, thereby acting in a manner completely at one with Greek custom, where the κύριος of a woman would undertake all negotiations on her behalf. One supposes that the brothers expected to be asked for their sister and to be able to extract some sort of *quid pro quo* to advance their political ambitions. They misjudge the scope of Darius' vision altogether and instead of gaining his help in achieving their own ambitions, they find that he orders the removal of their entire people from Europe to Asia. What is interesting from the point of view of this study is the depiction of the sister with all the accoutrements of an industrious Greek woman. In the Greek world, fetching water was a particularly female occupation, 'as well as a highly sociable activity'[51] and so was the production of textiles through spinning and weaving. Weaving requires a fixed loom but the distaff and spindle can be carried around by the woman doing the spinning and can be done anywhere, as is evidenced by this story. Equipped with her water jar and spindle, and with the horse's rein looped around her arm, the sister of Pigres and Mastyes is the epitome of female diligence and nicely calculated to catch a man's eye, even though the man in question is Persian. It is also worth noting that the brothers, even if they do not intend, or hope, to give their sister in marriage, but perhaps more realistically into concubinage, still use her as a bargaining tool in furthering their ambitions in much the same way as they would if they were Greek men arranging her marriage. By forging links with Darius through their sister, they would expect that a relationship beneficial to themselves as their sister's closest male relatives would result. Paeonia lay to the north of Macedonia, far from the centres of Greek society, but the two brothers act in a manner completely comprehensible to Herodotus' audience. There are also internal resonances within the

[51] Reeder 1995b: 21.

work here; the image of the spindle as signifying the generally accepted role of the woman occurs again later in the *Histories* when Pheretime is given a golden spindle by Euelthon when she asks for an army. The message is clear.

Not long after the previous episode Darius sends ambassadors to Amyntas of Macedon, demanding fire and water, the symbols of submission, which he gives them and afterwards entertains them at a feast.[52] The Persians then demand that the Macedonian women should join the men at the feast, according to Persian custom.[53] Amyntas obliges and the drunken Persians begin to fondle the Macedonian women. Amyntas' son Alexander, disturbed by the turn of events, sends his father off to bed and proceeds to deal with the situation himself. He sends the women off, ostensibly to bathe, but those who return are actually youths dressed in women's clothing. He tells the Persians that the Macedonians are presenting to them their own mothers and sisters, and seats a 'woman' next to every Persian. The disguised Macedonians kill all the Persians when they begin to fondle them. Cross-dressing is a frequent occurrence in myth, and there are resonances here with the example of Aspalis' brother, which combines cross-dressing with revenge as in Herodotus' story. Aspalis hangs herself to escape the unwelcome attentions of the local tyrant, Meliteus, so her brother, Astygites, dresses himself in her clothes, gains admission to the tyrant's apartments by means of this ploy and kills him in revenge for the death of his sister.[54] The motif of the honour of a sister being important to a brother is evident in both the myth and Herodotus' story. In the myth Aspalis' brother exacts revenge for her death; in

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[52] *Histories* 5.18-21.

[53] How & Wells 1928: 7 say 'Repugnant as is the suggestion to Greek sentiment (cf. Isaeus iii. 14) it is even more opposed to Oriental custom.' For more recent thinking on Persian customs in particular, see Brosius 1996: 94-97, where she says of this passage, 'The statement attributed to the Persian ambassadors at the Macedonian court, that both wives and concubines of the royal household were allowed to join Persian banquets, is far more likely to represent the truth.'

[54] Antoninus Liberalis 13.

Herodotus' story the brothers and sons of the Macedonian royal women pre-empt sexual assault by killing the would-be perpetrators.

For all the women in this story, sisters and mothers alike, rape would be a disaster; for the younger women, some of whom may well be unmarried virgins, rape would have severe repercussions for their value in the marriage market,[55] and for both sets of women there would be the risk of becoming pregnant and giving birth to an illegitimate child which would then probably be exposed or killed. The story of attempted rape during a feast as a result of drunkenness follows the pattern of the Centauromachy when the inebriated Centaurs try to rape the bride and her attendants;[56] it is hardly surprising that Dewald states that 'Most scholars are sceptical of this exciting tale.'[57] But the story is not quite over. Alexander has to ensure that the search party for the missing Persians finds nothing and to make sure that this occurs he gives his sister, Gygaea, in marriage to Bubares, the leader of the search party, along with a hefty bribe. So one Macedonian maiden is sacrificed by her brother for the greater good of all the others; with the frequent correspondence in myth of marriage to the death of the maiden, Gygaea's sacrifice reminds one of other heroines like Macaria who gave their lives for others.[58] There is a final twist to the story in that later this connection by marriage specifically prompts Mardonius to use Alexander as his emissary to the Athenians.[59] Finally, just before the battle of Plataea, Alexander finds his Greek ties overwhelming and warns the Greeks of an impending attack by the Persians, thereby betraying the ties of marriage which link him to the Persian court.

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[55] See Stewart 1995: 76.
[56] Apollodorus 1.21.
[57] Dewald 1998: 667.
[58] Pausanias 1.32.5.
[59] *Histories* 8.136.

Rape in ancient Greece is a very vexed question, since daughters are given in marriage by their fathers for the purpose of producing offspring for their husband's οἶκος, but not necessarily with the daughter's express consent. Conditioned by society and her upbringing to accept her father's choice of husband and to submit to him in order to produce the required heirs, a young girl was hardly in a position to give her informed consent to the process. Father-daughter relationships may well have been close since a daughter was not a 'potential replacement and competitor, like his son, nor a link to another lineage, like his wife,'[60] but neither party could escape the inevitability of the daughter's marriage, sooner rather than later if possible. Nonetheless, married or not, a woman who was raped suffered severe consequences, over and above the trauma of the experience itself. In ancient Greece, there are two aspects to rape; the outrage done to the woman involved and the affront to her κύριος, whose property has been violated. Indeed it has been suggested that seduction was regarded as a worse crime than rape,[61] because it involved the alienation of the woman's affections and the possibility of the introduction of another man's child into the οἶκος of her legitimate husband. There is little difference in the legal consequences for a woman who commits adultery and the woman who is raped; both would have been regarded as polluted and divorced by their husbands if caught.[62] The law did not allow for a husband to forgive his adulterous wife, nor to extend sympathy to the wife who had been raped, since both situations could eventuate in the contamination of the bloodline by the birth of another man's child.[63] Indeed far more concern is expended over the damage done to the husband, his property and his honour in either case, and no distinction is made between the woman who deliberately

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[60] Redfield 1982: 187.
[61] *Lysias* 1.32-3. See also Harris 1990: 370-75.
[62] Ogden 1997: 31.
[63] See Just 1989: 69.

deceives her husband with another man and one who is sexually assaulted. Since the consequences could theoretically be the same, i.e., the distortion of the rules of inheritance, whereby a man passed his property on to his son(s), the intentions of the woman in question are regarded as immaterial. So for the mothers and sisters at the banquet in this story, the fact that they would be unwilling partners would make no difference to the consequences; if unmarried, their chances of marriage would be greatly reduced and if married, the possibility of becoming pregnant with another man's child would be of far greater importance than their violation. In both cases they would be regarded in Greek thought as polluted by the rape. In this story in the *Histories*, however, the issue of rape is at least straightforward, and Alexander, the son of Amyntas, takes his duty to preserve the honour of the women of the court, 'our mothers and sisters,' as he terms them, very seriously and defends them to the extent of killing their would-be defilers. As their brother, he is aware of the consequences rape would have for his sisters, both married and unmarried. Nonetheless, Alexander's response can be seen as a reaction to the besmirching of the collective honour of the men of the court just as much as a defence of the women themselves. The fact that he marries off his sister to the leader of the Persian search party shows his understanding of the importance of inter-familial links forged by the giving and receiving of women in marriage and his acceptance of the fact that women could in fact be used in this way.

Rape in myth is widespread, with Zeus himself as the greatest offender,[64] with Europa,[65] Io,[66] Danae,[67] Alcmene,[68] and Leda[69] among his conquests, while Poseidon

[64] See *Iliad* 14.314-328 where Zeus catalogues some of his conquests for Hera.
[65] Apollodorus 3.1.1.
[66] Apollodorus 2.1.3.
[67] Apollodorus 2.4.1.
[68] Apollodorus 2.4.8.
[69] Apollodorus 3.10.7.

comes a close second. Zeitlin characterises the propensity of Zeus for rape as follows:

> 'Enthroned on Olympus, he (Zeus) augments his political and cosmic power, symbolised by his sceptre and thunderbolt, with a sexual energy of seemingly unlimited desire by which he pursues and mates unstintingly with both gods and mortals.'[70]

Most encounters between a god and a mortal woman end in the successful impregnation of the mortal, except for exceptional cases such as that of Daphne who is transformed into a laurel tree by Gaia when she flees the advances of Apollo,[71] of Cassandra who is cursed by Apollo for first agreeing to and then refusing his overtures,[72] and of Persephone who is abducted by Hades[73] and cannot return permanently to the world because she has eaten a pomegranate seed. Given the asymmetrical power relationship between a god and the παρθένος he is pursuing, it is not surprising that pregnancy generally occurs. The παρθένοι involved are generally surprised by the god while away from home, or at least, out of doors, and pursuit often ensues but the girl is nearly always caught. Of the goddesses, Athena herself is perhaps the only one to resist rape successfully through her own resources, since she does not call on help from others as do Hera and Aphrodite, nor does she suffer the metamorphosis which seems to be the only other way that, admittedly generally mortal, παρθένοι escape their pursuers. The most frequent outcome for mortals and lesser divinities is the pregnancy of the παρθένος and the birth of an exceptional child, generally a son. Dowden characterises the theme of divine rape thus: 'However

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[70] Zeitlin 1986: 124.
[71] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.568.
[72] Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* 1207-12.
[73] *Theogony* 912-16.

the gods' lusts, . . . are not trivially exercised but exist in order to beget significant offspring who will have a god at the head of their genealogy.'[74] Frequently the mortal woman lives only long enough to give birth to her divine son.

The next story concerning a sister provides interesting information on Spartan marriage customs.[75] Anaxandridas, king of Sparta, is married to his sister's daughter, to his niece, in other words, but they have no children. Since he is king, the question of an heir is a pressing one, so the ephors approach him to take a new wife to remedy the problem. Anaxandridas refuses to divorce his wife, but after some persuasion agrees to take a second wife and, contrary to normal Spartan practice, to run two households simultaneously. As soon as the new wife produces an heir in the shape of Cleomenes, Anaxandridas' first wife, his sister's daughter, becomes pregnant and produces three sons in rapid succession. In the Greek world, close kin marriage such as in this situation was quite common, exemplified particularly by the institution of the ἐπίκληρος, or brotherless daughter, known as a πατροῦχος in Sparta,[76] who was often given to her dead father's brother in marriage, so as to keep property in the family. Herodotus' account of the subsequent rivalry between Cleomenes and Doreius, eldest son of Anaxandridas and his niece, mirrors the familiar rivalry between male siblings or half-siblings so prevalent in myth, as for example in the fatal antagonism between Polynices and Eteocles.[77]

Herodotus also notes sibling relationships among the Persians and in the case of Mardonius, son of Darius' sister, emphasises that no one else at court had more

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[74] Dowden 1991: 163. Zeitlin 1986: 125 expresses the same idea: 'The single violent encounter bears political fruit when it produces offspring with impeccable pedigrees as founders of cities and other geographically defined areas.'
[75] *Histories* 5.39-41.
[76] The πατροῦχος, however, could inherit in her own right, unlike the Athenian ἐπίκληρος .
[77] Pindar *Ol.* 2.35-45.

influence with Xerxes.[78] He does not specifically attribute Mardonius' influence to the relationship between the two men but it can be inferred; at the very least, the existence of the relationship surely afforded Mardonius easy access to Xerxes. Certainly in Greek terms a sister constituted a link between her father and brothers in her natal family and her husband and children in her marital one. Since most Greek writers believed that Persian women exercised excessive power and influence at court, it is but a short step to attribute influence to men by virtue of their relationship to certain women. Bearing this in mind it is not difficult to infer that Mardonius enjoyed his particular influence with Xerxes as a result of the relationship between his mother and the Great King, particularly with the internal resonance of the story of Sataspes' mother

As noted earlier, the *Histories* do not provide a large number of stories dealing with sisters, but those that there are give testimony to the idea that sisters could indeed be expected to have close ties with their brothers and to exercise influence over them, while brothers could be expected to have the interests of their sisters at heart and to defend their honour vigorously. Such concern with the family honour might also persuade a brother to use his sister to form alliances in the matrimonial stakes but he would be expected to protect her interests at the same time, since sisters could also provide a useful link with other families through marriage.

[78] *Histories* 7.5.

WIVES

In this chapter those women in Herodotus whose stories are concerned mainly with their position as some man's wife will be examined, even though some of them may simultaneously be mothers or even queens. In modern terms, marriage is the social institution that makes a woman a wife, so it is instructive to examine some of the aspects of Greek marriage at the outset, to gain some idea of the background against which Herodotus wrote about women who were also wives.

'Marriage is for the girl what warfare is for the boy.'[1] Vernant's formulation expresses the importance of marriage for the Greek girl. Indeed it may be argued that marriage is more important for her than warfare is for the boy, since for her there is no alternative occupation; boys will not only be soldiers, they will also be citizens and participate in the life of the πόλις, but in Greek texts dealing with the lives of women, it is hard to find mention of the older unmarried woman, such as the stereotypical maiden aunt in other cultures.[2] In most Greek states, with the notable exception of Sparta, it was thought that girls should be married as soon after menarche as possible so as to reduce to a minimum the problematic period between readiness for marriage and marriage itself when the girl's virginity was at its most vulnerable and most in need of guarding. The medical treatises deal at length with diseases of παρθένοι or maidens[3] and the cure for most conditions is regarded as marriage and subsequent pregnancy, as is evidenced by the following advice concerning conditions believed to afflict young women in particular found in the Hippocratic treatise, Περὶ Παρθένιων:

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[1] Vernant: 1980: 23. See also Plato's *Timaeus* 90f.
[2] Blundell 1995: 119 has also remarked upon this point: 'There are very few references in literature to individual spinsters, but this could be explained by the Athenian male's lack of interest in non-reproducing females.'
[3] See Garland 1990: 168f.

> Κελεύω δ' ἔγωγε τὰς παρθένους, ὁκόταν τὸ τοιοῦτον πάσχωσιν, ὡς τάχιστα ξυνοικῆσαι ἀνδράσιν· ἢν γὰρ κυήσωσιν, ὑγιέες γίνονται· εἰ δὲ μὴ, ἢ αὐτίκα ἅμα τῇ ἥβῃ ἢ ὀλίγον ὕστερον ἁλώσεται, εἴπερ μὴ ἑτέρῃ νούσῳ· τῶν δὲ ἠνδρωμένων γυναικῶν αἱ στεῖραι μᾶλλον ταῦτα πάσχουσιν.
>
> I recommend to young girls, whenever they suffer such things, to marry a man as soon as possible. For if they become pregnant, they will become healthy; if not, when they reach puberty, or a little later, they will be seized by this affliction, if not by another. Among married women, the barren ones will suffer these things most.[4]

The importance of procreation of children as the purpose of marriage is underlined by the existence of a fairly lengthy treatise on sterility, Περί Ἀφορων,[5] in the Hippocratic corpus, in which the causes of sterility are examined in detail.

Marriages[6] in ancient Greece were arranged by the girl's father[7] and the head of the prospective husband's οἶκος; given the age of the man about to marry, his father was less likely to be still alive than the bride's. Each marriage constituted a relationship between two households or οἶκοι, and this link was epitomised in the form of the girl given by her father to her husband. Visser sees her position as a potentially difficult one: 'As a link, she is necessarily pulled in two directions at once; she is the point of contact between her natal family and her conjugal family.'[8] The fact that her father retained his interest in her provided her with a certain amount of

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[4] Περί Παρθένιων 1: Littré 1962 Vol. 8: 468f.
[5] Περί Ἀφορων Littré 1962 Vol.8: 408ff.
[6] What follows is of necessity a condensed version of the available evidence; for a more detailed examination of the different types of marriage see Vernant 1980 45-70; also Leduc 1992.
[7] See Reeder: 1995a: 287f where Greek marriage is illustrated by the myth of Demeter and Persephone.
[8] Visser 1986: 150.

security but it may also have led to less than wholehearted acceptance into her marital family.

For the Greeks it was not marriage which changed a παρθένος into a γύνη - that transition only occurred on the birth of a woman's first child, but on her marriage a παρθένος became a νύμφη or bride. Marriage in ancient Greek society was a process rather than an event, since it consisted of two parts, which often took place at different points in time. The first part was the ἐγγύε, the ceremony in which 'title to the woman is transferred,'[9] and by which legitimacy was conferred on the subsequent offspring of the union; in essence it was an arrangement between two men, the bride's κύριος, generally but not always her father, and the groom, with the bride as the object of exchange. Indeed, since the prospective bride was not a legal agent, she was not required to be present at the ἐγγύε. Redfield observes that 'a Greek man could make his sons legitimate heirs to the patriline only by securing them recognised matrikin.'[10] In other words, in Athenian terms a man needed a citizen wife to ensure that his sons would be recognised as his heirs and as Athenian citizens themselves.[11] This led to competition for the available citizen women as wives, and exposed what Redfield terms the 'latent bilaterality'[12] of the patrilineal system. As an illustration of this bilaterality, he notes that the dowry, which was attached to the woman, did not actually belong to the husband, and in fact formed part of the inheritance of the sons of the union, providing the marriage lasted till the death of the husband. If the marriage did not last,

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[9] Redfield 1982: 186.
[10] Redfield 1982: 184.
[11] The case against Neaera is an illustration of the importance attached by Athenians to legitimate citizenship. Neaera was a Corinthian courtesan living with Stephanus, an Athenian citizen. He was accused of passing off her alien children as his by a previous marriage and marrying her daughter to an Athenian citizen. The children of such a union should not have been entitled to the rights of citizenship. See Demosthenes 59. The requirement for two citizen parents came into effect with Pericles' law of citizenship in 451-450 B.C.
[12] Redfield 1982: 184.

the dowry returned with the woman to her natal home. In short, divorce meant not only the breakup of the marriage, but also the removal of part of the sons' inheritance. In the same way, refusal of marriage on the part of a daughter would have led to severe consequences on the death of her father since she could not inherit from him, and her brother would become head of the οἶκος, presumably with his own wife and children to provide for. From the foregoing, it will be seen that marriage was the desired state for men and women and that successful marriage was important to the Greeks in more ways than one.

While the ἐγγύε was the part of the ceremonies conferring legitimacy on the offspring,[13] the second part of the marriage was the ἔκδοσις, or handing over of the bride to the groom, usually at a wedding feast or γάμος. Frequent comparisons are made between the dressing of the bride in elaborate finery and the image of Pandora, who was beautifully clothed and bejewelled by the gods before being presented to Epimetheus.[14] Similarly, there is the scene in the *Iliad*[15] in which Hera adorns herself before seducing Zeus, which includes the bathing and anointing familiar to mortal brides prior to the donning of a special gown and jewellery. No doubt the mortal bride hoped to be as irresistible to her husband as were Hera and Pandora in the realm of mythology.

Marriage in antiquity underlined the ambiguous status of a female since although each οἶκος needed her to carry on its male line, she was still regarded as an

[13] Blundell 1995: 122 concurs with Patterson 1991: 60 that marriage was a 'composite process' and that the ἐγγύε was the part of this process which ensured the legitimacy of the children of the union.
[14] *Works and Days* 73-82.
[15] *Iliad* 14.159-223.

intruder and therefore suspect.[16] As Visser puts it, 'Men are foreigners before marriage, coming to take the bride away; women are foreigners afterwards.'[17] On the other hand, expectations of her fertility were high, and the pressure on her to become pregnant, preferably with a son for her husband, was immense.[18] The status of a woman in her marital οἶκος probably improved once she had her first child successfully, since the child would give her a vested interest in the success of her husband's family. Indeed this transition was marked in terminological terms by the fact that a woman was referred to as a νύμφη (bride) in the period between her marriage and the successful birth of her first child, when she became a γύνη (woman or wife). While much scholarly energy has been spent in debating the degree of seclusion or freedom which citizen women enjoyed in their everyday lives in the classical world,[19] it

[16] Demand 1994:147 says 'A woman was viewed as a constant threat to the honor of the *oikos* through her inability to control her rampant sexuality. She could bring shame and dishonor by even the slightest hint of impropriety, even by innocently putting herself in the way of temptation. Hence the male members of the *oikos* felt obliged to watch her constantly, and this watching could easily turn into an obsession.'

[17] Visser 1986: 151.

[18] Garland 1990: 17 says 'Inasmuch as the primary function of marriage in Greek society was procreation, the primary value of a married woman was as a reproductive machine. This culturally determined role was reinforced by medical lore which taught that a woman who did not engage in sexual intercourse could seriously endanger her health.'

[19] The question of the seclusion or otherwise of women in Greek/Athenian society is a controversial one. Those who argue for seclusion can cite Plato *Laws* 781c, where the reluctance of women to eat in public is discussed; Herodotus *Histories* 2.35.2, where he says that Egyptian women, by going to the market place, do the opposite of Greek women; Lysias 3.6, where women are described as being afraid to be seen even by their kinsmen, and 32.11, where women are said to be unused to speaking in front of men and Demosthenes 47.53, where Hagnophilus the servant is afraid to enter the house when the master is not present. On the other hand arguments against seclusion can be found in Demosthenes 55, where women in the country are said to visit each other; in Andocides 4.14, where Alcibiades carried his wife home forcibly when she went to he Archon to divorce him and in Aristotle *Pol.* 1299B, where the controller of women is described as an aristocratic feature since it is impossible to restrain the wives of poor men from going out at will. In the *Histories* there are also two examples, noted in this chapter, of groups of women attacking in public the lone suvivor of a battle (*Histories* 5.87) and the wife and children of Lycides (*Histories* 9.5). On balance, it would seem that seclusion was perhaps an ideal, more easily achieved by the wealthy élite, who would regard it as a mark of superiority to be able to keep their women from the public gaze. Nevertheless, the legal standing of women as perpetual minors under the guardianship of a man throughout their lives cannot be denied.

can hardly be denied that their behaviour was carefully scrutinised and monitored,[20] particularly in the case of women of childbearing age, since their chastity was the lynchpin of male citizenship. As Just says, 'the very young and the very old probably enjoyed a greater degree of freedom than those who, to underline the significant feature, were possessed of their full sexuality.'[21]

The duties of a married woman are spelled out in Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, in which Ischomachus instructs his young bride, detailing the sphere of competence she was expected to inhabit. It is clear is that the wife's place was in the home, overseeing the running of the household, bringing up her children and supervising the slaves, if there were any, while the husband spent his time outside, either running the estate or in civic affairs. Most of our evidence concerning household management comes from upper class families, where there were slaves for the heavy work which a woman in a poorer family would have done herself. Reeder says 'Obtaining the water from a fountain house was always a woman's task, as well as a highly sociable activity, although well-to-do houses could send slaves for that purpose and to carry out the basic shopping.'[22]

As in the Homeric epics, weaving and spinning to provide clothing for the members of the οἶκος were perhaps the most important part of the Greek wife's duties, and certainly the most time-consuming, but as Reeder[23] notes, 'skilfully worked garments also demonstrated a woman's industriousness, which, ironically for a society

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[20] See Demand 1994: 9f. Cohen 1991: 140 notes that 'the honor of men is, in large part, defined through the chastity of the women to whom they are related. Female honor largely involved sexual purity and the behavior which social norms deem necessary to maintain it in the eyes of the watchful community. Male honor receives the active role of defending that purity. A man's honor is therefore involved with the sexual purity of his mother, sisters, wife and daughters - of him, chastity is not required.'

[21] Just 1989: 112.

[22] Reeder 1995b: 21.

[23] Reeder 1995a: 132.

that devalued manual labour in its male citizens, was considered one of the most desirable of female qualities.' The 'ambiguity of Greek textiles' is amply demonstrated by Jenkins,[24] but here it is worth noting his characterisation of textiles as not only 'a manifestation of household wealth, but also as a demonstration of the owner's pride in keeping the women busy at the most respected of domestic chores.'[25] These skills in the production of textiles the Greek wife would be expected to pass on to her daughters,[26] as her mother had taught her. There are several references to weaving and spinning in the *Histories*[27] and even a Persian queen like Amestris weaves a shawl for her husband.[28] Since a woman's children were in her care until the age of about seven for boys and until marriage for girls, she was responsible for their early education and socialisation. Whether or not women were kept in seclusion, there was enough for a woman to do to keep her busy within the home, even if slaves did most of the heavy work.

During the woman's lifetime, marriage ended in either widowhood or divorce, and in both cases the woman could return to her natal οἶκος, along with her dowry, which would be used for her remarriage. If she was still of childbearing age, the husband might make provision for her remarriage, which was considered desirable, before his death. Given the age differential within a married couple, a woman could expect to be widowed relatively young and might well produce children within a second marriage. Upon widowhood technically a woman could choose either to return to her

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[24] Jenkins 1985: 109-32.

[25] Jenkins 1985: 112. Thomas 1988:263, in referring to Penelope, Helen, Andromache and Calypso, notes that 'these women were able to weave and create woven raiments that often are stored as treasures as the Phaeacian gifts to Odysseus surely were.'

[26] See Reeder 1995a:200-217.

[27] Including the memorable gift of a gold spindle by Euelthon to Pheretime when she asks for an army (*Histories* 4.162).

[28] *Histories* 9.109.

natal οἶκος with her dowry, but leaving behind her children in their father's οἶκος, or to remain in her husband's οἶκος with her children under the same guardianship, but there is no attested case of the latter arrangement where the widow was still of childbearing age.[29] It would seem that in practice she either remarried or returned to her natal family, frequently taking the children with her, though the legal guardianship of the children still resided with the agnatic family.[30] If a woman remarried and produced further offspring, these children became the heirs of her dowry, which had returned with her to her natal family, whose property it was. A widow with a son who had reached his majority might stay within the οἶκος of her son since he was her guardian and had control of her dowry; it was in any event his duty to care for her in her old age, representing her in court if necessary and finally after her death carrying out the rites of burial and honouring her grave. The son would then inherit her dowry, of which he was already the κύριος. It is likely that at this stage of her life the older widow enjoyed more freedom than ever before,[31] once the strict oversight of her honour and chastity was no longer necessary, and she may possibly have wielded considerable influence and authority within the family circle.[32]

Since Greek marriage did not involve any promises of lifelong devotion or fidelity[33], divorce was relatively simple, as is evidenced by the story in the *Histories* of Ariston's third wife; the husband could merely expel his wife from his οἶκος, while she could leave of her own accord, providing she had the consent and help of her former

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[29] Cox 1989: 298.
[30] Cox 1989: 298.
[31] Bremmer 1987b: 192.
[32] Cox 1989: 302.
[33] Although it must be noted that great care was taken to see that Greek wives were faithful, so as to ensure the legitimacy of any offspring. Even so, no promises to this effect were made during the marriage ceremony, and men were not expected to be faithful, as evidenced by the existence of the παλλακή.

guardian. The dowry had to be returned with her whether she was divorced or widowed, or returned to her natal family if she died childless.[34]

The first wife in mythology, apart from the goddesses, is Hesiod's Pandora, who is given to Epimetheus by Zeus as a gift he cannot refuse,[35] and who brings in her train all the evils to which men are heir. Shattering the dream of a world without women, she not only brings with her a pleasing exterior, 'the only fully positive trait of the first woman,'[36] which excites man's desire for her, but also all the diseases and evils which afflict man are released when she opens the jar. From now on, man, who has lived previously in harmony with the gods and in a paradisical state, has to face a life of toil to make a livelihood and feed the voracious woman foisted upon him on the orders of Zeus. If, however, he refuses the gift and does not marry, he will be without heirs to tend him in his old age and inherit his property. The paradoxical irony is that, although Pandora has brought death with her, man nevertheless needs her to carry on the οἶκος by producing an heir, preferably only one son, since wealth can then be accumulated rather than dissipated; in Saxonhouse's words, 'When confronted with the female, the leaders must face the problem of difference and complexity for she, by introducing human reproduction, underscores the male's dependence upon that which is other.'[37] In the new order, man's only hope is to find a good wife, and in pursuit of this ideal, Hesiod claims that the best course of action is to marry a young girl, in the hope that she will be receptive to the education her husband will provide, in order, as

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[34] Lacey 1968: 108-110 and 174 and Cox 1998: 75 and 119. Just 1989: 73 says that 'Although there is no direct evidence on the matter it would seem that the dowry was repayable irrespective of the grounds of the divorce, that is, even if the husband had sent away his wife because of adultery (Harrison 1968:55-6).'

[35] On gifts from the gods that cannot be refused see Pucci 1977: 2f.

[36] Pucci 1977: 92.

[37] Saxonhouse 1992: 53.

Pucci says, 'to efface her inherent difference, her otherness and her outsideness.'[38] Rudhardt makes the interesting observation that Pandora is not the sole ancestress of the 'race of women,' but that in each generation men and women were united in the procreation of offspring, in the same way that Pandora and Epimetheus were joined, so that men were just as much the progeny of Pandora as women.[39]

The other two wives in mythology who spring most readily to mind are of course Penelope and Clytemnestra, sisters who epitomise the good wife and the bad wife respectively. The faithful Penelope, waiting patiently in Ithaca for Odysseus to return, beseiged by the suitors and holding them off by the stratagem of unravelling her weaving each night, is the complete opposite to Clytemnestra, who is unfaithful to her husband as soon as he goes off to war, rules the kingdom in his stead and murders him on his return.[40] Clytemnestra is described by Aeschylus as this 'woman of manly counsel,'[41] an example of the woman who behaves like a man, eschewing the traditional womanly occupations in favour of the exercise of power, most particularly political power over men, something which was expressly denied to women in the organisation of Greek society. Nevertheless, even Clytemnestra busies herself with her weaving but the product of her industry, the garment in which she entangles Agamemnon as she kills him, is used for the nefarious purpose of murdering her husband. Hera, the wife of Zeus, exercises power as the consort of the most powerful god, rather than in her own right, and serves as an archetype for women like the Persian queens who exercise power as the wives of powerful men.

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[38] Pucci 1977: 112.
[39] Rudhardt 1986: 240.
[40] Agamemnon specifically contrasts Penelope and Clytemnestra as the good and the bad wife respectively at *Iliad* 24. 210ff.
[41] Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 11.

The first wife to appear in the *Histories* is the unnamed wife and queen of Candaules, king of Lydia.[42] The Greek preference not to name respectable women has been noted elsewhere,[43] and in this case the fact that she remains anonymous may underline the seriousness of the crime perpetrated against her. Her anonymity marks her as a respectable woman, one who should not be subjected to the shame induced by her husband's actions. Her husband's obsession with his wife's beauty and even more, his desire that another man should see her naked goes against not only every belief that Greeks had about the relationship between the sexes, but also those of the Lydians themselves, given Herodotus' statement that παρὰ γὰρ τοῖσι Λυδοῖσι, σκεδὸν δὲ καὶ παρὰ τοῖσι ἄλλοισι Βαρβάροισι, καὶ ἄνδρα ὀφθῆναι γυμνὸν ἐς αἰσχύνην μεγάλην φέρει – 'among the Lydians, and indeed among the other barbarians, it is disgraceful for a man to be seen naked.'[44] The inference here is that if it is so for a man, how much more so would it be for a woman. Under whatever degree of seclusion or segregation from men that Greek citizen women lived, it cannot be denied that displaying the nakedness of one's wife to another man would have been total anathema to a Greek. Indeed, Greek myth has several examples of severe punishment visited upon those who, even inadvertently, see goddesses naked, and if myth does indeed explore matters of concern to the society, then the display of female nakedness was certainly not regarded as desirable in Greek society. Stewart observes in connection with Pandora that 'the first thing that Zeus did when he created her, was to order her clothed, girdled and veiled: wrapped in a *peplos*, *zone*, and *kredemnon*.'[45] Candaules, king of Lydia and therefore not a Greek, overrides all Gyges' objections to

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[42] *Histories* 1.8-13.
[43] See above page 3.
[44] *Histories* 1.10
[45] Stewart 1997: 40f.

seeing the queen as she undresses, objections with which the audience would have been in full agreement, since Candaules' desire to display his wife would have been seen as completely non-Greek and an example of the alterity of what was countenanced by a man of another nation. Gray emphasises this example of alterity thus: 'Candaules as a royal barbarian has the otherness of lust and pride, violation and general excess even in praise for his wife (ὑπερεπαινῶν). Her exposure seems to be the equivalent of other physical displays of maltreatment which are the domain of the barbarian.'[46] Candaules, full of plans to accomplish his desire, assures Gyges that he need not fear the queen as he says 'μή τί τοι ἐξ αὐτῆς γένεται βλάβος - 'no harm will come to you from her.'[47] This is delightful irony in light of the fact that she later threatens him with death. The queen's shock and anger when she realises what her husband has done must have resonated fully with an audience steeped in the Greek myths of Actaeon and Teiresias, who saw the nakedness of Artemis and Athena respectively. Actaeon was a hunter who came upon Artemis bathing while on a hunting expedition; he did not deliberately seek her out but he paid the penalty nonetheless, since Artemis turned him into a deer and he was torn to pieces by his own hunting dogs.[48] Teiresias saw Athena bathing and was blinded for his presumption.[49]

The queen proves herself to be resourceful, intelligent and ruthless in planning revenge on her husband and Gyges finds himself facing another strong personality who will not take no for an answer. The queen, who remains unnamed throughout the

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[46] Gray 1995: 202.
[47] *Histories* 1.9
[48] Apollodorus 3.4.4. Powell 1998: 183 explains that 'the myth evidently reflects primitive human sacrifice, the gift of a man to the goddess to ensure success in the hunt.'
[49] Apollodorus 3.6.7.

episode,[50] insists that he choose between killing his master and taking over his wife and his throne - a particularly Eastern custom, according to How & Wells[51] - or being killed himself. There is, however, some parallel in Greek mythology for the custom of linking the widow and the throne; the suitors in the *Odyssey* seem to assume that whoever marries Penelope will take Odysseus' place as head of the οἶκος and perhaps as king of Ithaca[52] and, of course, Oedipus gains the throne in Thebes when he marries Jocasta. Herodotus' unnamed queen has a plan in mind and a fitting one at that; the murder should take place in the same room where the original crime was committed. Indeed she conceals Gyges behind the same door that afforded him concealment when he was doing Candaules' bidding. Her last act is to give him a short sword for the task at hand; he completes it successfully and she disappears from the pages of history.

There are several mythical elements in this story, the first of which is the queen's outstanding beauty. Beauty seems to be a given for heroines in both myth and folktale but some are more famous for their beauty than others. On occasion beauty itself can be the precipitating factor in the myth as it is in this instance. Although the queen herself does not boast about her beauty, her husband does and his obsession is the catalyst for the action of the story. In myth we find various other heroines for whom beauty might also be regarded as a curse; Helen immediately springs to mind, but besides her there is the beauty contest occasioned by the throwing of the apple by Eris at the wedding feast of Peleus and Thetis. Hera, Artemis and Aphrodite all lay

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[50] Clark 1989: 38 states that 'Athenian convention, in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., was not to name a lady except as 'wife of X' or 'daughter of Y'. Is this respect for the modesty of women, or deliberate 'social muting'?' Cartledge 1993: 74 says that it was 'a point of honour among men not to divulge them (the names of their female relatives) to unrelated men.'

[51] How & Wells 1928: 1, 59 say that 'it is quite in accordance with Eastern usage that the usurper should take the wife of his predecessor. Cf. 2 *Sam*, xvi.21-2 (Absalom and David), and iii.68.3.' In the note to 3.68.3 they draw attention to Darius' marriages mentioned in 3.88.

[52] For an extensive discussion of the 'value of Penelope's hand in marriage' see Thomas 1988: 257-264.

claim to the apple inscribed 'for the fairest', and it is only when Aphrodite offers Paris the most beautiful woman in the world if he chooses her that she carries off the prize. As the most beautiful woman in the world, Helen is given to Paris and the Trojan war ensues.[53] Neither Helen nor Candaules' queen have anything to do with the event that begins their story; it is only their beauty that embroils them in difficult circumstances. On the other hand, several heroines actually boast of their beauty and pay a penalty; Chione angers Artemis when she brags of her beauty and is killed as a result, while Cassiopeia is punished by the Nereids for boasting of her beauty by having to sacrifice her daughter to a sea monster.[54] Side, the wife of Orion, is punished by Hera for claiming to rival her beauty.[55]

An important mythical element in this story is the seeing of what should not be seen by someone who is not entitled to do so. Gyges, as he well knows, should not see Candaules' wife naked; in myth his predecessors are Actaeon and Teiresias, who saw the nakedness of Artemis and Athena respectively. Buxton[56] notes that 'certain sorts of acts typically result in the blinding of the agent. Such acts involve the over-stepping of limits.' These limits include those between gods and men and between men and women, so that Actaeon and Teiresias transgress both sets of boundaries by laying eyes on a naked goddess. From these myths it can be seen that punishment for impiety and inappropriate behaviour is a definite mythological element, and is exacted by goddesses as well as gods. Both Candaules and Gyges in their different ways overstep the limits between men and women and, although Candaules' wife may be unusual since she is a woman acting independently and on her own behalf, there are many mythological

[53] Apollodorus 3.1-6.
[54] Apollodorus 2.4.3.
[55] Apollodorus 1.4.3.
[56] Buxton 1980: 30.

precedents for her action. In the action she takes of ordering the death of Candaules she emulates figures such as Hecuba who avenges the death of her son Polydorus herself when Agamemnon refuses to act. She lures the murderer, Polymestor to her tent where her women put out his eyes and kill his sons.[57] She does not flinch from ordering others to kill any more than Candaules' wife does.

More to the point, the story of Candaules' wife is filled with even closer resonances with the story of Clytemnestra, Agamemnon and Aegisthus;[58] although the myth and Herodotus' story do not match in every respect there are enough correspondences for an audience familiar with the myth to recognise them instantly. Clytemnestra has been wronged by her husband in a different way from Candaules' queen, through the sacrifice of her daughter, but the initial outrage perpetrated by a husband is the common feature. Zeitlin[59] also notes that 'the woman does not initiate the hostilities. She is spurred to retaliation by a prior outrage inflicted upon her by a male.' Candaules' queen is in exactly the same position as Clytemnestra; her husband is the one who instigates the sequence of events that leads to his downfall. Gyges' compliance with the queen's demand that he kill her husband recalls Aegisthus' complicity in the murder of Agamemnon;[60] both men acquiesce in the plans of a stronger female character and both reap the immediate benefit of gaining a throne, a theme familiar to Herodotus' audience from their knowledge of the myth. Hall notes

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[57] Euripides *Hecuba* 882-1046.
[58] Apollodorus 6.23.
[59] Zeitlin 1978: 156.
[60] In the *Odyssey* 11.409f Homer seems to indicate that Aegisthus was the killer of Agamemnon, with Clytemnestra's aid, whereas the tragedians impute the crime to Clytemnestra herself. H. Foley 1981: 133 also notes the discrepancy when she says 'We have only to compare, for example, the titanic Clytemnestra of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, who takes full responsibility for the murder of her husband, to her Odyssean counterpart, who obeys the will of her seducer Aegisthus . . .' Vernant 1983: 135 concurs, saying that 'All the great tragic writers agree in depicting Aegisthus as effeminate, cowardly, a voluptuary, and a womaniser, succeeding through women, and whose prowess is confined solely to that field of battle ruled by Aphrodite.'

that 'The relationship between Clytemnestra and Aegisthus subverts both the sexual hierarchy and the political order, for in Greek eyes despotism was inextricably linked with both dominant women . . . and with uncontrolled or illicit sexual desires.'[61] The theme of a weak man dominated by a 'masculine-type' woman is illuminated in Herodotus' text by the audience's familiarity with the myth, and in Aeschylus' trilogy, the *Oresteia*, the same circumstances are illuminated by reference to Heracles' enslavement to Omphale.[62] This Aeschylean example shows that the hypothesis that myth is used as an enabling and explicatory mechanism of reception by the audience is a viable one.

Some commentators have argued[63] that the feminine response to the initial outrage is out of proportion to the offence and that this reflects the Greek view of women as irrational and in need of governance by the male to ensure the smooth workings of society, while Dewald terms Herodotus' presentation of the queen's actions as 'serious responses to issues of social authority and status.'[64] Herodotus does not comment on the appropriateness or otherwise of the queen's actions, and she and Gyges do not personally suffer any adverse consequences for the murder of Candaules, nor does society suffer any immediate effects beyond the change of monarch; indeed Gyges has a long and reasonably successful reign. Herodotus is, nevertheless, careful to note that vengeance does occur in a later generation. Through this unnamed woman the Lydian nation undergoes a change in ruling dynasty and five generations later is conquered by Cyrus, fulfilling the prophecy of the Pythia which legitimised Gyges' rule but added the rider that 'Ηρακλείδῃσι τίσις ἥξει ἐς τὸν

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[61] Hall 1989: 208.
[62] *Agamemnon* 1040-41.
[63] Zeitlin 1978: 156. See also Tyrrell & Brown 1991: 105.
[64] Dewald 1981:106f.

πέμπτον ἀπόγονον Γύγεω – 'revenge will come for the Heraclidae in the fourth generation after Gyges.'[65] For an audience brought up on myths, however, the links between the story of Clytemnestra and Candaules' queen are obvious and although Herodotus' tale is set in Lydia in the distant past, these links are enabling features in its reception. It is worth noting that, having begun his work by dismissing well known myths as the origins of the conflict between Europe and Asia, the first story that Herodotus tells in his historical account has so many recognisably mythological elements.

Later on Herodotus tells the story of the Athenian colonisers of Ionia who kill the local Carian men and take their daughters to be their wives.[66] These wives then swear an oath to abide by the rule that they would never share a meal with their husbands nor call them by their names and they pass the rule on to their daughters. Group action by wives to avenge a wrong - for after all, the husbands in this tale had killed the wives' original families - is reflected in the myth of the Lemnian women[67] who killed all the men on the island in retaliation for their taking Thracian concubines. The retaliatory action of the Carian wives of Miletus does not entail the wholesale rejection of marriage shown by the Lemnian women, but it would certainly be an obstacle to the harmonious 'living together,' συνοικεῖν, that was at the heart of Athenian marriage. How & Wells[68] claim that this is 'a piece of very early custom' but deny that it can have been 'as absolute as Herodotus states.' Likewise, the independent, disruptive action taken by a group of women goes against all the societal pressures in the direction of conformity to which Greek, and particularly Athenian,

[65] *Histories* 1.13.
[66] *Histories* 1.146.
[67] Apollodorus 1.9.17.
[68] How & Wells 1928: 1, 122.

women were subject, pressures which were only lifted under the strictly regulated celebration of a festival such as the *Thesmophoria*.

In his lengthy digression on Egypt, Herodotus makes much of the differences between Egyptian and Greek customs, an example of alterity where the 'other' in question is not barbarian, in the modern sense of the word, as for example the Scythians, but the civilised Egyptians, whose accomplishments and antiquity Herodotus is about to document at length in his descriptions of their monuments and in his belief that Egypt is the source of many of the gods in the Greek pantheon. He does not fail to comment on the strange customs of the contemporary Egyptians, among which are some concerning women, although Egyptians, like Greeks, have only one wife.[69] Egyptian women, according to Herodotus, do everything that Greek women do not; among other things, they go to the ἀγορά and sell goods, while the men stay at home and weave, in an opposite fashion to the method used by Greek women; daughters are obliged to care for their elderly parents, whereas among the Greeks this duty falls to sons; and Egyptian gods are served by priests, not by priestesses. It is noteworthy that Herodotus picks out weaving as one of the Egyptian customs to comment upon since it is such a prominent part of Greek thought concerning women; the fact that Egyptian men do it and do it differently to Greeks marks them as significantly 'other'. Likewise the observation that Egyptian religion does not have priestesses, in marked contrast to the Greek practice, in which some of the most important figures are women, notably the Pythia, the priestess of Apollo at Delphi, the priestess of Athena Polias who officiated at the Great Pananthenaea, and the priestess of Demeter at Olympia who was the only female 'who was actually required to witness

[69] *Histories* 2.35.

the Games.'[70] Otherwise, unsurprisingly, 'non-Greeks, slaves and women, except for priestesses of Demeter, were forbidden to take part on pain of severe punishment.'[71]

Egypt provides a story where blindness features as a punishment for impiety, as was noted above in the cases of Actaeon and Teiresias in Greek myth.[72] Pheros, king or pharaoh of Egypt, is blinded for the sacrilege of hurling a spear into the Nile during a particularly high flood. Such sacrilege is an example of the transgressing of limits noted earlier in connection with Actaeon and Teiresias.[73] For ten years he remains blind and then an oracle predicts that he will regain his sight if he washes his eyes in the urine of a faithful wife. Naturally he tries the urine of his own wife first but the cure does not work, nor does the urine of many other wives whom he tests. Eventually he is successful in finding a faithful wife and once he has regained his sight he assembles all the women he has tested in one town and burns it with them inside, allowing only the one faithful wife whom he has found to survive. Notwithstanding the fact that she is already married, he marries her. The wholesale punishment of a group of women recalls the punishment of the Lemnian women for neglecting the rites of Aphrodite; the goddess inflicts a terrible smell on them so that their husbands desert them for their Thracian concubines.[74] Pheros' blindness as the result of sacrilege rather than of seeing the forbidden recalls the myth of Phineus, king of Salmydessus in Eastern Thrace,[75] who was blinded by the gods for foretelling the future too accurately. How & Wells characterise the tale of Pheros as a 'satire on the truth of women' and no doubt it has many folkloric antecedents in its assumptions about the fidelity of wives in

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[70] Swaddling 1980: 42.
[71] Berve & Gruben 1963: 17.
[72] *Histories* 2.111.
[73] Cf. also Xerxes' whipping of the Hellespont.
[74] Apollodorus 1.9.17.
[75] Apollodorus 1.9. 21.

general,[76] but blindness as a punishment for presumption is well attested in myth. Anchises is blinded by Zeus' thunderbolt for boasting when drunk of Aphrodite's favour[77] and Thamyris the Thracian bard boasts that he would win a contest with the Muses. They blind him for his arrogance and make him forget his skill.[78] The archetypal unfaithful wives in myth are Helen and Clytemnestra, in contrast with the model of the faithful wife, Penelope. The fidelity of wives is of utmost concern to Greek society, both archaic and classical, since upon the chastity of women depends the legitimacy of heirs and no man wants to hand on his property to someone else's son. Herodotus' Greek audience would have felt no surprise at Pheros' anger at finding only one faithful wife, even if they regarded his subsequent actions as excessive and fit only for a barbarian. The miraculous cure recalls the healing of Telephus' wound by Achilles;[79] an oracle states that the wounder will also heal, so Telephus seeks out Achilles who inflicted the injury. He interprets the oracle correctly to mean that the spear that inflicted the wound will also heal it. There is a link between a faithless wife and healing in that the mother of Asclepius, Coronis, is killed for her infidelity to Apollo, the god of healing.[80]

The story of Ladice,[81] one of the many wives of the Pharaoh Amasis, illustrates not impiety and presumption but piety and correct behaviour towards the gods. Amasis, who has married Ladice to cement relations with Cyrene (or because he wanted a Greek wife, according to Herodotus) finds that he is impotent with her and

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[76] Dewald 1998: 625 dismisses the story with 'Pheros is merely the word pharaoh; the story is folktale.'

[77] Thereby disobeying Aphrodite's instruction to him in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* 290-92 not to speak of the episode.

[78] *Iliad* 2.594ff. See Buxton 1980: 31(Anchises) and 32 (Thamyris).

[79] Apollodorus 3.20.

[80] Apollodorus 3.10.3.

[81] *Histories* 2.181-2.

threatens her with a terrible death for bewitching him with drugs. She immediately prays to Aphrodite, promising to send a statue of the goddess to Cyrene if Amasis' potency is restored that very night. Her belief in Aphrodite's power is vindicated as her prayer is answered and she keeps her part of the bargain by sending the promised statue. It is hardly surprising to note Amasis' blaming of Ladice for his impotence nor her implicit acceptance of the blame; it is not only in strongly patriarchal societies that men prefer to seek the reason for impotence elsewhere than in themselves. Impotence and infertility in men are discussed in the Hippocratic corpus,[82] but not at the length accorded to the same subject in women; in fact, if intercourse did not result in a pregnancy, 'it was assumed that the woman had intervened to expel either the liquid seed or a more developed fetus later on – or that her organs of generation were anatomically deficient or nosologically impaired.'[83] The word Herodotus uses to describe Amasis' accusation against Ladice, καταφαρμάσσω, immediately brings to mind the enchantress of the *Odyssey*, Circe, who changes Odysseus' men into swine through the use of drugs.[84] The association of drugs and deceit with a woman is a commonplace in myth, for instance, in the stories of Medea[85] and Deianeira.[86]

Herodotus tells a horrifying story about the men of Babylon, who revolt against Darius' rule.[87] In the course of their revolt they gather together all the women of the city except for their mothers and one other woman chosen by each man from his

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[82] Hanson 1992: 46 says that 'Impotence in men was often said to be caused by severing the spermal passageway that led from the brain, the source of sperm, to the spinal marrow, and this cutting was thought to interrupt the spermal pathway to the testicles (e.g., *Airs, Waters, Places* 22 [II:76-78]; *Generation?Nature of the Child* 2 [VII: 472]; *Places in Human Beings* 3 [VI: 282]; *Epidemics* VI.5.15 [V:320]).'

[83] Hanson 1992: 46.

[84] *Odyssey* 10.233-43.

[85] Apollodorus 1.9.23.

[86] Apollodorus 2.7.6-7.

[87] *Histories* 3.150.

household as a cook or breadmaker, a designation which du Bois sees as a metaphor for sexual partner.[88] The interesting feature here is the inference that the woman chosen as a breadmaker, or sexual partner, by each man is not his lawfully wedded wife. The men then strangle all the other women in an attempt to save supplies. This story might be thought to illustrate a population in dire straits, forced to undertake drastic measures to meet a terrible situation, but How & Wells indicate that the Babylonians 'might well expect success, as the Persian power seemed shaken.'[89] If they are correct, this story underlines the lesser value accorded to women, even against children and old men, who would also be non-combatants in a situation of war. Tourraix believes that by this 'crime contre la féminité' the Babylonians 'se sont voués à la defaite.'[90] The city does in fact fall, thanks to the elaborate ruse carried out by Zopyrus, and Darius then has to make arrangements to replace the women who were strangled by their husbands.

Not all wives, however, are a bane to their husbands, fit only to be strangled to preserve supplies; in some cases they can even be their salvation. A group of Minyans settle in Lacedaemonia and start to cause trouble so the Lacedaemonians imprison them prior to execution.[91] The Lacedaemonian wives of the Minyans arrive at the prison to visit their husbands and are allowed in. Once inside they exchange clothing with their husbands who then escape successfully. The motif of cross-dressing occurs elsewhere in Herodotus[92] and also in mythology, although generally it is an individual rather than a group who dresses in the clothes of the opposite sex. For an instance of cross-dressing as a means of escape from danger, there is the case of Achilles who was

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[88] du Bois 1988: 116.
[89] How & Wells 1928: 1, 301.
[90] Tourraix 1976: 376.
[91] *Histories* 4.146.
[92] See above page 97.

sent to the island of Skyros[93] and hidden dressed as a girl to avoid joining the expedition to Troy. His ruse was found out through a ploy of the wily Odysseus who sounded the war trumpet while displaying gifts to the girls in the palace. Only one of them rushed to don armour and fight. Pentheus is induced by Dionysus to dress as a woman to spy upon the women of Thebes[94] but this instance of cross-dressing leads to his destruction as it does in the case of Leucippus, who dresses as a girl to join the hunting band of Daphne.[95] When Daphne and her companions go to bathe after the hunt, he is found out and killed. Even Heracles is found dressed in the garb of a woman during his servitude to Omphale, queen of Lydia,[96] but he suffers nothing more than ridicule at the idea of a strong man enslaved by a woman. Nonetheless, cross-dressing blurs the boundaries of the sexes and can prove to be dangerous. The capacity for deception displayed by the wives of the Minyans reflects the Greek belief that women are inherently deceitful; when men display the same characteristic, it is generally favourably described as μῆτις.

The story of the Scythian wives[97] who cohabit with their slaves during the twenty eight year absence of their husbands in Media is an interesting one. The Scythian men return home to find themselves opposed by an army made up of the sons borne by their wives to the slaves they left behind. It illustrates the idea that slavery is in some way an inborn characteristic, since the sons fight well in military fashion but run away when attacked with horsewhips. The actions of the Scythian women in finding men to replace their husbands recalls the Lemnian women who took the

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[93] *Iliad* 19.326. Apollodorus 3.13.7.
[94] *Bacchae* 820-41.
[95] Pausanias 8.20.2-4.
[96] Apollodorus 1.9.19.
[97] *Histories* 4.1.

Argonauts in eagerly after killing their own husbands.[98] The story and the myth certainly seem to illustrate the Greek belief in the rampant sexuality of women, which must be controlled in marriage by men, or women will find their satisfaction elsewhere.

Wives' devotion to their husbands can also be dangerous, as is evidenced by the Athenian wives who kill the sole survivor of a battle.[99] They are so distraught to learn that only one Athenian had survived the expedition to Aegina that they stab the survivor to death with their πέπλος brooches. The Athenians are so shocked by the action of their womenfolk that they decree that henceforth the χιτών, a form of Ionian clothing which did not require a brooch for fastening, should be worn. The sole survivor motif occurs in the myth of the Lemnian women who neglect the rites of Aphrodite and as punishment are afflicted with a terrible smell, as mentioned above. As a consequence their husbands shun them, preferring their Thracian concubines, and in retaliation the woman kill all the men, except Thoas, who is spared by his daughter Hypsipyle.[100] Likewise the fifty daughters of Danaus kill the sons of Aegyptus, whom they have been compelled to marry, except for Hypermnestra, who spares Lynceus.[101] Herodotus later tells another story of an enraged group of Athenian women but this time the focus of their anger is Lycides who argues in the Council on Salamis that the Athenians should accept the proposal of Mardonius that they should come to terms with Xerxes.[102] After Lycides makes his proposal he is stoned to death by the Athenian men and the uproar accompanying this act alerts the women, who proceed to

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[98] Apollodorus 1.9.17.
[99] *Histories* 5.87. There is another story involving a sole survivor at 1.82 when 300 Spartans and 300 Argives fought to determine the outcome of a dispute. The sole surviving Spartan committed suicide from shame.
[100] Apollodorus 1.9.17.
[101] Apollodorus 2.1.5.
[102] *Histories* 9.5.

Lycides' house where they stone his wife and children to death.[103] Loraux proposes one reading of Herodotus' telling of the story:

> 'Hérodote, qui n'intervenait pas personellement dans le récit mais se contentait d'y glisser une anaphore, était de fait plus critique, et l'on pariera que, si le premier *kata* introduit l'acte, le second souligne l'excès. Avec l'excès, se desseine en filigrane le naturel féminin, principe d'explication ô combien irrationel et cependant seul susceptible d'expliquer un tel acte.'[104]

It is also possible, of course, to see the action of the Athenian women as prompted by the original action of the men, who stone to death a fellow citizen exercising his right to express his opinion in the council concerning a matter of extreme importance to the whole city. The stoning of the children may indeed be considered excessive, but as feelings run high on all sides in this episode, it seems to be going too far to ascribe irrationality in this case to the women alone. In a society which took such pride in the democratic right of all (male) citizens to debate the issues of the day, the action of the Athenians in stoning one of their number because he proposes an unpopular viewpoint seems to be no more rational than that of their female counterparts. Groups of enraged women are also found in myth; for example, the women of Thebes who tear Pentheus limb from limb,[105] and the Thracian women who tear Orpheus apart for rejecting their advances.[106] These myths illustrate the deeply held belief in the

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[103] κατὰ μὲν ἔλευσαν αὐτου τὴν γυναῖκα, κατὰ δὲ τὰ τέκνα. Note that this is one of the few instances where the wife precedes the children.
[104] Loraux 1985: 27.
[105] *Bacchae* 1044-1167.
[106] Apollodorus 1.3.2.

'wildness' of women when not under the control of men, and Herodotus' stories of the Athenian women would seem to provide a real life justification for the belief. As with the Carian wives of the Athenian colonists, we have in these two examples further instances of the much feared, independent action undertaken by a group of women, action which in both myth and real life can have deadly consequences.

A wife's devotion can be tested to the limit, as is evidenced by the custom Herodotus describes of one of the polygamous tribes of Thracians who, on the death of a man, test his wives to find out which one he loved best.[107] When she is discovered, her praises are sung and then her throat is slit so that she can be buried along with her husband. While Herodotus says that the other wives feel it a great reproach not to be chosen as the best loved wife, it seems a dubious honour to be chosen to die. There is a similar custom among the Scythians; they bury the king not with his wife but with one of his concubines.[108] The devotion of the Thracian wife who actively seeks the honour of being buried with her husband recalls the devotion of Alcestis for Admetus in myth, but she goes to her death so that he may remain alive.[109] Evadne, on the other hand, hurls herself on the funeral pyre of her husband, Capaneus, in her grief at his death.[110] The Scythian concubine, however, has no such choice and may not have been devoted to her husband at all.

The story of Melissa,[111] the wife of Periander, is problematic to say the least. Herodotus makes a passing mention of the fact that she has been murdered by her husband when he tells the story of Periander's unsuccessful attempts to hand the

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[107] *Histories* 5.5.
[108] *Histories* 4.71.
[109] Apollodorus 1.9.14-15.
[110] Apollodorus 3.7.1.
[111] *Histories* 5.92.

succession of Corinth over to his son.[112] No reason is given for the murder, nor is the reader told whether her death was intentional or accidental, so we have no information from Herodotus about Melissa in life except that she was Periander's wife and the mother of two sons and a daughter, the latter unsurprisingly unnamed. Periander sends to the oracle of the dead to find out the location of a deposit belonging to a friend which he has mislaid. The ghost of Melissa replies, refusing to give Periander the information he desires because the clothes buried with her were not burnt. She authenticates her message with a phrase that only Periander will understand, saying that he put his loaves in a cold oven. Herodotus himself interprets that to mean that Periander lay with the corpse of his wife, which perhaps adds weight to du Bois' conjecture mentioned above in connection with the Babylonian women that a breadmaker denoted a sexual partner. Worse is to follow, in that Periander orders the women of Corinth to go to the temple of Hera, where he forces them to strip naked, free women and servants alike. Periander burns the clothing of the women and apparently satisfies the ghost of Melissa who gives the information he requested. Du Bois interprets this by saying 'The heat warms the oven and produces the baked bread, the considered response that he wanted.'[113] Du Bois likens the violation of the Corinthian women by stripping them naked and exposing them to the male gaze to the levelling of the male citizens by Periander when he murders the most eminent citizens, actions possible only in a tyranny which has no curbs on its power.[114] Stern examines this episode closely as an example of demythologisation, a process in which archaic myth becomes historicised and rationalised, and contends that

[112] *Histories* 3.50.
[113] du Bois 1988: 115.
[114] Ibid.

Herodotus himself is not responsible for the process; his part is to turn the resulting tales into 'cautionary moral exempla.'[115] Stern concludes that:

> 'The story is thus mythic in origin: a restoration of clothing to a helpless earth goddess, a ritual hierogamy in her honor finally leads to the revelation of the 'deposit of the stranger/host' in the earth. Thereafter, demythologisation creates a horror story of arrogantly insulted Corinthian women and of necrophilia.'[116]

From the point of view of this study the story is an illustration of the excesses of a tyrant in relation not only to his wife, whom he murders and upon whom he commits necrophilia, but also to the women of Corinth, whom he exposes to the gaze of men. The puzzling aspects of the story, such as the deposit, which Herodotus does not adequately explain, may indeed be an indication of incomplete demythologisation, but it is certain that Herodotus saw Periander's treatment of his wife and the Corinthian women as behaviour which Greek society would consider extreme.

The story of Ariston's third wife[117] is replete with folkloric and mythological elements. Unsurprisingly, she is unnamed, even though her first appearance is as a young child, whom we might expect to be named, as was Gorgo, daughter of Cleomenes. The story is the folktale of the Ugly Duckling, the ugly child who grows up to be the most beautiful woman in Sparta, thanks to the intervention of her nurse

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[115] One of the examples Stern 1989: 13 uses is that of Cleobis and Biton. He posits a version of the narrative prior to Herodotus in which 'the "mother" carried in the cart is rather an image of the mother deity than the mother of Cleobis and Biton, and in which they, as devotees of this deity, suffer enfeeblement for more ritual reasons than Herodotus' rationalised version acknowledges.'

[116] Stern 1989: 20.

[117] *Histories* 6.61-64.

who takes her to the shrine of Helen every day. Eventually a woman asks to see the child and strokes her face, predicting that one day she will be the most beautiful woman in Sparta. From that day on the child's ugliness disappears and she becomes beautiful. Here we have a reward for patience and piety on the part of the nurse, who asks for her favour in the correct way; as a contrast we have the story of the Sibyl who asked Apollo for as many years of life as grains of sand that she could scoop up in her hands. She forgot, however, to ask for eternal youth and eventually grew so old that she shrivelled up like a cicada, thereby suffering a punishment for asking more than was her due. There is also in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*[118] the story of Eos who loved Tithonos so dearly that she asked Zeus for immortality for him, but likewise forgot to ask for perpetual youth so that he suffered the same fate as the Sibyl. Nonetheless, the beauty acquired in this way brings its own problems for the child in later life.

When the child in Herodotus' story reaches adulthood she marries Agetus, a friend of Ariston. Ariston has already been married twice, but is still childless. Ariston is seized with passion for his friend's wife and devises a scheme to take her away from her husband. Here we again have the motif of the gift that should not be asked for; Ariston suggests that he and Agetus swear to give each other whichever gift the other requests. It is agreed and Ariston gives Agetus whatever it is he requests, and in return asks for Agetus' wife. Reluctantly, but constrained by his promise, Agetus hands over his wife, faithful to an oath that he swore in good faith, just as did Themison, the ξένος of Phronime's father,[119] in an example of internal resonance in the work, that of an oath which brings unforeseen and unwelcome complications for the

[118] *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* 218-238.
[119] See above page 69.

swearer. As a mythical parallel we have the oath Oedipus swears to punish the killer of Laius, not knowing that he himself is the guilty party.[120] It is interesting to note in Herodotus' story the equating of the wife with a man's other goods and chattels; there is no question of inquiring how the woman herself feels about the transaction. For her, as well as Helen and Candaules' wife, beauty is a mixed blessing. This story also illustrates the ease with which a Greek marriage could be dissolved, merely by an agreement between two men, even if one of them is reluctant, and as far as can be gathered from the text, without consulting the wife concerned. Ariston's wife does not take any action, either upon being given away by her husband or upon being installed as Ariston's wife; unlike Candaules' queen she does not take revenge on either man and cannot be said to participate in 'establishing and maintaining social order,' as Dewald argues,[121] unless one accepts that engineering or fulfilling a deceitful oath is an aspect of social order. Neither does Ariston's current wife, although Herodotus explicitly tells us that he is already married.

Artaynte, the daughter of Masistes and niece of Xerxes, is an adulterous wife.[122] Xerxes at first falls in love with her mother, Masistes' wife, but out of unusual respect for his brother he does not force himself upon her. Instead he arranges the marriage of her daughter to his son, hoping that this would make his seduction of the mother easier. However he then finds himself attracted to the daughter Artaynte and his seduction of her is successful. She is not a παρθένος, but a νύμφη or bride and, unlike most παρθένοι, a presumably willing participant in the sexual activity that brings about her downfall. Meanwhile Xerxes' wife, Amestris, has woven a wonderful

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[120] *Oedipus Tyrannus* 230-70.
[121] Dewald 1981: 92.
[122] *Histories* 9.107-13.

shawl and given it to Xerxes as a gift which he wears when visiting Artaynte. The disaster that follows is rich in mythological elements, which may be prompted by the exemplary nature of this story in illustrating the moral bankruptcy of the defeated Persian monarchy. Mythological examples of weaving by women abound, the most famous being that of Penelope's weaving in the *Odyssey*. Both Andromache[123] and Helen[124] in the *Iliad* also weave since weaving is the archetypal female occupation; women provided all the clothing and household furnishings for their families in this way.

Just before Artaynte makes her request, Herodotus intervenes to tell us that τῇ δὲ κακῶς γὰρ ἔδεε πανοικίῃ γενέσθαι - 'she with her whole household was fated to come to a bad end.'[125] He gives no source for this remark and does not explain it any further. It is interesting because in the case of the other women examined in this study, there is no other mention of fate being responsible for what occurs. We never actually discover what happens to Artaynte herself though the rest of her family is destroyed; in the light of Herodotus' remark quoted above one must assume that she meets her death as well, although it is not specifically stated. However, there is no oracle, prophecy or dream that foreshadows the end of Artaynte and her family; perhaps Herodotus means to indicate the general ruin and destruction that attends Xerxes' family in the years following his return from Greece.

Herodotus' tale unfolds predictably; Xerxes offers Artaynte her choice of gifts and she requests the shawl woven by Amestris. Of course, what she asks for is the precipitating factor in everything that follows, since she turns down all the other gifts

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[123] *Iliad* 22.440-1.
[124] *Iliad* 3.125-8, 6. 323-4 and *Odyssey* 4.125-36.
[125] *Histories* 9.109.

that Xerxes offers in place of the shawl, including an army, τοῦ ἔμελλε οὐδεὶς ἄρχειν ἄλλ' ἢ ἐκείνη - 'which nobody would command except her.'[126] In an authorial aside, Herodotus notes that Περσικὸν δὲ κάρτα ὁ στρατὸς δῶρον - 'an army is a very Persian gift,'[127] presumably because status symbols as a mark of the monarch's favour are very important in a court such as the Persian one, even if in this context an army is merely a bodyguard.[128] It is revealing that Herodotus tells us that Xerxes tried to distract her from the shawl by offering her cities or unlimited gold or the army for one reason alone; because φοβεόμενος δὲ Ἀμηστρίν, μὴ καὶ πρὶν κατεικαζούσῃ τὰ γινόμενα οὕτω ἐπευρετῇ πρήσσων - 'he feared lest Amestris, previously suspecting what was going on, might in this way find out and act.'[129] Artyante's desire for the one gift she should not desire recalls Callirhoe's desire for the necklace of Harmonia, which has fatal consequences for Alcmaeon;[130] here the fatal consequences affect Artaynte and her whole family. We find various other fatal gifts in mythology such as the poisoned robe which Deianeira gives to Heracles believing it to be impregnated with a love potion.[131] The links between women, weaving and clothing are worth noting; women are regarded as a disruptive element of society, needing to be controlled but even when they are at their most domesticated as when weaving, the products of their labours can still cause unforeseen outcomes. In this story, however, Xerxes is the disruptive element, interfering in the marriage bond between his son and

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[126] *Histories* 9.109.
[127] *Histories* 9.109.
[128] See How & Wells 1928: 2, 334 but for a more recent view see Sancisi-Weerdenberg 1988: 373f. She believes that the gift consisted of a donated army settled in a sparsely populated area in order to develop it. The revenue gathered in this way would then accrue to the person to whom the army had been given, in this case, Artaynte, had she accepted it. Sancisi-Weerdenberg then ascribes to the word ἄρξειν the meaning of 'to rule', 'to govern' rather than 'to command'.
[129] *Histories* 9.109.
[130] Apollodorus 3.7.5.
[131] Apollodorus 2.7.7.

daughter-in-law. Amestris is fulfilling her wifely duties by weaving a garment for her husband, but because he has already disregarded his bond with Amestris by seducing his daughter-in-law, he has set in motion an inescapable chain of events. Artaynte chooses the one gift which will reveal the secret of her liaison with Xerxes and everything else flows from that choice.

In any society, adultery on the part of a woman of course brings the legitimacy of her children and therefore her husband's heirs into question; in ancient Greece, by claiming that the child of an adulterous affair was that of her husband, as she would have to do, not only the woman but her partner in the illicit relationship would be introducing into the hierarchy of inheritance a child that did not belong to the οἶκος. Given the importance of property in the legal system, this state of affairs could not be tolerated and a husband catching his wife and another man *in flagrante delicto* was entitled to kill the adulterer without suffering the penalties attendant upon other acts of homicide. This right extended to any of the women under a man's κυρία or guardianship, which might include his mother, sister or daughter as well.[132] Although death could be demanded as the penalty for the adulterer, it was not always carried out and various other penalties could be imposed. For the woman, divorce and loss of civic rights, in the form of exclusion from participation in religious ceremonies, were imposed without recourse; in fact, the husband who did not divorce a wife guilty of adultery could suffer ἀτιμία or loss of civic rights himself.[133] Patterson emphasises the importance of the woman's Athenian citizenship in protecting her from suffering bodily

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[132] See Cohen 1991: 100, although he does go on to argue later that 'the social practices involving adultery were rather more complex than the prohibitions of the criminal law might imply.' Cohen 1991:133. Patterson 1998: 118 takes issue with Cohen on several points but agrees that 'the sexual violation of a woman within the household' is 'the type of act for which homicide is a justified response.'

[133] See Cohen 1991: 110.

punishment for her offence, since Solon's law prevented any Athenian citizen, male or female, from being physically tortured or sold into slavery, as well as the public nature of 'the stripping away of a woman citizen's responsibilities and privileges, based on household and religion.'[134] She doubts, however, that such a woman could remarry, for obvious reasons.

The behaviour of Amestris, wife of Xerxes, the Persian king, recalls the actions of Hera, the jealous wife of Zeus, particularly in her persecution of other family members connected to the woman with whom her husband is unfaithful. The wonderful shawl which Amestris weaves for her husband and which he gives, albeit unwillingly, to Artaynte, the niece and daughter-in-law whom he has seduced, becomes the gift that should not be asked for and leads to Amestris'discovery, or rather confirmation, of her husband's liaison with Artaynte, Masistes' daughter. Whereas Hera often persecutes the children of Zeus by other women,[135] Amestris believes that Artyante's mother is responsible for Xerxes' involvement with his niece and concocts a cunning plan to exact her revenge. She chooses the occasion of the banquet in honour of Xerxes' birthday, at which the custom is that he should grant any boon requested of him, and he, ὑπο τοῦ νόμου ἐξεργόμενος – 'constrained by this custom,'[136] cannot refuse her. In this instance Persian custom seems to function as 'other' to Greek custom,[137] where women do not dine with their menfolk. Brosius suggests that on occasion women of the Persian court joined the men: 'Celebrations which required the presence of the court may well have included royal and noble

[134] Patterson 1998: 131.
[135] For example, Heracles (Apollodorus 2.4.12) and Dionysus (Apollodorus 3.5.1).
[136] *Histories* 9.111.
[137] Plato refers to Persian customs as being opposite to those of the Spartans at *Laws* 637d-e.

women, while other banquets may have been restricted to male members of the nobility.'[138]

Just as Ariston asks for the gift he should not request, Amestris asks Xerxes for the mother of Artaynte, illustrating the power of custom as being as binding as the oath in the earlier story. Xerxes is not surprised by her request, in fact, ὁ δὲ δεινόν τε καὶ ἀνάρσιν ἐποιέετο τοῦτο μὲν αδελφεοῦ γυναῖκα παραδοῦναι, τοῦτο μὲν ἀναιτίην ἐοῦσαν τοῦ πρήγματος τούτου· συνῆκε γὰρ τοῦ εἵνεκεν ἐδέετο - 'he considered it a terrible injury to hand over his brother's wife, since she was innocent in this matter. For he understood why she asked.'[139] Xerxes seems almost mesmerised by Amestris and, κάρτα δὴ ἀέκων, – 'very unwillingly,'[140] hands over his brother's wife, showing himself to be just as weak-willed as he was when Artaynte asked for the shawl woven by Amestris; aware that nothing good can come of the granting the request, he nonethless does so, and seals someone else's fate as Amestris wreaks a bloody revenge on Artaynte's mother, who interestingly and unlike her daughter, remains unnamed in the text. Gray[141] points out that by taking her revenge on the mother of Artaynte, Amestris commits an offence against her from which Xerxes himself abstained, out of respect for his brother, and goes on to say, 'Amestris' mutilation of a woman who had protected her own marriage bed in the interests of Amestris' marriage bed is a grim irony.'[142] Masistes and his unnamed wife can be seen as 'other' in every way to Xerxes and Amestris, and are 'represented in speech and

[138] Brosius 1996: 95. She adduces further evidence, noting that, 'Independently from Greek sources evidence from the Fortification texts suggest that women participated in feasts and banquets. Five texts from the Persepolis archive indicate the involvement of royal women in feasts.' Brosius 1996: 96f.
[139] *Histories* 9.110.
[140] *Histories* 9.111.
[141] Gray 1995: 191.
[142] Gray 1995: 199.

narrative as a faithful couple devoid of lust and faithful to each other - unlike the royal team (esp 9.111).'[143]

Dewald describes Amestris' behaviour as 'nasty but clever politics. . . . Had Amestris merely tortured or humiliated the girl, she would have left intact and hostile to her the second most powerful family in Persia. By immediately destroying Masistes' wife, she throws the whole family into confusion and forces them to react while disorganised and unprepared for conflict.'[144] Amestris' mutilation of Masistes' wife is truly horrible and has the effect of alienating any sympathy the reader has perhaps felt for her as the wronged wife of Xerxes. Amestris is included in this chapter because the story that Herodotus tells relates to her position as a wife; it is her husband's infidelity that leads her to use the power available to her as the king's wife to exact her revenge. Like Atossa, who features in the chapter on women in power because she is asked to use her power in a matter relating to politics, Amestris wields power within the Persian court because of her relationship with the Great King rather than in her own right. Brosius explains Amestris' actions against Artaynte's mother by saying that 'if there were a conflict of interests between the royal family and members of the nobility, this affected the entire noble family. Amestris took action when she saw her position threatened by Masistes' wife and daughter.'[145] Amestris joins the gallery of Persian women in the *Histories* who act independently, e.g., Intaphrenes' wife, Sataspes' mother and Atossa, whose characterisation no doubt added to the generally held view that Persian women were powerful and exercised great influence over the King. Indeed, it is probable that Greek ideas about Persian women came partly from poorly

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[143] Gray 1995: 207.
[144] Dewald 1981: 117n21.
[145] Brosius 1996: 189.

understood observation of Persian customs and partly from an oral tradition which emphasised the 'otherness' of the Persian Empire and found in its strong womenfolk an easy means of underlining its degeneracy and decline.

There are scattered throughout the *Histories*, particularly in the ethnographical sections, references to customs of other peoples regarding marriage, customs which Herodotus notes simply because they can be seen as 'other' in relation to Greek practices. For example, he notes that the Persians have many lawful wives and even more concubines,[146] and, in connection with Phaidyme, that their wives go to their husbands in strict rotation.[147] In another instance, Herodotus cites the Agathyrsi who, in striking contrast to the Greeks, hold all their women in common, ἵνα κασίγνητοί τε ἀλλήλων ἔωσι καὶ οἰκήιοι ἐόντες πάντες μήτε φθόνῳ μήτ' ἔχθεϊ χρέωνται ἐς ἀλλήλους – 'in order that they may all be kinsmen of each other and, being related, indulge in neither envy nor enmity against each other.'[148] According to Herodotus the Nasamones have many wives, but as with the Massegetae,[149] any man may lie with any woman; all he has to do is place a staff in front of the house to ensure privacy. Herodotus further goes on to describe the marriage custom of this tribe whereby the bride is enjoyed by every male guest at the wedding and receives a gift from each of them in return.[150] Certainly all of these examples are in one way or another completely opposed to the Greek form of marriage where a woman belonged to one man alone, and he had only one legally wedded wife at a time, from whom his legitimate children would be born, their legitimacy guaranteed by the closely monitored fidelity of the

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[146] *Histories* 1.135.
[147] *Histories* 3.69.
[148] *Histories* 4.104.
[149] *Histories* 1.216. Among the Massegetae, the man hangs his quiver outside the woman's wagon to ensure privacy.
[150] *Histories* 4.172. How & Wells 1928: 1, 358 describe this custom as a 'curious form of group marriage.'

wife. The Greek male may have enjoyed other sexual relationships outside marriage, but it was marriage, through the wife, which produced the heirs to his property. Concubines, ἑταίραι and even boys were available to him if he so wished but the lawfully wedded wife was a necessity he could not do without. What is interesting about the women who appear in this chapter is that the individuals who act on their own behalf are not Greek, for example, Candaules' wife, Artaytne and Amestris, while individual Greek wives, such as Ladice and Ariston's third wife, obey the conventions of Greek marriage. Only when they act in groups do Greek wives, such as the Minyans' wives or the Athenian women who kill the sole survivor or the wife and children of Lycides, overstep the boundaries thought proper for women in ancient Greek society.

MOTHERS

In Ancient Greek thought anatomy is definitely destiny[1] and destiny for the female of the species is marriage and subsequent motherhood; a woman is given by her father to her husband in marriage for the procreation of children for his οἶκος. She may divorce her husband or be divorced by him and return to her natal οἶκος, but even if she does so and her children go with her as the primary caregiver, they remain under the κύρια of their father. The sons will carry on their father's οἶκος when they reach adulthood, and the daughters will be given to other men in their turn in the matrimonial economy. The woman's purpose in life is to produce offspring, hence the intense preoccupation of Greek society with the control of her reproductive capacity. To this end, her childhood is spent in the women's quarters, learning the skills needed to manage her own household, and once she reaches puberty, she is married off as soon as possible so as to exploit her reproductive capabilities and to supply her husband's οἶκος with the children, preferably sons, necessary for its survival. As a result of this early removal of the young girl from her family of origin to another household where she is an intruder, her loyalty is frequently suspect and one can infer that her emotional ties to her children might often be stronger than those to her husband, since her daily life is spent with her children, both male and female, and for them she is a caregiver, not an interloper.[2] As the link between the οἶκος of her father and that of her husband, she is what Blundell terms a 'liminal' figure,[3] someone who crosses boundaries, in this case from her natal family to her marital one

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[1] Freud, S. 1924 *Collected Writings*. Vol 5: 210.

[2] In considering the appearance of accounts of incestuous dreams in the fifth century, Bremmer 1987a:54 proposes that this is a result of changes in social organisation: 'The women of the upper classes had to stay at home, and they were not even allowed to dine with their husbands when other men were present. Raising the children now became one of their main activities.'

[3] Blundell 1995: 19.

where her reproductive role is the means whereby her husband's οἶκος is able to perpetuate itself. The importance of the position of the mother in a patrilineal system such as Ancient Greece is noted by Schneider: 'The statuses of mother and wife . . . are indispensable to patrilineal systems. The bond between mother and child has a certain base in the nursing and care situation which is not paralleled by the genitor-child relationship. It is the psychobiological quality of the mother-child relationship which makes the status of mother indispensable to patrilineal descent groups.'[4] This dependence of the patrilineal system on women for the production of legitimate heirs is the quintessential difference between it and a matrilineal system such as that exemplified by the Amazons: in a patrilineal system men must control women to be sure of their paternity but the converse is not true. The Amazons can engage in promiscuous sexual intercourse since paternity is of no import in their social organisation, while maternity is seldom in doubt.

Although most of the mothers who appear in the *Histories* have successfully given birth, motherhood, however, was a dangerous undertaking in the ancient world, both for mother and child; in the *Histories* we have the example of Cyrus' humble foster mother, who gives birth to a stillborn child, to exemplify the risks involved.[5] Mothers faced the very real prospect of dying in childbirth themselves and since the rate of infant mortality was very high, the chances that a child once safely born would reach adulthood were not good. It would be simplistic to say that the high rate of infant mortality meant that bonds between mother and child were not as strong as in the modern world, given the ever-present chance that the child would die young; indeed Golden argues that such children as did survive would perhaps have been more

[4] Schneider 1962: 14.
[5] *Histories* 1.112.

highly valued simply because of that fact.[6] Nonetheless, the constant awareness of the possibility that the child might fall victim to disease must have cast something of a pall on the joy of motherhood, along with the mother's knowledge that even if she was safely delivered of a child, her husband still had to accept the child for rearing. The vexed question of exposure of infants intrudes here, in that the evidence we have is sketchy and can be interpreted in different ways.[7] We do know, however, that the father had the right to decide whether or not to rear a child; what we do not know with any certainty is how often this right not to rear a child was exercised. When and if it was, one can assume that deformed or sickly babies would be most likely to be exposed and, given the preference for sons to inherit property, it is also probable that baby girls were exposed more often than boys.[8] It is likely that a mother would have felt more joy at the birth of a son rather than a daughter, since sons were regarded as more valuable than daughters, who, in the normal course of events, would not remain in the οἶκος for very long, and who would have to be provided with a dowry when they left. Sons on the other hand remained in the οἶκος until the death of the father when, in the typical vertical inheritance pattern of Greek law, a son inherited the property and became κύριος of the household in his own right. In this case the widowed mother could remain in the household under his guardianship and it was the son's duty to care for her in her old age.

The youth of the first-time mother was a further negative factor, both in terms of fertility and danger in childbirth, since the risks of both infertility and difficult

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[6] Golden 1990: 87.

[7] For opposing opinions see Engels 1980 and Golden 1981.

[8] For an in depth discussion of this topic see Golden 1981. See also Blundell 1995: 130f, who notes that 'Although there seems to have been no legal or moral bar on the exposure of infants of either sex, the sources record no single real-life instance.' On the other hand, however, examples in myth abound.

labour and childbirth are higher in young girls than in more mature women.[9] The Hippocratic corpus of medical writings reflects the ancient view of women as passive vessels; for example, the process of childbirth is attributed to the exhaustion by the foetus of the food supply in the uterus and the subsequent breaking of the membranes through foetal restlessness.[10] Childcare is not attested in the medical writings, despite the fact that infant mortality was very high even among those infants who were accepted for raising in the family.[11] It is hardly surprising then to find that myth mirrors the intense societal preoccupation with reproduction and fertility. All primitive societies show concern for fertility, both of nature and of women, since upon it depends the survival of all species. As we have seen earlier, myth deals with the basic concerns of a society, exploring and examining matters of import, and fertility, whether of mankind or of crops and animals, is the prime prerequisite for the continuation of the species. Although concern for fertility is found in all early societies, the Greeks nonetheless found these concerns still relevant to their circumstances; for them life expectancy and infant survival rates were low compared with modern industrialised societies. Modern society still depends on agricultural fertility, although concern for the overall world population explosion has masked concern for human fertility. That it is still a basic human concern is illustrated by the modern development of such techniques as *in vitro* fertilisation for infertile couples.

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[9] Demand 1994:102 says 'Even under the best of modern conditions, women who give birth before the age of seventeen have a higher mortality rate than older women. The closer a woman is to menarche, the greater the risk to both mother and child, as well as to the mother's future childbearing capabilities, for the reproductive system has not completely matured when ovulation begins.' See also Garland 1990: 26, where he says that 'there is little doubt that the early age at which many girls first gave birth greatly increased the risk of infant mortality, since those who became pregnant within two years of menarche put both themselves and their child at high risk.'

[10] See Demand 1994: 19-21 for Hippocratic views on childbirth, administration of drugs and number of pregnancies.

[11] Garland 1990: 110 believes that 'It remains extremely doubtful, however, whether physicians were regularly requested to attend infants in the first months or even in the first years of life.'

In myth, Demeter is the archetypal mother, mourning the loss of her daughter through her abduction by Hades, and bringing famine and loss to the earth as a result.[12] Indeed the Demeter-Persephone pair exemplify a mother-daughter bond not found elsewhere in Greek myth; stories of daughters' relationships with their fathers are far more common. We also find in Homer examples of caring mothers such as Thetis, Hecuba, Penelope, and Andromache, but they are all mothers of sons, though Hecuba at least has daughters as well. Thetis is always concerned for the welfare of Achilles, especially since she knows that he is fated to die young, even if gloriously.[13] Hecuba, the mother of nineteen of Priam's children, tries to restore Hector's strength with wine when he returns to the city from the battlefield,[14] beseeches him to retire within the city walls rather than fight Achilles outside[15] and finally laments mightily when he is killed.[16] Penelope is concerned with the future of Telemachus since the suitors are consuming his inheritance as they vie for her hand in marriage, and Andromache's fear of Hector's death is in no small part a fear for the fate of a fatherless child, who will either be enslaved or, more likely, killed.[17] Furthermore, there are numerous examples in myth of mortal women, raped or seduced by Zeus and other gods in various guises, who are left literally holding the baby, abandoned to face the consequences of the loss of their virginity before marriage, generally in the form

[12] Reeder 1995a: 288 describes Demeter as 'a goddess who is the source of all vegetation on earth and, until her daughter's misfortune, . . . apparently a generous donor. . . The beneficent picture is totally changed, however, when Demeter is angered. Now she becomes awesomely vengeful, and completely pitiless as she keeps all vegetation from growing until her will prevails.'
[13] *Iliad* 1.412-418.
[14] *Iliad* 6.254-262.
[15] *Iliad* 22.81-89.
[16] *Iliad* 22.431-436 and 24.747-759.
[17] *Iliad* 6.406-413.

of angry fathers and grandfathers.[18] Since, as has been noted previously, the Greeks were not aware of the existence of the hymen, a young girl who became pregnant by a god could perhaps escape the consequences if she was able to hide her condition, expose the child at birth and thereby prevent knowledge of her fall from grace becoming public. Frequently the mortal women are either killed while the child they are carrying is still unborn or an infant, as in the cases of Semele[19] and Coronis,[20] or, having undergone major vicissitudes, they are later rescued when their hero sons, who have been exposed but survived, reach maturity, as in the cases of Auge[21] and Antiope.[22] Since her liaison with the god is generally limited to a single occasion, the mother is more often later linked with her heroic son[23] than with the god who fathered him.

The ubiquitousness of the κουροτρόφος, or nurturing figure, in myth indicates the frequent displacement of motherhood, sometimes as the result of death of the mother, as in the case of Semele, but on occasion as a result of the refusal of motherhood as in the case of Athena with Erichthonius,[24] or through the raising of an exposed child by a shepherd's wife or even an animal. Lyons describes this phenomenon as 'the common tendency in Greek myth to sidestep the issue of maternity. . . . Its more radical manifestation is the fantasy of redesigning human

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[18] According to Reeder 1995b: 23 'So serious was the loss of virginity that when Solon, the sixth century lawgiver, abolished the conditions under which a citizen could be enslaved, he left intact the provision that a father could sell into slavery a daughter who had become sullied in this way.' Larson 1995: 100 offers the suggestion that the frequency of daughter-killing in myth is explained by the fact that 'the control of the *kyrios* over all his female charges, including his daughters, creates a system in which he is the only man who has sexual access to them. The killing of a violated daughter could be the mythic expression of a father's unconscious feelings of sexual ownership of a daughter, and anger at the usurpation of his privilege.'

[19] Pindar *Ol.* 2.25-27.

[20] Pindar *Pyth.* 3.8-46.

[21] Apollodorus 2.7.4.

[22] Apollodorus 3.5.5.

[23] As Larson 1995: 60 puts it, 'Once a woman becomes the mother of a hero, however, the significant "event" in her life is the birth of her son.'

[24] Apollodorus 3.14.6.

reproduction to eliminate the mother altogether.'[25] The myths of Athena[26] and Dionysus,[27] springing from the forehead and thigh of Zeus respectively, and therefore being technically born of a male, exemplify this fantasy. Only Zeus, by giving birth to Athena himself, provides what Arthur calls 'the model of a non-conflictual bond between male and female'[28] and this model is only maintained by Athena's eternal virginity, which allows her loyalty to be forever bound to her father. Athena herself articulates the strength of the bond between herself and Zeus in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* when she casts her vote in the trial of Orestes:

> ἐμὸν τόδ' ἔργον, λοισθίαν κρῖναι δίκην·
> ψῆφον δ' Ὀρέστῃ τήνδ' ἐγὼ προσθήσομαι.
> μήτηρ γὰρ οὔτις ἔστιν ἥ μ' ἐγείνατο,
> τὸ δ' ἄρσεν αἰνῶ πάντα, πλὴν γάμου τυχεῖν,
> ἄπαντι θυμῷ, κάρτα δ' εἰμὶ τοῦ πατρός.
>
> It is my task to make the final judgement.
> I will place this vote in favour of Orestes.
> For there is no mother who gave me birth,
> And I approve the male in all things, except marriage,
> With all my heart, and am completely my father's.[29]

The myth of Athena's birth,[30] which is described by Arthur as 'an ideal paradigm of a social system in which the children are born from the mother but belong to the father,'[31] seems to reinforce the relative importance accorded to the father and his children, as opposed to the mother. Zeus' swallowing of the pregnant Metis, so that

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[25] Lyons 1997: 111.
[26] Apollodorus 1.3.6.
[27] Apollodorus 3.4.3.
[28] Arthur 1983: 99.
[29] *Eumenides* 734-38.
[30] *Theogony* 886-90.
[31] Arthur 1982: 77.

he alone is parent to Athena, exemplifies the scant regard paid to motherhood in myth; once the child of the god or hero is born, the mother frequently disappears from the scene. The offspring of the divine or heroic father is also far more likely to be a son than a daughter, Athena notwithstanding. Dionysus, on the other hand, retains his ties to his mother, whose belief that Zeus fathered her child has been questioned by her mortal family, and by retrieving her from the Underworld, he brings about her apotheosis. In Euripides' *Bacchae* Dionysus spells out his mission to Thebes in part in the following way:

> Σεμέλης τε μητρὸς ἀπολογήσασθαί μ' ὕπερ
> φανέντα θνητοῖς δαίμον' ὃν τίκτει Διί.
>
> And I must speak in defence of my mother Semele
> By appearing to men as the god whom she bore to Zeus.[32]

Indeed, of the six Olympian goddesses, Athena, Artemis and Hestia remain virgins, Hera and Aphrodite are hardly model mothers, and only Demeter could be said to provide a role model for maternity. Motherhood has been described as 'the definitive statement of the male's dependence on the female'[33] and this may account for the decided ambivalence towards it in Greek myth, which is at odds with the significance accorded to maternity in the lives of Greek women, for whom it is the ultimate *raison d'être* and whose reproductive capacity is not only strictly regulated but also exploited to provide heirs. There is, of course, the obvious facet of motherhood that it cannot be denied; a mother knows she has had a child, even if the child is exposed at birth, whereas a father may be ignorant, or worse still, unsure of his paternity.

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[32] *Bacchae* 41-42.
[33] Saxonhouse 1992: 88.

It has been noted already that apart from Demeter and Persephone, mother-daughter relationships in myth are far less common than father-daughter relationships.[34] Indeed, if a society's best known myth featuring a mother and daughter deals with the separation of the pair upon the marriage of the daughter, it is clear what that society expects of its mothers and daughters. Furthermore, if a goddess in her grief cannot bring about the permanent return of her daughter, then neither can any human mother. Larson[35] suggests that the paucity of mother-daughter relationships in myth may be explained by the fact that men as myth makers were not interested in the relationship, and posits the additional argument that strong mother-daughter bonds are not compatible with a patriarchal society in which a daughter is required to leave her natal home at a relatively early age and transfer her loyalties to another οἶκος. Given that myth can be seen as a societal tool for affirming and reinforcing common attitudes and beliefs, myths illustrating a strong mother-daughter bond would undermine the process of detaching the young girl from her mother at the time of her marriage. The myth of Demeter and Persephone demonstrates that, even where there is a strong mother-daughter bond, in the normal course of events the marriage of the daughter and their consequent separation cannot be avoided. Mothers and sons do not have to face the same process of physical separation, for although the male child leaves the world of women to be educated, he does not move to another οἶκος upon his marriage, which takes place much later in life than his sister's anyway. So for mothers and sons, the relationship can continue for life.[36] While the adult son

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[34] There is one reference to the mother-daughter bond in a simile at *Iliad* 16.7-10 where Patroclus, weeping at the wounding of Diomedes, Odysseus and Agamemnon, is compared by Achilles to a little girl, crying for her mother to pick her up, but the comparison is not with a specific mother and daughter.

[35] Larson 1995: 100.

[36] For a discussion of the mother-son relationship see Cox 1998: 99-103. Most of the evidence adduced is from the orators, but there is no reason to think that the situation was very different in Herodotus' day.

will be absent on men's business just as much as his father, the bond which has been formed between mother and son in the early years gives the relationship a basis absent in the marital union. The mother-son bond is highlighted by Herodotus when in his excursus on the Lycians[37] he claims that a Lycian son traces his ancestry through his mother rather than through his father in the Greek fashion. This is a striking example of alterity, where a society's practices are said to be diametrically opposed to those of the Greeks, but modern research into Lycian funerary inscriptions does not seem to support Herodotus' claim.[38] In the following examples of mothers found in the *Histories* the majority are mothers of sons, as might be expected.

The first example in the *Histories*[39] is that of an exceptionally fortunate mother who has two sons who honour their mother by harnessing themselves to a cart to take her to the festival of Hera, some considerable distance away. After participating in the rites at the temple and the subsequent feast, the two young men lie down to rest in the temple itself, a rest from which they never rise.[40] Cleobis and Biton demonstrate the strength of the mother-son bond and honour their obligations to their mother in the same way as sons in myth go to the aid of a persecuted mother once they have reached maturity; as examples we might cite Tyro's twin sons, Neleus and Pelias,[41] who kill their mother's persecutor Sidero,[42] or the twin sons of Antiope who punish Dirce for tormenting their mother by tying her to a bull,[43] or even

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[37] *Histories* 1.173.

[38] See Cartledge 1993: 76f. For arguments against the existence of ancient matriarchy see Pembroke 1965: 217-47 and Lerner 1986: 30f. Dewald 1998 makes no comment on the Lycians; How & Wells 1928: 134 say that Herodotus' information is correct, citing *Iliad* 6.196-206, where 'Sarpedon, the sister's son, is chief, and the male heir, Glaucus, is subordinate.' But Sarpedon was the son of Zeus.

[39] *Histories* 1.31.

[40] Statues commemorating Cleobis and Biton have survived and can be seen in the Delphi Museum, Inv. 467 and 980; 1524. The sculptor has faithfully depicted their great physical strength, despite the constraints of early archaic sculptural development.

[41] Apollodorus 1.9.8.

[42] Two lost plays of Sophocles, *Tyro A* and *B* dealt with this story.

[43] Apollodorus 3.5.5.

Dionysus' rescue of Semele from the Underworld.[44] By their action Cleobis and Biton show their respect and affection for their mother and bring great glory to her in the eyes of other parents, who congratulate the mother on the good fortune of having such sons and the young men on their strength. Although they are depicted as neither rich nor powerful nor extraordinary in any way, notable only for being prizewinning athletes and of great physical strength, Cleobis and Biton have nonetheless achieved what Vernant characterises in epic as a 'beautiful death.'[45] By dying in the flower of their youth, through a sleep from which they never wake, at the height of their powers and almost literally 'in harness,' they avoid all the unpleasant attributes of old age such as illness and debility, and instead remain frozen in their moment of glory like heroes in the Homeric poems. What is interesting is that their mother prays to the goddess to grant to her sons τὸ ἀνθρώπῳ τυχεῖν ἄριστόν ἐστι – 'whatever it is best for a human being to have'[46] - in return for the honour they have done her, and her prayer is answered with a peaceful death in the sanctuary of the temple. Herodotus' audience would not only have recognised the filial piety Cleobis and Biton showed towards their mother but also appreciated the correspondences of their deaths with the 'beautiful death' of the heroes in epic.

A very humble mother appears in the story of Cyrus;[47] not his biological mother Mandane, about whom we learn very little as she is manipulated to and fro by her father Astyages, but the wife of the herdsman who acts as foster mother to the baby who was supposed to be exposed. When her husband brings home the baby

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[44] Apollodorus 3.5.3.

[45] Vernant 1992: 86 characterises the 'beautiful death' thus: 'The way to escape old age is by dying in the flower of one's youth, at the acme of one's virile strength. Through death the hero is now fixed forever in the brilliance of an unchanging youth.' This is what Cleobis and Biton, through the prayers of their mother, have been given. For a discussion of the καλός θάνατος of the Greeks, in which this Herodotean episode is quoted, see Humphreys 1981: 261-63.

[46] *Histories* 1.31.

[47] *Histories* 1.111f.

Cyrus, she has just given birth to a stillborn child herself in an instance of interrupted maternity such as that suffered by various other mothers whose children were exposed shortly after birth. She provides an example of the dangers to both mother and child in childbirth in the ancient world; in this case it is the child who does not survive. When her husband explains that he has been ordered to expose the child, she is the one who puts forward the idea of exchanging the children and rearing the live child as her own. Gray sees the herdsman's wife as 'other' on several different levels in addition to that of nurturer,

> 'as barbarian, as nonroyal, and only to a lesser extent as a woman. Herodotus indicates her barbarian otherness both in the translation of her name as 'bitch' and in the animal reference itself. Her otherness from royalty is reflected in the slave status she shares with her husband and in the remote wilderness in which she lives. Her otherness from the men in the story is seen in her desire to nurture the child rather than kill it, something that she has to persuade even her husband to accept, but her desire to nurture makes her 'other' to the wife of Harpagus as well, who had no reaction to the child's fate. She is 'other' to the deregistered princess in another respect: she does not produce a large and bouncing child as Mandane did, but a dead one (1.112), for she lacks the fecundity of the princess' enormous royal grapevine and rivers of urine.'[48]

[48] Gray 1995: 204–5.

Mythology is full of exposed children being rescued and reared, generally by shepherds and their wives, but this must be one of the fullest treatments of this sort of episode with the herdsman's wife using all her powers of persuasion on her husband. The whole episode brings to mind other mythological parallels, the most famous being Oedipus,[49] but there were also Paris,[50] Telephus[51] and Perseus,[52] all of whom were exposed.[53] The child who was exposed and expected to die but survived against the odds is a mythological τόπος in many cultures, as is illustrated by the examples of Moses and Romulus and Remus. While the figure of the herdman's wife may be a rationalisation of myths where the child is suckled by an animal,[54] in Herodotus' version of Cyrus' childhood the nurturing Demeter archetype of the mother is present in the herdsman's wife as well, since she has just given birth herself and presumably would have cared for her own child in the same way. Given the frequent rearing of exposed infants by foster mothers, the role of nurturer or κουροτρόφος is widespread in mythology; generally the infant is male and the κουροτρόφος is either an animal, a woman or a goddess, particularly in the case of infants, although males may assume a pedagogical role as the child grows older. Certainly, Cyrus himself appreciated the care the herdsman's wife gave him, since Herodotus reports that he praised her constantly when he returned to his biological parents.

The story of Sesostris' wife[55] is told to Herodotus by the Egyptian priests whom he questioned, and is a tale featuring a completely different sort of mother. Sesostris returns home after a military campaign and is invited to a banquet with his

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[49] *Oedipus Tyrannus* 1158-94.
[50] Apollodorus 3.12.5.
[51] Apollodorus 2.7.4.
[52] Apollodorus 2.4.1.
[53] Bremmer 1987a: 44 notes that 'it is . . . natural to see in the exposure a narrative ploy: the important position of the hero in later life within the community is thrown into greater relief by his earlier removal from that community.'
[54] Such as the myth of Zeus suckled on Crete by the goat Amaltheia.
[55] *Histories* 2.107.

family by his brother who has been acting as regent in his absence. Once the whole family is gathered within the building, the brother sets fire to it, obviously hoping to destroy them all and retain power for himself. Interestingly, Sesostris turns to his wife for advice and she suggests that two of their sons should lie down over the fire and form a bridge for the rest of the family to escape to safety. Wives are not generally consulted by their husbands in Greek texts and this wife's advice to her husband confirms her singularity; most mothers would not have the strength of character to condemn two of her sons to death, nor to make the choice of which two sons it should be.[56] The mythological parallels for this story are, of course, Medea, who deliberately kills the children she has had by Jason as her revenge on him,[57] and Althaea, who knowingly brings about the death of her son, Meleager, when she discovers that he has killed her brothers.[58] Although Herodotus refers to this woman as a wife, and in spite of the fact that her husband asks for her advice and acts on it, her most significant action is as a mother, hence her inclusion in this chapter. Like Medea, she deliberately brings about the death of two of her sons, though in her defence it might be said that revenge is not her motive and the intended salvation of the other children is a mitigating factor. In myth there is also the story of Agave,[59] who unwittingly rends her son limb from limb under the influence of a Bacchic frenzy but her lack of deliberate intention separates her from Medea and Althaea. Nonetheless, mothers who knowingly or unknowingly cause the deaths of their sons are sufficiently unusual to remind the audience or reader of other examples of the phenomenon.

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[56] Lloyd 1988: identifies several folk-motifs in this tale: the treacherous brother (Thompson, *Motif-Index*, K2211), the fire-motif (Thompson, op. cit., H1199.10), the son-saves-father motif (Thompson, op. cit., R154.2&3; H1162.2) and the *fête fatale*.
[57] Apollodorus 1.9.28.
[58] Apollodorus 1.8.1.
[59] Euripides' *Bacchae* 1044-1167.

The Egyptian tale of the thieves[60] is characterised by How & Wells as 'one of the most familiar pieces of universal folklore,' and indeed there is the Greek myth of Trophonius and Agamedes,[61] which mirrors the Herodotean story exactly, in that the two brothers rob a treasury by means of a moveable stone, and when one is caught in the trap set by the king, the other beheads him to prevent his identity being revealed. Herodotus, somewhat surprisingly, given his propensity for positing Egyptian prototypes for Greek gods, does not suggest that the Egyptian tale might be the source for the Greek one. There is, however, a further element that would have had important resonances for a Greek audience and that is the distress of the mother at the thought of her son's corpse remaining exposed to the elements and lacking proper burial. One of the familial rites of passage in which women played a significant role was that of the funeral. Right from Homeric times the proper burial of the corpse was an important rite and the close relatives of the deceased had a religious duty to see that the ritual was carried out. Since death was a form of pollution, as was childbirth, women carried out the duties of 'washing, anointing, dressing, crowning and covering the body after adorning it with flowers.'[62] Sourvinou-Inwood[63] argues that women carried out the ritual preparation of the corpse because of their close association with ritual pollution and that men and women participated equally in the πρόθεσις, when the corpse was then laid out for two days on a bier in the inner courtyard of the house, and mourners came to pay their respects while the women wailed and sang funeral dirges,[64] beat their breasts and tore at their hair to demonstrate their grief. She goes on

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[60] *Histories* 2.121.

[61] Lloyd 1988: 53 comments on this tale thus: 'The strikingly similar Gk. tale of Trophonius and Agamedes (Charax, *FHG* III, p. 637, F.6; Paus., IX, 3,5) must owe a great deal to the Eg. prototype, conceivably via the *Telegony* of Eugammon (Niebuhr, *OLZ* 17(1914), 105ff.; Kern, *RE* I, 719 ff.).'

[62] Rehm 1994: 22.

[63] Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 114.

[64] According to Alexiou 1974: 6, 'lamentation involved movement as well as wailing and singing.'

to say, however, that men took the most important role in the ἐκφορά, or carrying out, when the corpse was removed for burial in a procession led by the men, followed by women singing the ritual lament. In other words women fade into the background progressively as the ceremonies become more and more public. Herodotus' audience, familiar with the role played by Greek women in funeral rites, would have understood the mother's distress at being unable to carry out the final obligations towards her son. Dewald includes the mother of the thieves among various women who come into conflict with a male relative whose role she describes as 'to remind her son, father, brother or husband of prudential considerations or of social norms that he is in danger of ignoring.'[65]

Vernant[66] contrasts the desires of the friends of the dead hero who want to give him a proper funeral and those of his enemies who, 'in doing outrage to his remains, in delivering him to dogs and birds to be devoured raw, in leaving him to rot without burial, . . . want to deprive the enemy not of life - that has already happened - but of death.'[67] Priam's mission to the Achaean camp to ask Achilles for the body of Hector[68] is perhaps the best known instance illustrating ancient Greek attitudes towards the proper treatment of dead. Sophocles' tragedy *Antigone* takes the topic of proper burial of the dead as its theme; Creon, king of Thebes, forbids the burial of Polynices for being the aggressor in his battle with Eteocles; his sister Antigone refuses to obey Creon's edict and gives the body a token burial, is discovered and buried alive as punishment. The importance of the rite of burial for all, not just for heroes, seems to be associated with the belief that the unburied could not enter Hades

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[65] Dewald 1981: 105.
[66] Vernant 1992: 85.
[67] Cf. Achilles' treatment of Hector's corpse at *Iliad* 24.12-21. The corpse being devoured by dogs and birds is a frequent Homeric *topos*. For more detail concerning the τόπος of corpses being devoured by birds and dogs, see Vermeule 1979: 103-107 and Vernant 1992: 188.
[68] *Iliad* 24.468-691.

and were condemned to wander the earth forever,[69] but whatever the particular belief, it is undeniable that proper burial of the corpse was considered imperative. Although the Herodotean story under discussion is set in Egypt, Herodotus' Greek audience would have found the mother's distress wholly understandable, and not just because Herodotus had already provided them with detailed information about Egyptian funerary practices; this is an instance where Egyptian and Greek beliefs would have coincided exactly.

The case of Mycerinus' daughter,[70] who, according to one version of the tale told to Herodotus, is raped by her father and consequently commits suicide by hanging herself, which in itself is a common mythological element, provides us with an another example of a mother's distress at the death of a child. This time the mother's natural distress is exacerbated not by a lack of burial, since the father constructs a most elaborate resting place for his daughter, but rather by anger against the maidservants who betrayed her daughter and, being unable to take out her anger on the perpetrator of the crime against her daughter, the mother displaces her anger on to the maidservants. It is a moot point whether they, or she, could have done anything to prevent the father's abuse of his child, but in her anger the mother cuts off the hands of the serving maids. Lloyd[71] suggests that, 'The handless statues are themselves the likely origin of the grisly episode of the serving maids', but a Greek audience, steeped in Homeric epic, would recognise the parallels with the punishment of the serving maids at the end of the *Odyssey*,[72] though in their case the punishment was perhaps more deserved. The mother's rage at her daughter's death mirrors

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[69] See Garland 1985: 101-03 for a discussion on those left unburied.
[70] *Histories* 2.131.
[71] Lloyd 1988: 81.
[72] *Odyssey* 22.465-473. Here the maids are hanged, while in Herodotus' story, their hands are chopped off.

Demeter's rage at Hades' abduction of Persephone; both mothers vent their anger and distress at the loss of a daughter on those not directly responsible for the outrage, since it is not possible for either of them to exact retribution from the more powerful perpetrator. This is one of the few episodes in the *Histories* where the mother-daughter bond is brought to the fore; more often, however, the protective mother figure in the *Histories* as in myth is found in connection with sons.

On occasion the protective bond between mother and son works the other way, in that the son either avenges a slight to his mother, or rescues her from her persecutors when he reaches adulthood. One of the stories Herodotus tells of Cambyses, which he professes not to believe, falls into this category. Cambyses' mother, Cassandane, the daughter of the Achaemenid Pharnaspes, felt that she was being replaced in Cyrus' affections by the Egyptian Nitetis, and complained to a visiting Persian woman.[73] The story goes that Cambyses, on hearing his mother's complaint, promises to turn Egypt upside down when he grows up to avenge the slight done to her. Mythology abounds with avenging sons, generally the exposed sons of unmarried mothers who have survived through the ministrations of a κουροτρόφος, and who, on reaching adulthood, make their mothers' persecutors pay the price for their actions. Perseus, for example, uses the fatal head of the Gorgon to petrify all his adversaries, including Polydectes who had enslaved Danae, and accidentally kills his grandfather who had put his daughter and her baby son to sea in a chest, thereby fulfilling the very prophecy that Danae's imprisonment was designed to avoid.[74]

Melissa, wife of Periander and mother of his two sons, features as the cause of strife between father and sons.[75] Her name is interesting since Melissa is the Greek

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[73] *Histories* 3.3.
[74] Apollodorus 2.4.2-4.
[75] *Histories* 3.50. See Sourvinou-Inwood 1991: 244-84 for a discussion of this story as an example of the 'father-son hostility' schema of myth.

word for a bee and in Semonides' poem on women this metaphorical type of woman is the only one that merits any form of praise from the poet.[76] In this story told by Herodotus Melissa is important because she has been murdered by Periander, a murder that prevents what Tourraix terms 'la transmission harmonieuse du pouvoir de Périandre'[77] to her son. When her sons visit her father, their maternal grandfather, after her death, he asks them if they know who killed their mother. The younger son Lycophron understands the significance of the question and thereafter refuses to have anything to do with his father, since he believes him to have killed his mother. Sourvinou-Inwood[78] notes the importance of 'the mother and the mother's οἶκος which function as a potential locus of conflict also in other father-son hostility stories and in real life as well.' She discusses the structural elements this story has in common with the stories of Hippolytus, Phoenix and Tenes, among which she includes: '(i) the hostility begins - or is falsely or unjustly considered by the father to begin - with the son and (ii) it is centred on the father's wife.'[79] Sourvinou-Inwood is concerned with the consequences of the hostility and enumerates other similiarities, but for the purposes of this study the figure of the mother in Herodotus' story is the focus of interest and it is arguable that if indeed Periander did murder his wife, then he initiated the hostility rather than his son. Likewise in the story of Phoenix, the hostility begins with the favouring of a concubine over the lawfully wedded wife, Phoenix' mother, by Amyntor, his father. Phoenix is induced by his mother to seduce the concubine so that Amyntor will no longer be attractive to her, and he does so.[80] Father-son conflict precipitated by the actions of a father towards the mother and the

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[76] Semonides fr.7: 83-93.
[77] Tourraix 1976:73f.
[78] Sourvinou-Inwood 1991: 251.
[79] Sourvinou-Inwood 1991: 252.
[80] *Iliad* 9.447-457.

son's reaction thereto is the mythological element which would have had resonances for Herodotus' audience when considering the story of Melissa and Lycophron.

The story of Sataspes' mother, sister of Darius,[81] also displays some mythological elements, as she pleads for mercy with Xerxes who has decreed that her son should be impaled for the crime of raping the unmarried daughter of Zopyrus.[82] The image of a mother pleading for her son with a more powerful male recalls Thetis pleading with Zeus on behalf of Achilles.[83] Thetis asks Zeus to honour her son and favour the Trojans in the war until the Achaeans recompense him for the injury done to him. Zeus agrees to Thetis' request[84] just as Xerxes agrees to the suggestion that Sataspes should be spared, although in his case it is to undergo almost as harsh a punishment set by his mother. She sends him on a dangerous journey, to sail around the continent of Libya (Africa) until he comes back to his starting point. The dangerous journey is a frequent mythological element, often in the expectation that the hero will meet his death in the attempt.[85] Sataspes' mother obviously feels that whatever dangers her son will meet on his voyage will not be as irrevocable as Xerxes' punishment of impalement. In the event he turns back, probably impeded by trade winds, and goes on to suffer the original punishment. The reprieve won by Thetis from Zeus for Achilles does not save him from his eventual fate, just as Sisyphus' cunning ploy of instructing his wife to leave his body unburied so that he can return to the world of the living does not save him from his eventual fate either. This mythical narrative pattern is replicated in the story of Sataspes; he too gains a

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[81] *Histories* 4.43.

[82] How & Wells 1928: 319 note that this is 'probably the Zopyrus of iii.153 seqq., whose grandson deserted to Athens (iii.160) and may well have told H. this and other stories.'

[83] *Iliad* 1.498-510.

[84] For an investigation into the influence that Thetis, who is, after all, only a minor goddess, has over Zeus, see Slatkin 1991.

[85] Various mythological dangerous quests are noted elsewhere: see above page 61.

reprieve but has to meet his original fate in the end. Impaling is a particularly foreign punishment for the Greeks and its occurrence here affords Herodotus the opportunity to underline the alterity of the practices of the Persian court. Hall adduces several examples of impalement,[86] after noting that 'In the fifth century accusations of physical cruelty were a commonplace of Greek rhetoric against the barbarians, and amongst cruel punishments, impalement was regarded as the most extreme; it was a mark of the tyrant.'[87]

Labda, daughter of Amphion, wife of Eëtion, is the mother of Cypselos[88] and is characterised by Loraux as

> 'both central and marginal. Labda is more central than marginal, but she belongs to the marginal sex: she is central because a Bacchiad, and marginal because being a woman with a physical defect she could not marry (and thus become integrated into society as a mature member) at the high level at which she had been born.'[89]

Because of her physical defect she is married off to a commoner, Eëtion, and later an oracle predicts that the child of Eëtion will 'punish Corinth' so the Bacchiads, rulers of Corinth, decide to kill the child once it is born. Ten of their number go to the village where Eëtion and Labda are living, intent on the murder of the child. All ten of them turn out to be the type of 'compassionate executioner' that we have noted before[90] since not one of them can bring himself to dash the child to the ground while

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[86] E.g., *Histories* 3.159 and 9.79.
[87] Hall 1989: 158. She also quotes from the Behistun inscription in which Darius describes the impalement of a rebellious Sagartian chief.
[88] *Histories* 5.92.
[89] Sourvinou-Inwood 1991: 282 n122.
[90] Cf. the story of Phronime chapter 2: 65ff.

be is holding it, as they had previously planned. After the first would-be assassin has been disarmed by the smile of the child, each one passes the child on to the next. Labda then hears them planning a concerted attempt on the life of her child and hides him in a κυψέλη where the men cannot find him.[91] Hiding a child in a container has many resonances in mythology, including Aphrodite hiding Adonis in a chest,[92] Creousa hiding Ion, her son by Apollo, and Athena hiding Erichthonius in a similar fashion.[93] Concealment in a container to ensure the survival of the child is the opposite of exposure in the wild to bring about the death of the child. Containers or chests also figure as motifs connected with motherhood in punishments meted out to daughters who find themselves pregnant by various deities, generally by angry fathers and grandfathers, e.g., Danae is put to sea in a chest with Perseus by her father Acrisius and set adrift,[94] as is Rhoio by her father Staphylos when she becomes pregnant with Anios by Apollo. Needless to say, both are rescued but it does seem to be a preferred form of punishment for a daughter, resembling exposure insofar as the victim is removed from the killer and left, presumably to die, at the mercy of the elements and wild creatures, thereby removing blood guilt from the perpetrator, who as the father or grandfather should be the protector of a daughter rather than the killer.[95] The recurrence of the motif of the container with mother and child, either as a form of concealment for the child or of confinement for the mother, or as a method of disposing of both together, is so all pervasive in myth that the thought of Labda's

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[91] Tourraix 1976: 373 depicts the κυψέλη as 'réalisation symbolique du retour à la vie intra-utérine qui lui assure une parfaite protection mythique.'
[92] Apollodorus 3.14.4.
[93] Apollodorus 3.14.6.
[94] Apollodorus 2.4.1.
[95] For a discussion of women and containers see Lissarrague 1995: 91-100.

child concealed in a container can only be assumed to have been a familiar motif for Herodotus' audience.[96]

Argeia, wife of Aristodemus, king of Sparta, gives birth to twins just before the death of her husband.[97] The kingship should pass to the eldest son, but since they are identical twins, no one knows which of the two should inherit his father's throne. Argeia, hoping, as Herodotus informs his readers, that both of them should become kings, professes not to know which of her sons is the elder, though this is not true. An oracle declares that both children should become king, but that the elder should receive more honour. Observers note that she feeds and bathes the children in the same order all the time and correctly surmise that the elder is the one whom she consistently tends first. In many societies twins are regarded as evidence of the mother's infidelity, since it is felt that one man cannot father two children at once; sometimes the explanation is offered that one has a divine father, the other a mortal one.[98] This story highlights the unusual institution of dual kingship in Sparta and recalls the early mythical history of Sparta in which Gorgophone, daughter of Perseus, bore two sons to each of her two husbands.[99] Leda, the wife of Tyndareus, one of Gorgophone's sons, produced the pairs of Castor and Polydeuces and Helen and Clytemnestra.[100] An interesting feature of the story is the identification of Argeia as a descendant of Polynices, complete with full genealogy, which, given the fatal enmity between Polynices and Eteocles,[101] confers on the story of Argeia's twin sons special

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[96] Tourraix 1976: 373, commenting on the controversy concerning the exact identity of the κυψέλη, says 'seul compte le caractère commun à ces divers objets: ce sont des boîtes, des récipients, des contenants, en d'autres terms des symboles maternels.'

[97] *Histories* 6.52.

[98] For a discussion of 'Poseidon's law', rejected by the Hippocratics, which held that intercourse with a god led to the birth of two children, see Hanson 1992: 46.

[99] There has been much scholarly debate on the origin of the dual kingship in Sparta; Vandiver 1991: 195-197 reviews some of the arguments.

[100] Apollodorus 3.10.6-7.

[101] Apollodorus 3.6.5-8.

resonance, since she tries by her refusal to identify the older of the two boys to gain equal status for both of them and thereby obviate the possibility of fraternal strife between them. Herodotus notes that in the event Argeia's sons quarrelled all their lives, despite the fact that they were brothers, and that their descendants continued to do likewise, a reference to Cleomenes and Demaratus in the contemporary history Herodotus is telling. For quarrelling twin brothers in myth we only have to think of Danaus and Aegyptus[102] or Acrisius and Proteus,[103] and as further examples of fraternal rather than twin rivalry there are, of course, Prometheus and Epimetheus as well as Atreus and Thyestes.[104]

The story of Demaratus' birth[105] is a sequel to the one dealt with earlier in which Ariston takes the wife of Agetus from him through a trick. This wife, unnamed as we might expect, gives birth to a son Demaratus who eventually asks his mother who his father is, as other people are taunting him that he is not in fact the son of Ariston. His mother tells him the tale of how, three days after being installed as Ariston's wife, she was visited by a phantom in the shape of Ariston who slept with her and left some garlands round her neck when he left. Later Ariston came and denied all knowledge of the incident but recognised it as the work of a god. In commenting on Ariston's wife, Gray says that she 'has none of the brutal despotic power of barbarian queens, but she shares their beauty and sexual juice, receiving the local hero and her husband both on the same night and producing a very special child with a claim to heroic otherness, like the child of Mandane.'[106] In myth gods assume all sorts of disguises to seduce unsuspecting girls; we have only to think of Zeus'

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[102] Apollodorus 2.1.4. Aeschylus' *Suppliants* deals with the flight of the 50 daughters of Danaus from the 50 sons of Aegyptus.
[103] Pausanias 2.25.6.
[104] Pausanias 2.18.2; Apollodorus 2.10-14.
[105] *Histories* 6.67.
[106] Gray 1995: 206.

appearance to Alcmene in the form of her husband Amphitryon[107] to find a mythological element to parallel the disguised god in the story Herodotus relays as the one Demaratus' mother tells him.

Hippias is acting as a guide for the invading Persians when he has a dream of sleeping with his own mother, which he interprets to mean that he would return to Athens and regain his political position.[108] In the event, he loses a tooth during a sneezing fit while organising the Persian troops at Marathon and when he cannot find the tooth he is convinced that his first interpretation was wrong; he now believes that the Persians will never conquer the Greeks and that the only bit of Greek territory that he will ever own is the piece claimed by his missing tooth. The equation of Hippias' dream of his mother with the territory of Athens in the sense of a motherland is noteworthy, given the more usual use of πατρή or πατρίς to express the idea of native or fatherland. In their commentary How and Wells refer to the dream attributed to Caesar by Suetonius, in which he dreams of raping his own mother.[109] The soothsayers interpret Caesar's dream to mean that he will conquer the earth, the universal mother, an interpretation analogous to the one Herodotus ascribes to Hippias. But that is a later instance of this particular dream; contemporary with Herodotus is the description by Jocasta in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* of the dream of sleeping with one's mother as not unusual.[110]

Agariste, mother of Pericles, dreams of a lion just before she gives birth to her son,[111] recalling various other dreams prior to the birth of a famous child, particularly the internal resonances of the two dreams of Astyages before the birth of Cyrus in

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[107] Pindar *Pyth.* 9.84-85; Apollodorus 2.4.8.
[108] *Histories* 6.107.
[109] Suetonius *Julius Caesar* 7.
[110] *Oedipus Tyrranus* 981ff.
[111] *Histories* 6.131.

Herodotus, and in mythology, the dream of Hecuba before the birth of Paris.[112] In the latter cases, both Cyrus and Paris are exposed as infants in an attempt to ward off the disasters the dreams seem to portend but although Dewald notes that 'the lion was a symbol of royal power, but not, in ancient Greece, of the restrained majesty that we associate with it; a lion was a ravening, bloodthirsty beast (cf. *Iliad* 5.782),'[113] no suggestion of similar action is made in the case of Pericles. Dewald does not give full credit to the range of lion similes in the Homeric poems, for while the lion in Homer is presented as a dangerous animal to be feared, it is also seen as courageous and powerful, worthy of respect and even awe. Although the lion is depicted on occasion as a scavenger,[114] the poet also points out that the other animals flee from it in fear, thereby acknowledging its superiority. In the *Iliad* the lion occurs more often in similes dealing with the Achaean heroes such as Diomedes, Achilles and Agamemnon, in other words, with the ultimately victorious army, so that the two elements of the simile each reflect greatness and power on the other. Vermeule's assessment of the effect of lion images is altogether more positive than Dewald's: 'The lion was for the Greeks as for almost all their Mediterranean neighbours the image of success in both war and hunting, the most skilled hunter himself, the most frightening object of the hunt, the representative of male ambitions to be courageous, dangerous, intelligent and successful.'[115] Herodotus does not comment on what Agariste's dream might mean and no attempt is made to expose the infant Pericles, but in the light of the preceding remarks, it is clear that the audience would have had no difficulty in interpreting the dream. Perhaps that is why Herodotus himself does not comment; the dream itself is enough. There is a further reference to a lion in the

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[112] Apollodorus 3.12.5.
[113] Dewald 1998: 677. See also *Iliad* 5.136-142.
[114] *Iliad* 11.473-481.
[115] Vermeule 1979: 85f.

oracle given to Eëtion before the birth of Cypselus and here the aggressive nature of the beast is stressed: 'a strong, savage lion which will loosen the knees of many,'[116] an example of epic language which surely reflects the phrases used in the *Iliad* to denote the death of a warrior.[117]

There are scattered throughout the *Histories* fleeting references to mothers, small vignettes that add to the overall impression of ideas current at the time in respect of mothers. There is for example the passing mention of the mother of Megacles' daughter.[118] The marriage between Pisistratus and Megacles' daughter, as usual unnamed, has been arranged between the two men as we would expect, but when there are problems within the marriage, Megacles' daughter eventually tells her mother, who, as Herodotus says, may or may not have questioned her about it. In either case, there is obviously a bond between the two women, a bond strong enough either for the mother to note the daughter's distress, or for the daughter to have the courage to mention such an intimate problem to her mother. It is the mother who takes action by telling her husband, for she would have been aware of the effect her news was likely to cause, particularly since the marriage was arranged by her husband for reasons of a political alliance. Political reasons govern another marriage in the story of Cyrus: Astyages is looking for a husband without political clout for his daughter Mandane after his disturbing dream about her. He chooses Cambyses, a Persian and therefore of little influence, so that the oracle Croesus receives can describe Cyrus, the offspring of this union, as a mule since his mother was a Mede of noble lineage and therefore of a different nationality from his Persian father. In addition, in the course of his excursus on Persian customs, Herodotus does note that

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[116] *Histories* 5.92.
[117] For example, *Iliad* 5.76, 11.579, 15.332, 21.114 and 22.335. For a discussion of this image, see Vernant 1992: 101.
[118] *Histories* 1.61.

the Persians believe that no one has ever killed his own father and mother,[119] a belief that the Greeks could not share, given the murder of Clytemnestra by Orestes in myth, yet another example of alterity between Greek and Persian belief systems. It is worth reminding ourselves at this point that during the siege of Babylon, the male citizens strangle their wives to preserve supplies but spare their mothers,[120] as discussed under the rubric of 'Wives' above.

There are several references in the *Histories* to mothers as transmitters of culture, which, given the frequent association of women with nature in Greek thought, are worth noting.[121] When Herodotus is noting the existence of a sanctuary of Perseus and a celebration of athletic games in the Greek fashion in Chemmis in Egypt, he says that the Egyptians told him that Perseus' lineage could be traced back through Danaus and Lynceus to the city of Chemmis. Consequently when he goes to Egypt on his way to Libya to collect the Gorgon's head, Perseus visits Chemmis because he has heard of the city from his mother.[122] Once there he recognises his relatives and tells the citizens of the city to celebrate the games for him. There are other examples, however, of women who do not, as Dewald claims, work 'to guarantee the stability of both family and culture,' nor are they 'passionately loyal to the family into which they have married.'[123] The Istrian mother of Scyles, king of the Scythians, features in a story similar to that of Perseus, in that she has brought him up to read and speak Greek. As a result he always favours Greek customs and whenever he is in the vicinity of Borysthenes on military campaigns he is accustomed to go inside the city and indulge his taste for Greek clothing and religion.[124] Eventually the Scythian

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[119] *Histories* 1.137.
[120] *Histories* 3.150.
[121] For a discussion of this association see Ortner 1998.
[122] *Histories* 2.91.
[123] Dewald 1981: 97.
[124] *Histories* 4.78.

subjects of Scyles murder him for his adherence to Greek religious practices when they discover him celebrating the rites of Dionysus. In addition there is the story of the Pelasgians who abduct some Athenian women celebrating the festival of Artemis at Brauron and take them back to Lemnos where they keep them as concubines.[125] The women produce many children and teach them the Attic dialect and Athenian customs. According to Herodotus' story, the Athenian children do not fraternise with the children of the Pelasgian wives, and in the end the Athenian boys eventually become the dominant group and exercise power over the other children. The Pelasgian fathers come to the conclusion that this state of affairs cannot be allowed to continue into the adulthood of the children and therefore murder not only the Athenian children but their mothers as well. All three of these stories underline the importance of mothers in the inculcation of language, ideals, customs and attitudes in early childhood. The cultural information imparted by all these mothers has an effect on their children, from knowledge of his ancestry in the case of Perseus to death in the case of Scyles and the Athenian children, an effect resulting from their adoption of the cultural ethos of their mothers. In the latter two cases the culture of their natal families is more important to these women than that of their marital ones, and by privileging their natal culture in the education of their children they bring about the downfall of their marital families.

The mothers whose stories Herodotus tells in the *Histories* are generally of the nurturing type, exemplified in myth by Demeter, anxious for the well-being of their children and ready to give maternal support when necessary, though Sataspes' mother displays a readiness to impose punishment on her child when necessary. Since the alternative for Sataspes is death by impalement, the punishment his mother imposes is

[125] *Histories* 6.138.

at least designed to save his life. The instance of Sesostris' wife, who suggests the sacrifice of two of her sons, is perhaps not the notable exception it might seem at first glance, since her intention is to save her other children. Cyrus' foster mother and Labda fit the nurturing, protective mother type, while the mother of the thieves and the mother of Mycerinus' daughter maintain their concern for their children even after the death of their offspring, the former in her desire to bury her child properly and the latter in her attempts to punish those who did not take proper care of her daughter.

WOMEN IN POWER

The most obvious women in power in the *Histories* are the various queens whose stories Herodotus tells. It is striking to note when studying these particular women that the word, βασίλεια, or queen, occurs only nine times in the work,[1] in a variety of cases, while the word for king, βασιλεύς, occurs 624 times.[2] As a measure of the participation of women in the world of power, that ratio does not come as a surprise. Of course, the mere use of the word queen does not exhaust all the possibilities of women in power, particularly in view of the fact that Herodotus does not use it to refer to the Persian royal women as we might expect, but it is an illuminating statistic nonetheless. It is also worth noting that the majority of the women in powerful positions are not Greek, either. Although monarchy was not an entirely foreign institution to the Greeks in the historical times with which Herodotus is dealing, as the Spartan dual kingship illustrates, it was certainly the exception rather than the rule, with the result that there were few Greek queens, and even fewer Greek women associated with power. As an analogy to queens in other societies, we might expect to consider the wives of Greek tyrants, such as Melissa, wife of Periander, but they do not seem to feature much in the *Histories* and even Melissa appears only after her death. Helen of Troy is a queen from myth, despite Herodotus' belief in the Trojan war as a fact of history and his rationalisation of the story, while Argeia, wife of Aristodemus and queen of Sparta, is mentioned mainly in her capacity as a mother. There is generally more material in the *Histories* concerning the women examined in this chapter than there is concerning most of the other women studied so far, a

[1] Powell 1938 s.v. Brosius 1996: 20 notes that Herodotus uses the term to refer to Candaules' wife (*Histories* 1.11), Tomyris (*Histories* 1.21) and Hestia, the Scythian queen (*Histories* 4.127). She points out that of the three only Tomyris is described as a ruling queen while the others have no political power and that 'it is significant that this list excludes any reference to a Persian royal woman as βασίλεια, and the evidence is not conclusive about whether the term was used as a title.'

[2] Powell 1938 s.v.

situation which lends itself to more detailed textual analysis in their cases, in an attempt to discover whether there are any differences in Herodotus' treatment of male and female characters.

At this point it is appropriate to mention the existence of the *Tractatus de Mulieribus*, the ancient anonymous work of uncertain date,[3] with its short accounts of fourteen women who performed some notable deed, frequently but not exclusively on the battlefield. As Herodotus is generally considered to be the first historian, his portraits of women in power are the first of their kind so that it will come as no surprise to discover that Herodotus is named as the main source for five of these women, Nitocris the Egyptian, Nitocris the Babylonian, Argeia, Tomyris and Artemisia. Two further women, Semiramis and Pheretime, occur in the *Tractatus* as well as in the *Histories* but in their cases the anonymous author of the *Tractatus* has used Ctesias and Menecles respectively as his sources. It is worthwhile therefore to compare the entries for these two women in particular with Herodotus' account; any discrepancies or additional information would be illuminating.

The queen or woman in power is the complete inversion of the norms of Greek society where men are in control, so it is only to be expected that such deviations from the norm should occur, or be reported as occurring, away from Greece. A state with a female ruler is by definition 'other', its alterity epitomised by the fact that a woman wields political power over men. This aberration frequently comes about through the death of a male ruler whose queen then steps into his shoes and the ones we hear about are, of course, those who are, temporarily anyway, successful. It has been suggested before that older women, particularly those past childbearing age, probably

[3] Gera 1996: 29f suggests that the work should be dated to the end of the second or beginning of the first century BCE.

enjoyed more freedom in Greek πόλεις than their younger counterparts, and it would seem that this also applied in other geographical areas. Herodotus deals with the queens of the Massegetae, the Babylonians and the Egyptians, who are sufficiently far away from Greece to qualify as 'other' simply through distance, but the cases of Artemisia and Pheretime are more problematic, since Halicarnassus and Cyrene began as Greek colonies and had links with Greek thought and tradition. Nonetheless, it is probably safe to assume that as older women, which we can deduce from the fact that they both have grown sons, these two queens were more easily able to assert their independence.

These powerful women are the first in a long line of women in the Western tradition who receive attention simply because they are exceptions, because they function successfully in the world of men. There are, of course, mythological counterparts, such as Clytemnestra, who comes to such a bad end that one can only conclude that the myth acts as a cautionary tale in illustrating how such an aberration cannot be successful. On the other hand, there is also in myth the figure of Omphale who does not murder her husband and come to a bad end, but rather flourishes peacefully ruling her kingdom after her husband's death and does not even suffer for her enslavement of the quintessential Greek hero, Heracles. Other powerful women in Greek myth are Circe and Calypso, both of whom detain Odysseus on his return home to Penelope; both exercise power over Odysseus when he lands on their islands as a castaway in foreign territory. Circe, who appears to be the more powerful of the two goddesses, uses magic to transform his men into swine and Odysseus can only resist her power with the help of the magic herb μῶλυ.[4] In comparison, Calypso

[4] For the Circe episode see *Odyssey* 10: 210-574; 12: 21-141.

seems quite benign, but nonetheless, Odysseus is in her power in her territory.[5] Medusa, one of the three Gorgons, is a far more terrifying character since anyone who looked at her was said to be turned to stone and Perseus needed the help of several gods and goddesses to overcome her. Although both Odysseus and Perseus are successful to the extent that they emerge unscathed from their encounters with powerful women, it remains true, however, that women in power exert a fascination because they are different and because they represent a deviation from the norm.

The myth of the Amazons, women warriors in a completely female society, provides the Greeks with an extended opportunity to explore and examine the problem of women in power, a situation sedulously avoided and, indeed, completely forbidden in Greek political institutions, where women had no place whatsoever, except as mothers of citizens. In myth, the Amazons were said to reside near the Black Sea, where they occupied themselves with hunting and warfare in a society entirely run by women, where everything was diametrically opposed to the institutions of Greek society. Marriage, one of the key institutions of Greek society, did not exist in its Amazon counterpart; men of a neighbouring tribe were used for procreation and the resulting daughters were kept for rearing but the sons were killed or handed over to the tribe of the fathers. The exclusively female nature of Amazon society means that even there women did not wield political power over men, but merely made use of men from outside for procreative purposes, so it cannot strictly be termed a matriarchy in the sense that Athens and other Greek πόλεις can be termed patriarchies. In some sources it was said that the women had one breast cauterised[6] so as not to interfere with their use of weapons and an etymology for their name was

[5] For the Calypso episode see *Odyssey* 5: 11-277.
[6] Diodorus Siculus 4.16.1ff.

derived from this practice, by linking the alpha privative with the Greek word for breast, μαζός, to give the name Amazon. The progenitor of the Amazons was said to be Ares, god of war, but he does not figure in any other way in the myth and seems merely to provide a suitably masculine and warlike father for women warriors who are said to be 'the equal of men.'[7]

The Amazons appear in myth in the cycles dealing with Heracles, Bellerophon and Theseus; Heracles was sent to obtain the girdle of the queen of the Amazons,[8] Bellerophon was sent to fight the Amazons by Iobates[9] and Theseus abducted Antiope and took her back to Athens, where he 'tamed' her by marrying her.[10] This latter exploit led to the invasion of Attica by the Amazons and the subsequent Amazonomachy was a feature of Athenian public art, as were Heracles' encounters with the Amazons; for instance, among the metopes respectively of the Hephaesteum in Athens and the Athenian Treasury at Delphi. Amazonomachies also recurred in the Parthenon sculptural decoration of the western metopes and the outer face of Athena's shield in the chryselephantine statue within the temple. The Amazons appear very briefly twice in the *Iliad*, once in a speech of Priam recounting the exploits of his youth,[11] and once in the famous scene between Diomedes and Glaucus, when Glaucus narrates his family history, including the story of Bellerophon, who was his great grandfather.[12] Other epics in the Trojan cycle, such as the *Aethiopis*, in which the Amazons are said to have joined the Trojan side in the war and the queen Penthesilea to have fought a duel with Achilles resulting in her death, complete the narrative

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[7] *Iliad* 6.186. See Blok 1995: 259-65.
[8] Apollodorus 2.5.9.
[9] Apollodorus 2.3.1.
[10] Apollodorus 1.16.
[11] *Iliad* 3.189. It is interesting to note that here the Amazons are the enemies of Priam, while epic dealing with later events in the cycle places them on the side of the Trojans. See Blok 1995: 297f.
[12] *Iliad* 6.186.

concerning the Amazons. When the Greek heroes in myth come into contact with the Amazons, it is a given that they will be victorious; Heracles successfully obtains Hippolyta's girdle, the loosening of which generally signified sexual submission,[13] so that the myth may be read as Heracles' rape of Hippolyta, and Bellerophon, according to Homer, κατέπεφνεν Ἀμαζόνας ἀντιανείρας – 'slaughtered the Amazons, the equals of men.'[14] Theseus' abduction of Antiope led to the Athenian victory over the retaliatory Amazon invasion of Attica[15] and when the Amazons fought for Troy, the losing side in the war, Achilles, ἄριστον Ἀχαιῶν – 'the best of the Achaeans',[16] slew the Amazon queen. A female society that subverts the most basic tenets of Greek thought cannot be allowed to flourish and its defeat reflects glory on the male victors.

On the other hand, as Blok has pointed out,[17] there is an ambiguity about the Amazons, who have 'a male *thymos* inside a female body.' They are not monsters, since they are wholly human, but their martial prowess marks them out as 'other' in the Greek scheme of things, where warfare is men's work. But this alterity is not absolute since Amazons fight in the Greek fashion frequently with Greek armour and Greek weapons and inspired by the same Greek god of war, Ares, at least until after the Persian war, when they begin to appear in art in Persian dress, to signify their 'otherness'.[18] The fact that the Amazons are described as 'the equal of men' and that they are considered worthy opponents of the most famous Greek heroes says

[13] Reeder 1995a: 374.
[14] *Iliad* 6: 186.
[15] See *Histories* 9.27 where defeat of the invasion of Attica by the Amazons is cited by the Athenians as an heroic deed in the speech before the battle of Plataea.
[16] *Iliad* 1.244.
[17] Blok 1995: 276-88.
[18] Blok 1995: 407f says 'In the earliest archaeological material, the Amazons appear wearing elements of hoplite armour, a helmet, a round shield, a sword and a spear....At the same time, however, a tendency can be discerned in this early group which increases in quantity in the course of the black-figure and red-figure work as well as acquiring a more detailed elaboration. This tendency can be labelled "barbarisation": the borrowing of visual elements of clothing or armour from non-Greek cultures.'

something about their assimilation into the heroic code; normally it would be considered unworthy for a Greek male to fight a woman, since the code demands that a hero should face an equal opponent to win renown. In fact, it is this equality which confers κλέος on the warriors, winners and losers. To be defeated by an equal is more honorable than to win over an inferior. For this reason the warrior aspect of the Amazons has to be emphasised over the fact of their being female so that they can indeed be described as ἀντιανείραι, equal to men, otherwise the heroes would be courting dishonour in fighting against women.[19] This treatment of the myth illustrates the way in which it is incorporated into the system so as to satisfy the terms of Greek thought.

The myth of the Amazons is an example of mythical inversion, where an important element of society is reversed and the consequences of this reversal are examined.[20] The Greek family depended on the submission of women to men, on their willingness to be exchanged between men in marriage and on the absolute control of their reproductive capacity by men. In the myth of the Amazons, women are not subordinate to men, they do not enter the institution of marriage and they control their own reproductive capacity. Paternity, which is of such central importance in Greek society, is of no concern to the Amazons, who engage in indiscriminate sexual intercourse with the men of a neighbouring tribe purely for the sake of conceiving children, preferably daughters. Sons are killed, maimed or sent to their fathers. From this lack of concern about the paternity of offspring flow several consequences, including the ability of Amazons to occupy what in Greek thought is

[19] Blok 1995: 284-86 notes that male warriors are generally depicted naked, but Amazons, though warriors, are never shown naked, because this would make explicit their femaleness and undermine their status as worthy opponents.

[20] Stewart 1997: 118 says that the Athenians used this inversion 'as a tool for conceptualising, explaining, and confirming their city's customs, institutions, and values by postulating their opposites and showing them to be unacceptable.'

male space, the outdoors. Seclusion and separation of the sexes are unnecessary if paternity is of no import so that Amazons can and do indulge in those pursuits which the Greeks considered the preserve of men, such as hunting and fighting. In this version of society, chastity and modesty are of no advantage; in fact, all virtues considered manly by the Greeks, such as courage, competitiveness and daring, are displaced on to women.

Amazon society is the epitome of the 'other' in relation to Greek, particularly Athenian, society. As Vidal-Naquet says, 'whether we are talking about the Amazons or the Lycians, it is the Greek polis, that men's club, that is being defined by historians and its "ethnographers" in terms of its opposite.'[21] The adult male citizen who is the paradigm of Greekness is opposed to the Amazon,[22] the woman unfettered by societal constraints such as marriage, not subordinated to a κύριος like her Athenian sister, and free in her choice of sexual partners. She exemplifies what will happen if the daughters of Athenian citizens refuse to acquiesce in their exchange in marriage between men, and present a horrifying prospect to a citizen body that Stewart describes as 'one big, endogamous and xenophobic family.'[23] Tyrrell characterises the meaning of the myth of the Amazon as follows:

> The desideratum of every Greek household was self-sufficiency. None could achieve it because every house had to give out its daughters in marriage in order to receive others for its sons. The moment of separation, long foreseen and painful, was built into the social fabric. Personal tensions aside, however, and short of incest,

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[21] Vidal-Naquet 1986: 208.
[22] It is interesting to note that Lissarrague 1990 does not include the Amazons in his categories of warriors who function as 'other' in relation to the Greek hoplite.
[23] Stewart 1997: 196.

> the house would perish unless it relented. In a society of households jealous of their independence and suspicious of the women brought into the houses, exchange of daughters was an inescapable dilemma. The Amazon, the liminal figure of transition rites whose world is the reversal of everything that is valued by the male, explains the necessity of the daughter to marry by portraying the consequences of her not marrying. The daughter must be given away by the father, and he must compromise the self-sufficiency of his household, so that order may be maintained on the earth and in the cosmos.[24]

The Amazon myth serves as a subtext to all the stories that Herodotus tells of women in power, a subtext that exemplifies the logical conclusion that will be reached if Greek societal practices are not upheld and this exceptional kind of woman is allowed to become the norm. There are other discrete mythological elements in the stories of the individual women, not necessarily from myths dealing with Amazons, but as a group of stories dealing with the common theme of women in power, the Amazon myth applies to all of them.

While investigating mythological elements in the work of Herodotus, it proved fruitful to examine first of all some of the words and concepts characteristic of the heroic world found in Homer, and then to inquire whether any of these features were to be found in Herodotus, particularly in connection with women, and even more specifically in connection with women in power, since they are the women most likely to share the attributes of Homeric heroes. Not only in the pre-literate period but also much later, the Homeric works and the ideas they contained were part of every

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[24] Tyrrell 1984:127.

Greek's mental makeup. Havelock argues that 'Poetry was not "literature" but a political and social necessity. It was not an art form, nor a creation of the private imagination, but an encyclopaedia maintained by co-operative effort on the part of the "best Greek politics".'[25] Even if this is considered to be an extreme view of the epic genre, it is true nonetheless that the ideas contained in epic poetry could be assumed to be familiar to all Greeks, and indeed to shape their thinking. Given this state of affairs, Herodotus would have shared this perspective, or at least have been familiar with its assumptions, and it therefore seems more than likely that, even unconsciously, his work should present some features and especially values shared with epic poetry. It is arguable, therefore, that when Herodotus used words expressing ideas familiar from the heroic world, his audience or reader would have automatically had access to all the resonances of that word and its associated ideas from the previous contexts in which it had been used, in the same way that his use of mythological story patterns would have struck chords of recognition in the minds of his audience.

The first word to be examined, because of its central importance in the world of the Homeric poems was the word κλέος, glory or renown, and this in turn led to the investigation of the words ἀρετή, valour or excellence, and τίσις, vengeance, since the concepts that the three words signified seemed to be at the heart of the heroic world view. Then the occurrences of the same words in Herodotus were noted, to see whether there is any difference in his deployment of the words in connection with men and women.

The words ἀρετή and κλέος are closely linked in the heroic tradition. It has been said of the Homeric hero that 'What moves him to deeds of heroism is not a sense of duty as we understand it - duty towards others; it is rather duty towards

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[25] Havelock 1963: 125.

himself. He strives after that which we translate "virtue" but is in Greek ἀρετή, excellence.'[26] In striving after ἀρετή, the Homeric hero is hoping to gain κλέος, which is generally rendered in English as fame, glory or renown. The word also has the meaning of report, rumour, news or tidings, and this double meaning is easily explicable when it is understood that glory in early Greece could only be made known through song or epic poetry, since writing is not generally regarded as having been introduced until the mid eighth century BCE. Therefore marvellous or heroic deeds had to be reported in order to confer glory or renown on the hero. As Kitto goes on to say, 'The only hope of immortality was that one's fame might live on in song.'[27] Havelock expresses the same thought from a different perspective when he says, 'Saga by definition was a celebration of κλέος.'[28] In his proem Herodotus himself says that he wrote specifically to ensure that the great deeds of the Greeks and the barbarians should not be ἀκλεᾶ, without glory or without report. The use of the word here is an excellent example of its double meaning and it would seem that Herodotus intended the reader to be aware of both connotations. It would appear that in his day it was still important to the Greek mind that greatness should be celebrated and this is one of the strongest motivations behind his self-imposed task of recording the war between the Greeks and the Persians and its background.

The κλέος of a Greek or Homeric hero is generally won on the battlefield, since this is where he shows his particular ἀρετή in deeds of exceptional valour or martial excellence. In the *Iliad* the word κλέος is used 27 times, and the majority of instances reflect the meaning of fame, glory or renown. Only four signify rumour or report, so it is clear that for Homer the word more often indicates the fame brought by

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[26] Kitto 1951: 58. This is well illustrated in the case of Herodotus' portrayal of Leonidas; see below.
[27] Kitto 1951: 60.
[28] Havelock 1963: 231 n15.

a report than the report itself. In the *Odyssey* the situation is similar; there are 33 occurrences of the word, of which 25 refer to glory, fame or renown and only eight indicate report, rumour or tidings.

Herodotus himself uses the word κλέος only four times[29] and in each case it is in connection with the Spartans and signifies glory or reputation. The first instance of the word κλέος in Herodotus comes when he is recounting the story of the battle of Thermopylae,[30] where he says that he believes that Leonidas deliberately sent his allies away since they were fainthearted, but that he himself (Leonidas) would have found it dishonourable to desert his post. This episode neatly points up the difference in the Greek attitude to heroic deeds. Leonidas stays at his post because he knows that μένοντι δὲ αὐτοῦ κλέος μέγα ἐλείπετο -'by standing his ground he would leave behind him a great name.' This concern with one's reputation and what others will think of one's actions is crucial to the heroic world view; Leonidas faces certain death in order to preserve his κλέος, not because it is his duty to anyone else, but because it is his duty to himself to show as much courage and valour as possible. Not content with using the word κλέος once in this chapter, Herodotus uses it again after quoting the prophecy of the Pythia and goes on to say that Leonidas wanted to store up κλέος for the Spartiates alone.

The third occurrence of the word is found also in connection with the Spartiates, in the speech of Mardonius before Plataea, when the Persian general accuses the Lacedaimonians of cowardice in preferring to face the Boeotians and Thessalians rather than the Persians themselves in battle.[31] Mardonius says that the Persians expected the Lacedaimonians, κατὰ κλέος – 'in the light of their reputation'

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[29] *Histories* 7.220.2, 7.220.4, 9.48 and 9.78.
[30] *Histories* 7.220.
[31] *Histories* 9.48.

- to send heralds to challenge the Persians, but instead they had changed their positions in the battle line to avoid them. It would seem that in Herodotus' day the concept of κλέος was still important enough to use as a taunt.

The fourth occurrence of the word, yet again in connection with a Spartiate, is found after the battle of Plataea when an Aeginetan, Lampon, approaches Pausanias and suggests that he should impale the head of Mardonius as revenge for the impaling of Leonidas' head by Mardonius and Xerxes after Thermopylae. In his speech Lampon says that god has given Pausanias κλέος . . . μέγιστον Ἑλλήνων τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν – 'the greatest glory of the Greeks that we know'[32] for his defence of Greece. It is apparent from Pausanias' reply to Lampon that the old heroic virtues still retain their power to influence men's behaviour, since Pausanias rejects the suggestion of such barbarism on the part of a Greek, and says that Leonidas has been amply avenged by the honour he has won by his heroism.

Despite the low incidence of the word κλέος in Herodotus, when he does use it the meaning that he intends is the one that predominates in epic - glory, renown, reputation - but it also noteworthy to discover that he does not employ the word in connection with women. This is particularly striking when one considers Herodotus' stories of women in power, those concerning Tomyris, Pheretime and Artemisia, for example. If nothing else, these women surely gained notoriety, if not renown, as women playing an effective role in traditionally male spheres, but Herodotus does not use the word in this context. On the other hand, in the Homeric poems, Penelope is credited with both κλέος and ἀρετή. The obvious explanation is that Penelope's κλέος is won in her exemplary maintenance of traditional wifely ἀρετή and not in fighting battles or attending councils, like Herodotus' women in power, who

[32] *Histories* 9.78.

consequently do not receive traditional expressions of approval. The concept of κλέος is an integral part of the oral tradition and the fact that the word itself and the associated ideas occur in Herodotus illustrates his debt to the tradition, and since the tradition reserves such words only for characters like Penelope, Herodotus does likewise. It is the bard, or in Herodotus' case, the historian, who is responsible for both facets of κλέος, the reporting and the transmission of fame, and in this respect, Herodotus is indeed carrying on the tradition of the oral epic. Herodotus consciously undertakes the same task as the bard who, in the words of Segal, is 'the repository and transmitter of knowledge and lore about the past.'[33]

'Αρετή, like κλέος, is a word full of resonance in the Homeric world. Its basic meaning is excellence in any sphere, not only the human, from superiority of accomplishment to martial or athletic prowess, from manliness and moral virtue to skill, success and even prosperity. It occurs 15 times in the *Iliad* and 21 times in the *Odyssey* and its meanings cover, among other things, Odysseus' heroic prowess, Penelope's virtue, the skills of the Phaeacians at seamanship, feasting and music, and the prosperity that Odysseus wishes for the Phaeacians.

In the *Histories* of Herodotus we find the word ἀρετή used 24 times, but frequency of occurrence is not by itself significant; context must be considered to ascertain the importance and shade of meaning assigned to the word by Herodotus. Of these 24 instances, five[34] refer to excellence in the non-human world; on three occasions it refers to the excellence or fertility of the soil in a particular place; once it refers to the excellence of Darius' horse which helped him to gain the kingship and once to a plant found in India which φέρει καρπὸν εἴρια καλλονή τε προφέρονται

[33] Segal 1994: 87.
[34] *Histories* 3.88, 3.106, 4.198, 7.5 and 8.144.

καὶ ἀρετῇ τῶν ὀἰων – 'bears a fruit that is in beauty like wool and in excellence as good as that which comes from sheep'[35] - which must be one of the earliest references to cotton.

The other occurrences of ἀρετή in Herodotus[36] refer to excellence in the human sphere and the range of meaning covers virtue, courage, valour, bravery, merit and moral excellence. The preponderance of meaning shows that for Herodotus ἀρετή had the same connotations as it had for Homer. Since Herodotus can be described as the heir to Homer in his purpose of recording ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, - 'great and wonderful deeds' [37] - it is not surprising that some of these resonances can be found in Herodotus too, but again the word is not used in connection with women. While Herodotus uses a striking *hapax legomenon* in connection with Artemisia's courage, which he terms ἀνδρηίη, he does not credit her with ἀρετή, which Powell defines as valour in connection with men.[38]

Given the importance in the heroic code of ἀρετή and κλέος it follows that any action which diminished one's reputation or cast a slur on one's honour had to be countered, and therefore the concept of τίσις or revenge was very important to the Greek mind. For the Greeks it was a duty to avenge a wrong done to one and seek retribution from one's enemies; the Christian ideal of turning the other cheek did not yet exist. As with the concept of κλέος, the idea of τίσις stems from the Greek sense of honour exemplified in the Homeric epics. Kitto says, 'The Greek was very sensitive to his standing among his fellows: he was zealous, and was expected to be zealous, in claiming what was due to him . . . The reward of Virtue (ἀρετή,

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[35] *Histories* 3.106.
[36] *Histories* 1.52, 1.134, 1.176, 3.82, 3.120, 5.49, 7.102, 7.154, 7.181, 7.225, 7.237, 8.1, 8.27, 8.92, 9.21, 9.28, 9.40, 9.70 and 9.71.
[37] *Histories*, Proem.
[38] Powell 1938 s.v. ἀρετή.

outstanding excellence) is the praise of one's fellows and posterity.'[39] Therefore it follows that to preserve one's honour, it is necessary to take action when it is damaged or impugned in any way. The word occurs six times in Homer, only twice in the *Iliad*[40] and four times in the *Odyssey*[41], each time with the meaning of vengeance, recompense or retribution; the idea of reciprocity and paying the price for one's actions predominates.

Herodotus uses the word τίσις fourteen times,[42] but not once in connection with women. One of the examples is in the story of Gyges, who usurped the throne of Candaules. The oracle at Delphi was consulted to see whether Gyges should retain the throne and its answer was in the affirmative. There was, however, a rider that the Heraclids should have their vengeance on a descendant of Gyges in the fifth generation. This example serves to show that vengeance might not necessarily be instantaneous, but that in the end it would be exacted. Just as with the other words examined, however, Herodotus does not use τίσις in any of the stories concerning women, which is strange when some of them take what might be termed spectacular revenge; to take the story of Gyges as just one example, one might well expect Herodotus to describe the actions of Candaules' queen against her husband as τίσις.

It is fitting to turn now to the individual women in power who feature in the *Histories*, bearing in mind what has been said above. Semiramis, queen of Babylon, is mentioned by Herodotus only for the fact that she had dykes built on the plain of Babylon to control flooding.[43] Her entry in the *Tractatus de Mulieribus*, however, for which Ctesias[44] is named as the source, is much more informative and identifies her as

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[39] Kitto 1951: 245.
[40] *Iliad* 9.284 and 22.19.
[41] *Odyssey* 1.40, 2.76, 13.144 and 22.218.
[42] *Histories* 1.13, 1.86, 2.152, 3.109, 3.126, 3.128, 5.56, 5.79, 6.72, 6.84, 7.8A, 8.76, 8.105 and 8.106.
[43] *Histories* 1.184.
[44] Ctesias: FGrHist 688.

the daughter of Derceto the Syrian goddess and a Syrian man. She is said to have been married to Onnes, a governor of the king, and gone to war with him to capture Bactra. During this campaign she came to the attention of the king, Ninus, an old man, who then married her and fathered two sons by her. When he died, she became queen and fortified Babylon and built a temple to Belus. One of her sons, Ninyas, conspired against her and she died at the age of 62, having ruled for 42 years, which means that she came to the throne at the age of twenty, a remarkable fact in itself. This is a fascinating story, for all its brevity, and one cannot help but wonder whether Herodotus was unaware of any more information about her, or whether he knew more but decided not to include it in his material. As a woman who reigned for such a long period and who was credited with large building projects and successful military campaigns, as well as a string of lovers whom she killed, she was very well known both in antiquity and later.[45] Ctesias, the author of the *Persica* which is the source for the entry about Semiramis in the *Tractatus*, lived in the early fourth century BCE. and although his sojourn at the Persian court may perhaps have given him access to better Persian sources than Herodotus, one cannot help but feel that her story must have enjoyed fairly wide currency.[46] Indeed Gera suggests that 'Semiramis is such a forceful, dominant figure and her adventures and roles so varied that she casts a shadow upon the lives of other heroines. Several of the women in the DM[47] . . . engage in activities which are similar to, confused or even conflated with those of

[45] Indeed Gera 1996: 65 states that Semiramis is 'perhaps the very first woman who comes to mind when we think of an independent queen. She appears time and again in ancient sources as an instance as an exceptional leader and is often mentioned as one of a series of *exempla* of eminent women.' Gera lists ancient references such as Julian, Theon, Plutarch, Dio Chrysostom, Dio Cassius and Hyginus as well as the medieval authors Boccaccio and Chaucer.

[46] For discussion of fragments of an early Greek novel about Ninus see Stephens and Winkler 1995: 23-71. Semiramis is not named in the fragments and the female character in two of the three fragments at least seems to be a shy young girl, but the fragments may deal with her early life before she became a woman in power.

[47] Gera uses this abbreviation for the *Tractatus de Mulieribus*.

Semiramis and all these women may simply be variations on the original Assyrian queen.'[48] Perhaps Herodotus was saving her story for his Assyrian λόγοι, which as far as we know, were never written.

Nitocris of Babylon receives more extensive treatment than Semiramis in the *Histories* and is noted by Herodotus for the defensive system that she built to protect the city of Babylon. In fact, Herodotus is the only ancient author to deal with her story, so that How & Wells comment that her existence is not 'found either in Babylonian inscriptions or Berosus.'[49] They suggest that perhaps Herodotus 'misheard the name, and assimilated it, when he wrote, to the Egyptian name with which he was more familiar.'[50] It has been proposed that the works attributed by Herodotus to Nitocris were in fact carried out by Nebuchadnezzar, and that it was Herodotus' 'informants' prejudice which is responsible for the suppression of all mention of this great king.'[51] It is thought, in fact, that the bridge in Babylon which Herodotus attributes to Nitocris[52] was actually begun by Nabopolassar and finished by Nebuchadnezzar, his son. Furthermore, there is an inscription by Nebuchadnezzar in which he claims to have diverted the Euphrates into many channels and to have built defensive walls to contain the water of the river.[53] Identification of this Nitocris with a particular woman has never been securely made and various candidates have been put forward, among them the Egyptian Nitocris, Semiramis, Naqi'a, the wife of the Assyrian king Sennacherib, and Ada-guppi, mother of the Babylonian king

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[48] Gera 1996: 66.
[49] Berosus (FrGrHist 680) was a third century BCE bilingual Babylonian priest of Baal, who wrote a *Babyloniaca* in three books covering the land of Babylon, Babylonian mythology and the history of Babylon.
[50] How & Wells 1928: 1,141.
[51] How & Wells 1928: 1,141.
[52] *Histories* 1.185.
[53] For an examination of the possible confusion between Nitocris and Nebuchadnezzar, see Gera 1996: 111-113.

Nabonidus.[54] Herodotus' account describes Nitocris' diversion of the waters of the Euphrates in order to delay the approach to the city by water. Such farsightedness is admirable but can also be seen as an example of the perceived deviousness of women in general and in fact, Herodotus notes later[55] that Nitocris' precautions actually make Cyrus' capture of the city during the reign of her son easier. The reference to Nitocris the Babylonian in the *Tractatus de Mulieribus*, which names Herodotus as its source, notes the building of a bridge over the river and the diversion of its waters but none of the consequences mentioned by Herodotus. Although Herodotus gives the names of her husband and son, both Labynetus, the anonymous author of the *Tractatus* elects not to follow his usual practice in doing so.

The theme of deviousness in the character of Nitocris is continued when Herodotus tells the story of Nitocris' tomb, which she built over the city gates and engraved with an inscription permitting any future king of Babylon in need of money to open it. Darius eventually opens it and finds no money, only the corpse and a message telling him that he has done it out of greed and avarice. Gera notes the irony of Darius falling victim to a hoax perpetrated through an inscription, 'for in the *History* he himself sets up a monument and an inscription commemorating a devious deed: winning the kingship by trickery with his horse (3.88.3).'[56] The authenticity of the inscription as reported by Herodotus is generally doubted by scholars, and it would seem that the curse form used is not usual on Babylonian graves but is frequently found on Greek tombstones,[57] which would suggest that Herodotus casts the story in terms familiar to his Greek audience. The story of Nitocris' tomb is a

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[54] For fuller discussion of the identity of the Egyptian Nitocris, see Gera 1996:106-109 and Lloyd 1988: 15.
[55] *Histories* 1.191.
[56] Gera 1996: 116.
[57] See Gera 1996: 115.

strange one, and it is even stranger in that it has mythological resonances. The tomb of Laomedon, father of Priam, king of Troy, was built over the Scaean gate of Troy and the safety of the city was said to be assured as long as it lay undisturbed. It was dismantled to admit the Trojan Horse, with well known consequences. Herodotus manages to convey the notion that opening tombs is not a good idea, as he notes Darius' disappointment at not finding the hoped for treasure, which calls up the mythological reminiscence that the opening of Laomedon's tomb did not bring the expected rewards either. Although tombs could be violated in times of emergency,[58] generally speaking tombs were accorded respect as the site of regular visitation by the relatives of the dead, and it was an heir's obligation to carry out this duty.[59]

Tomyris, queen of the Massegetae and eventual conqueror of Cyrus, is the subject of relatively extended treatment. She is a warrior queen in the style of the Amazons and, having come to power on the death of her husband like Artemisia, appears to be ruling very capably. Indeed in the chapters of the *Histories* in which she features, she comes off very favourably in the comparison between her and both Cyrus and Croesus. If Herodotus is trying to illustrate the failings of the Persians by using the barbarian queen as a foil, the device succeeds admirably. There is, of course, the mythological parallel of Omphale, queen of Lydia, who ruled her kingdom after the death of her husband, Tmolus, and would be remembered by Herodotus' audience as the queen who bought the services of Heracles. Heracles fathered four sons by Omphale, but more to the point, also had dealings with the Amazons. Coincidentally, one of her sons by Heracles, Agelaus, was the founder of the line that produced Croesus, who also features in the story of Tomyris and Cyrus.

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[58] See Garland 1985: 4.
[59] See Garland 1985: 104.

The tale of Cyrus' death typifies Herodotus' idea that those who trangress the limits of human achievement often come to a bad end. Cyrus has become over-confident through his unchecked successes and his motives for attacking the Massegetae are characterised thus: πολλὰ τε γάρ μιν καὶ μεγάλα τὰ ἐπαείροντα καὶ ἐποτρύνοντα ἦν, πρῶτον μὲν ἡ γένεσις, τὸ δοκέειν πλέον τι εἶναι ἀνθρώπου, δεύτερα δὲ ἡ εὐτυχίη ἡ κατὰ τοὺς πολέμους γενομένη - 'many and great were the reasons inciting him and urging him on, firstly his birth, which seemed something more than human, and secondly the good luck which attended him in his wars.'[60] It would be possible to argue a case for saying that Cyrus displays ὕβρις in his disregard for the honour of other nations and his pursuit of ever more territory. Extreme good fortune in Herodotus frequently precedes disaster and Cyrus is an exemplary case.

Tomyris has come to power through the death of her husband. Cyrus attempts to trick her by sending her a proposal of marriage but Tomyris is too astute a politician to fall for his deceit. There are echoes here of the suitors' pursuit of Penelope, since they too seem to think that whoever marries Penelope will also assume Odysseus' position as king of Ithaca,[61] and as Tomyris is a queen this element of the story would have had resonances for Herodotus' audience. Tomyris knows he is much more interested in her territory than in herself and her evaluation is vindicated when, upon her rejection of his proposal of marriage, Cyrus immediately begins to move against her people by bridging the Araxes so that he can cross to their lands.

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[60] *Histories* 1.204.

[61] In dealing with the case of Oedipus and Jocasta, Bremmer 1987a: 47 notes that ' these myths presuppose a matrimonial system in which gaining the hand of the queen-widow implies occupation of the throne.' Other examples of gaining a throne as well as a wife include Menelaus who gains the throne of Sparta through his marriage to Helen, daughter of Tyndareus, and Orestes, who succeeds him by marrying Hermione, Menelaus' daughter, but these wives are daughters rather than widows of kings.

Tomyris suggests that he should abandon the enterprise, since he cannot be sure of an eventual favourable outcome, but she knows that he will not do so nor will he be able to ἡμέας ἀνέχευ ὁρέων ἄρχοντας τῶν περ ἄρχομεν – 'endure seeing me rule those whom I rule.'[62] This could just mean that Cyrus feels the urge to conquer every other ruler he comes across, but the suggestion is there that when the other ruler is a woman he is even less likely to leave her to rule in peace, because a woman ruler is an anomaly. Cyrus' attempt to return the situation to normal, using the device of marriage to replace a female ruler with a male one, where it is assumed that the husband will be in control, underlines the use of marriage as a method of the regulation of the power of women. Having put forward the myth of the Amazons as a subtext to all the women in power, we have only to think of the mythical story of Theseus, who abducts Antiope and 'tames' her by marrying her,[63] to find a mythological parallel for the intention of Cyrus in offering marriage to Tomyris.

Tomyris offers Cyrus a choice; she and her people will withdraw three days journey from the river so that he can cross safely, or if he wishes to do battle in his own territory, he should withdraw the same distance. Perhaps she thought that she would gain the advantage either by luring him deep into Massegetan territory or conversely by gaining safe access to Cyrus' territory if he acceded to her proposal. Both are plausible options and show Tomyris to be a thoughtful strategist. Cyrus' generals agree that they should meet her on their home ground, but Croesus goes against the general opinion and suggests an underhanded plan, whereby the Persians would cross the river, lay out a luxurious Persian feast for the Massegetae and attack them while they are indulging themselves. The motif of the feast interrupted by

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[62] *Histories* 1.206.
[63] Apollodorus 1.16.

violence is most famously represented by the wedding feast of Pirithous and Hippodamia, when the Centaurs, intoxicated with wine, try to attack the bride and her attendants, so that the Lapiths have to rush to their defence, leading to the celebrated and frequently illustrated Centauromachy. The use of wine as a drug to befuddle and confuse is found in many mythological contexts. Circe uses a mixture of wine, drugs and magic to change Odysseus' men into swine;[64] Odysseus makes Polyphemus the Cyclops intoxicated with wine so that he can attack him in his drunken stupor;[65] and Midas renders Silenus drunk on wine in an attempt to learn his wisdom.[66] Indeed the effects of wine on those unused to it is reflected in the myth of Icarius, who, on being given the gift of wine by Dionysus, introduces his fellow countrymen to it. Feeling the effects of drinking wine, to which they are unaccustomed, they conclude they have been poisoned and kill Icarius in revenge.[67] The correct use of wine, which in Greek terms is the drinking of wine diluted with water, is the mark of civilisation, and the ignorance of the Massegetae, which leads them to drink it undiluted, emphasises their barbarian status; indeed Tomyris herself describes the wine that Cyrus has used to gain the advantage over the Massegetae as a φάρμακον or drug.

Cyrus agrees to Croesus' plan and it is carried out, with the resultant loss of life on the Massegetan side and the capture of Tomyris' son, whom Herodotus describes as the commander of the army, with the consequent inference that Tomyris herself did not lead her army initially. Still Tomyris is prepared to allow Cyrus to leave her territory unharmed providing that he returns her son, although she is understandably disgusted by the methods Cyrus has used. The contrast between the straightforward, honest and honourable barbarian queen and the devious Persian

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[64] *Odyssey* 10.233-243.
[65] *Odyssey* 9.345-364.
[66] Pausanias 1.4.5.
[67] Apollodorus 3.14.7.

monarch is highlighted by the female/male opposition, especially since the female of the species was generally regarded as the more devious of the two by definition, as is exemplified by Hesiod's account of Hermes' gift of a thieving mind and a deceitful nature to Pandora.[68] It is interesting to note that the 'otherness' of the Persian Cyrus is greater than that of a powerful queen in this story. Tomyris displays her readiness to negotiate an end to the situation even when her son is in Cyrus' hands and offers him a safe passage from her territory if he hands back her son. Herodotus states that Cyrus pays no attention to her offer when it is relayed to him but does give him credit for freeing Tomyris' son, Spargapises, who asks to be released when he wakes from his wine-induced stupor; on being freed, however, Spargapises commits suicide, presumably out of shame, as Ajax does when the arms of Achilles are awarded to Odysseus.[69]

Herodotus does not say that Tomyris attacked Cyrus' army to take revenge for her son's death, merely that she mustered her forces and attacked Cyrus because he would not take her advice, which implies that her offer of a safe passage still stood. Once battle is joined, however, with Tomyris in command this time, no quarter is given and Cyrus dies in the fighting. Then and only then does Tomyris give free rein to her rage and grief by immersing Cyrus' head in a wineskin of human blood, and declaring that she has given him his fill of blood as she promised. The opposition between the drinking of wine with which Cyrus deceives Tomyris and the 'drinking' of blood which the victorious queen imposes on the defeated king underlines the fact that the whole episode is a series of oppositions, between the barbarian queen and the supposedly civilised king, the straightforward woman and the devious man, and the final defeat of the aggressive male by the conciliatory female is a complete reversal of

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[68] *Works and Days* 67.
[69] Apollodorus 5.5.

expectation. Gera notes that there are several later versions of the story of Tomyris in which she employs deceit to lure the Persian forces into an ambush or uses food and wine to befuddle Cyrus' army but such additions to the story change the character of Tomyris as depicted by Herodotus. Gera underlines the contrast between Tomyris and Cyrus thus:

> If we often think of deceit and wiles as womanly weapons used to counteract or circumvent powerful masculine violence, in Herodotus it is Cyrus who uses trickery, while Tomyris uses straightforward warfare; she is, by this criterion, the more masculine of the two. An important element of Herodotus' tale is the contrast between the queen's straightforward, primitive, "hard" ways and the devious, civilised, "soft" Cyrus.[70]

Perhaps Tomyris acquires the status of the less 'other' of the two because she is Cyrus' enemy and is therefore a more sympathetic character in Greek eyes as a result. Indeed the figure of Tomyris in the *Histories* acts as a foil to Cyrus and Croesus, pointing up their deficiencies both as men and as rulers, and yet nowhere does Herodotus use the words of approval that we find in connection with men. He does not credit Tomyris with κλέος, ἀρετή or even with exacting τίσις on Cyrus for the death of her son and the absence of these terms serves only to emphasise Tomyris' alterity; surely a woman leading an army to victory against a huge empire such as Cyrus' would at the very least earn renown for her deeds, if only for their very singularity. Likewise Tomyris showed nothing if not courage in taking on Cyrus and his army but Herodotus does not commend her ἀρετή. The absence of these terms

[70] Gera 1996: 197.

suggests a double standard; only men exhibit the admirable qualities expressed in words so closely associated with the heroic world. It was noted earlier that Cyrus came to a bad end for exhibiting ὕβρις and overstepping boundaries; Tomyris, on the other hand, does not commit ὕβρις, even if one might term her actions at the very least as overstepping boundaries, and not only Greek ones, since warrior queens are few and far between in any age and society. She does not show the same disregard for the honour of others as Cyrus does; indeed she goes to great lengths to try to prevent him from overreaching himself, while she merely defends her own territory. Nor is there any mention of fate being responsible for her victory, as it seems to have been for every success in Cyrus' life; her success is her own.

The entry on Tomyris in the *Tractatus de Mulieribus* omits various items of information given by Herodotus although he is acknowledged as the source. The *Tractatus* does not mention the fact that Tomyris is a widow who has come to power on the death of her husband, nor the marriage proposal which Cyrus makes to Tomyris, in the hope of acquiring her territory without going to war. The crossing of the Araxes, which Tomyris recognises as a declaration of war, is also not mentioned specifically in the *Tractatus*, nor is the deceitful use of wine to befuddle the Massegetae, but it does reproduce Tomyris' advice to the victorious Cyrus to be satisfied with his victory and to turn back to his own land. The dramatic scene in which the vengeful queen immerses Cyrus' head in a wineskin is reduced to a mention of the mutilation of Cyrus' corpse, without any of the details found in Herodotus' account. Indeed, in comparison with Herodotus' characterisation, the Tomyris in the *Tractatus* is altogether little more than a vengeful mother who has lost her son. Gera notes other equally brief later accounts of Tomyris which include some

of the more colourful details of Herodotus' version,[71] particularly the wineskin, but obviously the anonymous author's taste did not run to dramatic touches. It would appear from the comparison of the accounts of Herodotus and the author of the *Tractatus* that, even given the reduced scale of the latter, Herodotus is more interested in Tomyris as a personality, perhaps as a result of her success against an enemy of Greece.

The existence of Nitocris, the Egyptian queen mentioned by Herodotus, has been queried in the same way as that of her Babylonian namesake.[72] Although there are Egyptian written records in which she appears, there is no archaeological evidence in the form of inscriptions or a known tomb. She is one of the queens who appear in the *Tractatus de Mulieribus* and again Herodotus is noted as the source. There is no extraneous information from any other source contained in the entry, but she is mentioned by Manetho, the Egyptian priest/historian of the third century B.C. who notes only her building works and makes no mention of her murdered brother nor the revenge she exacts for his death. Herodotus claims that her brother was a king whose Egyptian subjects killed him and handed over the kingdom to her.[73] In order to avenge her brother's death, she invites his murderers to an inauguration ceremony for an underground chamber she has just built, but floods it through a secret passage during the course of the meal.

Women in myth are frequently associated with deception; indeed, Pandora, the first of the race of women, is given a deceitful nature by Hermes and deviousness is often attributed to women, both mortal and immortal. Here again we have a feast interrupted by violence, not this time as the result of excessive intake of wine, but

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[71] Gera 1996: 204.
[72] See How & Wells 1928: 1, 216f. For more recent discussion of the identity of Nitocris the Egyptian, see Lloyd 1988: 13-15.
[73] *Histories* 2.100.

rather intentional violence perpetrated out of a desire for vengeance, vengeance which Herodotus does not characterise as τίσις, but for which he employs the verb τιμωρέω, which is cognate with the noun τιμωρίη, a word for revenge that he uses in connection with another woman, Pheretime.[74] Lloyd comments on the feast as follows:

> An example of the common folk motif of the *fête fatale*. This violent tale *may* reflect the disturbed political conditions of the late VIth Dyn. Note, however, that since vengeance is a typical motive of characters in the *Histories* as a whole, the presence of this element in the narrative is almost certainly to be ascribed to Gk. contamination.[75]

Nitocris then commits suicide, like other sisters in myth who show great love and loyalty to brothers: Antigone pays with her life for according burial rites to the corpse of her brother, Polynices;[76] Macaria, daughter of Heracles, gives her own life to save her brothers when an oracle declares that the Athenians will be victorious only if one of the children of Heracles dies voluntarily. Other sisters in myth who demonstrate close ties with their brothers are Althaea, who avenges the murder of her brothers by killing her son, Meleager, then, doubly bereft, hangs herself, using the method of suicide most associated with women in myth,[77] and Electra, who supports Orestes after

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[74] *Histories* 4.165. Powell 1938 s.v. τιμωρέω and τιμωρίη. Note that Powell gives 'to avenge' and 'vengeance' respectively as secondary meanings for these words. He gives the primary meaning as 'succour.' For an examination of the two meanings of the word in Herodotus, see Demont 1995.
[75] Lloyd 1988: 15.
[76] *Antigone* 1190-1235.
[77] Apollodorus 1.8.3.

the murder of Clytemnestra.[78] Since the existence of Nitocris is attested in the written rather than the archaeological record, it is perhaps possible to speculate that Herodotus may have recast an Egyptian story he was told in terms of Greek myth familiar to his audience, as is intimated by Lloyd in the phrase 'Greek contamination', noted above.

Herodotus' chapters on Helen of Troy[79] are interesting for various reasons, not least of which is his obvious belief in the historical reality of the Trojan War, and also his assertions that Homer knew another version of the story but chose not to use it for artistic reasons. He also makes detailed criticisms of the view that Helen was in Troy during the war; he cannot believe that the Trojans would have suffered so much for her and therefore concludes that she must have been in Egypt as he had been told.[80] Helen differs from the other queens in Herodotus, since her sphere is marriage, the sphere in which all women rightfully belong in the Greek order of things. Whether she is abducted by Paris or elopes with him is not really at issue, since even if she acts as an unfaithful wife, her significance lies in being a wife, not a ruler or leader of an army, and as such she does not warrant an entry in the *Tractatus de Mulieribus*. Her power lies in the realm of Aphrodite rather than the realm of politics or war, which are properly the domain of men.

As with other queens, the material relating to Atossa is sparse, two full chapters and otherwise just passing references to her.[81] Herodotus identifies her as the daughter of Cyrus and wife of Darius[82] in keeping with the Greek custom, having earlier noted that previously she had been the wife first of her brother, Cambyses and then of Smerdis the Magus.[83] It has been argued that the picture Herodotus paints of

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[78] Sophocles' *Electra.*
[79] *Histories* 2.112-20.
[80] Euripides' *Helen* attests to such a variant version.
[81] *Histories* 3.133-34.
[82] *Histories* 3.133.
[83] *Histories* 3.68 and 88.

the Persian queens such as Atossa and Amestris is not an accurate one, partly because of Greek misunderstanding of Persian customs and partly because of the already existing antagonism between the two peoples.[84] Brosius calls attention to the function of 'other' that such women play in the work of Herodotus and other Greek historiography:

> When deeds, actions, customs and behaviour of foreign cultures need to be evaluated they are often compared with and judged against one's own cultural standards. The Greeks were thus far from able to create an open-minded and unprejudiced record of Persian court life; their comments on Persian royal women reflected what the Greeks *thought* the behaviour of royal women was like. What was permissible or socially accepted behaviour for women in Persian society was judged by the Greeks, not within the framework of Persian culture, but by the accepted Greek standards of behaviour.[85]

Such women as Atossa and Amestris, being not only foreign but also powerful by virtue of their relationship to the Great King, are doubly 'other' and, for lack of information to the contrary, the narratives concerning them tend to fall into stereotypical patterns. In the case of Atossa there is also the fact that she appears in Aeschylus' *Persae*, albeit unnamed, where as the daughter of Cyrus, wife of Darius and mother of Xerxes she serves as the link between the three kings. As the only

[84] Brosius 1996: 1f.
[85] Brosius 1996: 2.

female royal character in the play she is unusual and unGreek on at least two counts.

Herodotus' picture of Atossa is actually much more muted than that of Aeschylus. His description of her as a woman with a breast tumour is a convincing and accurate vignette of a frightened woman trying to hide her condition and her distress but having to turn to someone when the condition progresses; even powerful queens succumb to disease on occasion. Since Democedes had earlier cured Darius' dislocated ankle he was already well known at the Persian court for his skill and would have been the natural choice for Atossa to approach. Her gratitude to Democedes when he cures her is easily understandable as is her acquiescence in carrying out his plan to effect his return to Greece. Democedes is counting on her influence with Darius, which can be likened to Arete's influence at the court of the Phaeacians in the *Odyssey*; Nausicaa tells Odysseus to appeal to her mother first when appearing as a suppliant. Atossa does not, however, wield power independently, as Arete seems to do, but rather as the result of her ready access to the men in power as the daughter of Cyrus and wife of Darius.

Unless one posits the unlikely circumstance of an observer in the royal boudoir, the bedroom scene between Atossa and Darius is surely pure fiction and a good example of Herodotus' capacity to dramatise situations. Although Atossa is under instruction from Democedes concerning what she has to say to Darius, she argues her case skilfully and convincingly. She shows a capacity for intelligence and logical thought, and more than a passing acquaintance with the art of persuading her husband to do what she wants. She plays on Darius' masculine pride and his natural desire to

make his mark as a monarch;[86] indeed in the course of the first two sentences of her speech she uses the word ἀνήρ three times as she enumerates the things he should do to prove his manhood to his subjects.[87] Dewald maintains that 'Atossa supports Darius' political ambitions and at the same time fulfils the oath she has privately sworn to her physician.'[88] In fact Darius' political ambitions as king have not been mentioned up to this point; Herodotus has noted that on becoming king he married Atossa and Artystone, among others, and had divided the empire into satrapies or provinces, but of his future intentions there is silence. Atossa appears to articulate for the first time something that may have been in Darius' mind, conquest over others, but which he has not made public. Atossa is not reacting to Darius' ambitions but rather taking the initiative herself in suggesting that he should make positive moves to increase the Persian empire. That she is doing so in fulfilment of a vow in no way negates her understanding of the political situation and her skilful manipulation of her husband within it.

The bedroom scene has resonances with the episode in the *Iliad* [89] when Hera makes elaborate preparations to seduce Zeus so as to allow Poseidon to continue aiding the Achaeans; Hera manipulates Zeus just as skilfully as Atossa does Darius, though she does have supernatural help in the form of Aphrodite's girdle, whose power not even Zeus can withstand. The historical accuracy of the Persian episode is undermined by the fact that Democedes' reconnaissance mission took place twenty years before the actual invasion of Greece and patience on this scale is not normally

[86] Atossa is mentioned by Dewald 1981: 115 n8 as illustrative of 'the kinds of power available to a woman because of a powerful father.' Presumably by this she means that Atossa will gain a sympathetic hearing from Darius because she is her father's daughter.
[87] *Histories* 3.134.
[88] Dewald 1981: 117 n20.
[89] *Iliad* 14: 153-360.

attributed to royal women accustomed to having their wishes fulfilled immediately. It seems only reasonable to concur with Brosius when she says,

> 'This story formed part of a narrative pattern in which Persian kings follow the council (sic) of women who are depicted as instigators of revolt and war. In the Democedes story Atossa is merely a literary figure; the actions and words ascribed to her cannot be taken as historical reality.'[90]

In a later reference to Atossa[91] Herodotus recounts the tale of Xerxes' rivalry for the throne with an older son of Darius by a former wife, the daughter of Gobryas.[92] Persian law demands that Darius should nominate an heir before leaving on an expedition and the two rival competing claimants put forward the grounds for their claims; Artobazanes is the oldest of all Darius' children but Xerxes bases his claim on his descent through his mother Atossa from Cyrus, the architect of Persian independence. Demaratus, who has just arrived from Sparta, advises Xerxes to add that he is the first son born to Darius as king, while Artobazanes was the child of Darius the private citizen. Darius opts for Xerxes and Herodotus adds an authorial comment – δοκέειν δέ μοι, καὶ ἄνευ ταύτης τῆς ὑποθήκης ἐβασίλευσε ἂν Ξέρξες· ἡ γὰρ Ἄτοσσα εἶχε τὸ πᾶν κράτος – 'it seems to me that the kingship would have fallen to Xerxes anyway, without this advice. For Atossa had all the power.'[93] It is tempting to believe that there must have been other stories in circulation concerning Atossa's influence over Darius, since the one that Herodotus

[90] Brosius 1996: 51.
[91] *Histories* 7.2.
[92] Note that this wife, like many other women in the text, is also unnamed.
[93] *Histories* 7.3.

has told prior to this one[94] does not depict the formidable figure that the last phrase quoted suggests. Whatever the truth of the matter, Atossa's son is the one named as the heir. Brosius suggests that the position of mother of the king was an important one at the Persian court, 'regarding the mother of the king as ranking high among royal women at the court, with a seniority and status perhaps superior even to that of the king's wife.'[95] Next in rank then would be the king's wife who was the mother of the heir to the throne. The position of the latter could only be instituted once the selection of the heir had been made and, *pace* Herodotus, Brosius believes that 'the king alone decided who the heir to the throne should be.'[96] If that was in fact the case, then it would certainly explain Atossa's eagerness to secure Xerxes' position as Darius' official heir, if not the reason for her alleged influence over her husband. As Brosius points out, Darius was also married to Atossa's sister, Artystone, whose sons would have had the same maternal claims to the throne as Xerxes.[97]

Sibling rivalry is a recurrent motif in mythology, since it highlights the Greek preoccupation with problems of inheritance. The fatal rivalry of Polynices and Eteocles springs to mind immediately as an example,[98] but there are likewise the stories of Proetus and Acrisius who also fight over an inheritance,[99] and of Danaus and Aegyptus whose rivalry is carried on to the next generation.[100] Atossa's championing of her own son's claim to the throne is reminiscent of Ino's persecution of Athamas' children of his previous marriage, Phrixus and Helle, in defence of her own children's claim to their inheritance.[101] Herodotus' Greek audience would have

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[94] *Histories* 3.133-134.
[95] Brosius 1996: 24.
[96] Brosius 1996: 188.
[97] Brosius 1996: 50.
[98] Apollodorus 3.6.8.
[99] Apollodorus 2.2.1.
[100] Apollodorus 2.1.4.
[101] Apollodorus 1.9.1.

understood Atossa's concerns entirely, given their own anxiety over the rightful inheritance of property.

At this point it is instructive to examine Herodotus' material concerning the Amazons. It occurs during his long excursus on Scythia, when the Scythians and their neighbouring tribes are gathering to discuss their response to Darius' invasion of their territory. One of the neighbouring tribes is that of the Sauromatians and Herodotus takes the opportunity to tell the tale of their interaction with the Amazons.[102] A Greek victory over the Amazons is his starting point, but he does not specify which Greek expedition this was, nor who led it; he merely states that three shiploads of Amazons were taken captive. After killing their Greek captors at sea, the Amazons eventually land in Scythia, where they seize the first horses they came across and proceed to ravage the land of the Scyths. The account of the encounter between the young Scythian men and the Amazon women is an interesting exercise in alterity but as Hartog points out, there are three rather than two parties to the comparison,[103] since the Greek way of doing things is always understood, even if not explicitly mentioned. Once the Scythians realise, after examining the corpses after a battle, that their opponents are not men but women, as Hartog puts it, 'Confronted with the Amazons, the Scythians turn into quasi-Greeks,'[104] and stop fighting, because Greeks do not fight women. Here again, as in the story of Cyrus and Tomyris, there is a gradation of 'otherness' in which the least 'other' assumes the position and attributes of the Greeks. There follows an elaborate series of accommodations between the young men of the Scythians and the Amazon women, for the Scythian men, in every respect barbarians in Greek eyes, see women as bearers of children as Greeks do, and proceed

[102] *Histories* 4.110-17.
[103] Hartog 1988: 218.
[104] Hartog 1988: 223.

to make love rather than war with them. Finally, upholding the idea of marriage maintained in Greek custom, the Scythian men ask the women to come and live with them as their wives in a virilocal marriage. It is the Amazons who are 'other' in this discussion, since they refuse to do so or to change their customs of riding, hunting and fighting, in order to live like Scythian (or Greek) women. The final arrangement arrived at is one in which the men bring their possessions from their parents, a dowry as it were, and together the two groups travel to find a suitable place to live, so that the men move to another *oikos* like a Greek bride and and the women retain their previous habits. Herodotus' treatment of the Amazons reads very much as his other ethnographic digressions, relating the history, geography and customs of his subjects and there is no reference to the Amazons of myth, except in the allusion to the battle of Thermodon at the very beginning of his account. One assumes that he is referring to one of the expeditions led by the heroes of myth, Heracles, Theseus or Bellerophon, but he makes no attempt to link myth and history in specific terms.

Pheretime[105] is an interesting case in the cast of female characters found in Herodotus' *Histories*. She is a native of Cyrene, a colony on the north African coast founded by settlers from the Greek island of Thera around 630 BCE. Her situation is analogous to that of Artemisia since she is queen of a tribute-paying part of the Persian empire under Darius.[106] It would appear from Herodotus' account that following the death of Battus III, Pheretime's husband, there was civil strife because her son Arcesilaus III demanded the return of his hereditary privileges. He flees to Samos while his mother escapes to Salamis in Cyprus where she asks Euelthon for an army to restore her and her son to power in Cyrene. The only women associated with

[105] *Histories* 4.165ff.

[106] *Histories* 3.91, where Herodotus notes that Cyrene and Barca were also assessed as part of Egypt under the system of satrapies instituted by Darius. How & Wells 1928: 1, 283 note that 'the whole passage implies that the Persians were masters of Egypt when it was written.'

armies in Greek mythology are, of course, the Amazons; the martial goddess, Athena, although frequently represented as armed, does not lead armies in attack or aggression, though she does stand in the van in defence, hence the statue on the Acropolis of Athena Promachos.

Euelthon is prepared to give Pheretime anything but an army and showers her with gifts, which she accepts, each time reiterating her request for an army. In the end Euelthon gives her a golden spindle and distaff, along with some wool, saying, as Herodotus puts it, that women should be given these things, ἀλλ' οὐ στρατιῇ - 'but not an army.'[107] As the quintessential expression of male superiority, Euelthon's response has few rivals for brevity, while at the same time being loaded with unspoken meaning. A woman's place is in the private arena, in the home spinning wool for the family, not in the public arena, where men do the important things like fighting battles with armies. Spinning is extremely time-consuming, even more so than weaving, so Euelthon's gift is an artefact intended to keep Pheretime continually occupied with a pastime more suitable to her sex than warfare. Weaving is far more visible in myth than spinning, as is illustrated by the examples of Penelope or Philomela, but weaving implies spinning, and even the thread that Ariadne gives to Theseus to find his way out of the labyrinth had to have been spun first.[108] At this point the case of Arachne might be adduced;[109] she angered Athena through her prowess at weaving and the goddess tore up her perfect specimen of the craft. Arachne hanged herself in despair, as might be expected from a heroine in myth, but the goddess changed her into a spider, condemned to spend her days forever spinning,

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[107] *Histories* 4.162.
[108] Apollodorus 1.9.
[109] Ovid *Metamorphoses* 6.1-145.

a punishment in itself for a heroine who prided herself so much on her ability in the more creative art of weaving.

Pheretime may indeed be an example of a woman who owes her position to her powerful male relatives but she takes a very active part in the politics of Cyrene, once her son is forced to flee to Barca through a misunderstanding of an oracular response. On her son's departure from Cyrene, Pheretime takes over his political duties, including his seat on the council. A female participant in communal deliberations is an unusual phenomenon in the Greek world, both in real life and in myth, except perhaps for Athena's speeches on Odysseus' behalf at the councils of the gods in the *Odyssey*.[110] Her participation in the council of Cyrene is remarkable in itself, not least because her male colleagues allowed it. Pheretime is no shrinking violet but a woman accustomed to act, and act in the very male world of war and politics. The public arena of politics is not normally the domain of women; Euelthon's gift of a spindle and distaff merely expresses the general view of the time. Pheretime also has great persistence, as is shown by her repeated requests for an army; she is not put off by Euelthon's first refusal. When she needs an army on a second occasion, she goes this time to Egypt, displaying an understanding of the political climate by choosing the man most likely to help her. She also understands the need to frame her request in terms that will gain her a favourable response; by saying that her son was killed because he had been pro-Persian she elicits immediate support from Aryandes, Cambyses' viceroy in Egypt. Her persistence in seeking to avenge her son's death recalls Hecuba's attempts to obtain help in avenging the death of Polydorus, and in the event, Pheretime is more successful in this enterprise than Hecuba, who has to take matters into her own hands. Eventually when Barca is beseiged and taken by

[110] *Odyssey* 1.26-95 and 5.3-42. All the councils of war in the *Iliad* are attended only by men.

Aryandes' forces through a ruse, Pheretime exacts her revenge by having those responsible for her son's death impaled at intervals around the city walls and by cutting off their wives' breasts and displaying those too. Amestris, wife of Xerxes, takes her revenge by mutilating Artaynte's mother in a similar fashion.

What is really interesting, however, is a comparison between Herodotus' treatment of Pheretime and Amestris, both of whom exact terrible revenge by mutilating the sexual organs of their victims, as retribution for what they perceive as offences again them, and his treatment of a man who does likewise. One of the most vivid stories in Herodotus illustrating the Greek concept of τίσις, vengeance, is that of Hermotimus. Hermotimus is a Pedasian whom Xerxes sends along to guard his children when Artimisia takes them to Ephesus after the battle of Salamis. The name of a guard is hardly likely to remain in the mind of the reader or listener, but the story of the man who exacts what Herodotus describes as μεγίστη τίσις . . . πάντων τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν - 'the greatest vengeance of all men we know'[111] - will indeed live on in the memory. In brief, the story goes that having been captured, castrated and given to Xerxes by a Chian, Hermotimus rises in the service of Xerxes until on a business trip he comes across his persecutor, Panionius. Hermotimus exacts revenge for the wrong done to him by having Panionius castrate his children and having the children castrate their father. What is interesting is the manner in which Herodotus marks Hermotimus' revenge approvingly as 'the greatest vengeance of all the men we know' but characterises Pheretime's revenge quite differently. By overstepping the bounds of revenge allowed by the gods,[112] Pheretime comes to a sorry end herself, which Herodotus describes in terms

[111] *Histories* 8.105.

[112] Dewald 1981:118 notes that the gods punish Pheretime not 'because she has adopted a role inappropriate for a woman, but because she has transgressed the limits set by the gods on *human* vengeance.'

diametrically opposed to those used for Hermotimus' actions: ζῶσα γὰρ εὐλέων ἐξέζεσε, ὡς ἄρα ἀνθρώποισι αἱ λίην ἰσχυραὶ τιμωρίαι πρὸς θεῶν ἐπίφθονοι γίνονται - 'while still alive she became infested with worms so that it becomes clear to men that too great revenge is abominated by the gods.'[113] Amestris' vengeance receives no evaluative comment whatsoever.

Also of interest at this point is the fact that Herodotus does not use the word τίσις to describe what Pheretime has done, but instead employs a synonym, τιμωρίη, which he uses twice in consecutive sentences in the concluding chapter of the episode.[114] Long has investigated instances of repetition and variation in a close reading of several of the short stories in the first book of the *Histories* and concluded that variation of an expected word is significant.[115] Bearing this in mind, it is arguable that Herodotus' use of τίσις in the case of Hermotimus but not in the case of Pheretime or Amestris is significant, given the similarity of their actions, and may represent an unconscious, or even conscious, difference in Herodotus' feelings about vengeance exacted by men and by women. Pheretime is perhaps not a very heroic character and that may explain why we do not find the heroic type words such as κλέος, ἀρετή, τίσις or even ὕβρις in the account of her exploits, even though her treatment of her victims is surely an instance of outright ὕβρις, but it may also be symptomatic of a reluctance to use words with heroic resonances in connection with women, especially as it has already been noted that Herodotus avoids the use of the same words concerning Tomyris. Like Pheretime, Amestris exacts extreme vengeance in return for the harm done to her, but in her case it is not her husband who

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[113] *Histories* 4.205.

[114] Herodotus also uses τιμωρίη on three other occasions; at 1.123 in connection with Harpagus plotting to take revenge on Astyages; at 5.90 to describe the Athenians' preparations to take revenge on the Aeginetans and at 7.8a.2 in the course of Xerxes' speech in which he gives his reasons for going to war against the Greeks. One reason he gives is to exact revenge and retribution against his enemies.

[115] Long 1987: 2ff.

pays for his violation of the conventions of marriage, nor even his mistress, but an innocent woman. But again as in the case of Pheretime, Herodotus does not characterise her avenging of her honour as τίσις.[116] Is there a special resonance to the word τίσις which does not allow its use when a woman is the avenger? It is hardly surprising that we do not find the approving words such as ἀρετή and κλέος in connection with Amestris but it is interesting to note that we do not find τίσις. Revenge in myth is exemplified by the house of Pelops, which is cursed by Myrtilus when he does not receive payment from Pelops for tampering with the chariot of Oenomaus. The curse plays itself out over generations, including Thyestes and Atreus, Aegisthus, Menelaus and Agamemnon.[117] Clytemnestra claims that her motive for killing Agamemnon on his return from the Trojan War is revenge for his sacrifice of their daughter, Iphigenia, at Aulis.[118]

Pheretime features among the fourteen women memorialised in the *Tractatus de Mulieribus*, but the source for the entry is not Herodotus, but Menecles, who is identified as the author of a work known as the *Libyan Histories*, dated to the middle or late second century BCE.[119] In the style of all the entries, the one on Pheretime is brief and straightforward, and the picture given of the queen is of a woman concerned mainly with maintaining the Battiad line on the throne, rather than the vengeful mother who mutilates the murderers of her son that we find in Herodotus. The anonymous author of the *Tractatus* tells us that she took over the rule of Cyrene herself and established her grandson as king, a somewhat ambiguous statement which does not make clear whether she ruled herself for some time before handing over

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[116] It is worth noting that Herodotus does not use the word τίσις in connection with the action of Candaules' queen either.
[117] Apollodorus 2.3-14.
[118] *Agamemnon* 1436-44.
[119] See Gera 1996: 164 for details of the date of Menecles.

power to her grandson, or whether she she acted as regent for him during his minority. The author also merely reports that she killed those who had opposed her son, without any of the gruesome details we find in the text of Herodotus, nor does he note anything remarkable about her death.

There is no doubt that Herodotus paints a sympathetic and complimentary picture of Artemisia, perhaps because she is a fellow citizen of Halicarnassus and perhaps simply because she stands out as a woman in a man's world. The material relating to her is contained in only four chapters of the *Histories*,[120] apart from passing references, but some of the relevant material reads as a paean of praise,[121] without any suggestion of the feminine wiles and deviousness or even savagery attributed to other women in power in the work. Herodotus says that he considers it a wonder, θῶμα ποιεῦμαι, that as a woman Artemisia served in the army, despite the fact that she had a grownup son who could serve and there was no compulsion for her to do so. One of Herodotus' main concerns in his work is to record the various wonders or θώματα[122] that he comes across, so his usage of the word here to describe the behaviour of a woman is a direct pointer to the normal expectations of the age concerning female conduct. Unlike most Greek women Artemisia was able to choose to serve in Xerxes' forces because she was the ruler of city and therefore not bound by the *mores* governing ordinary women. Her freedom to choose to join Xerxes' forces not only points up her alterity with regard to other women, but sets her apart from the other commanders in the Persian force who are compelled to serve in the Great King's army. As Munson notes, 'Autonomy with regard to political choices is generally a

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[120] She is also mentioned in the entry for Herodotus in the *Suda*, the Byzantine literary encyclopedia compiled at the end of the tenth century AD. Part of the entry reads 'He migrated to Samos because of Lygdamis, who was the third tyrant of Halicarnassus after Artemisia.'

[121] In particular, *Histories* 7.99.

[122] Cartledge 1993: 66 comments that women "appear under the 'wonders' rubric of his preface rather than the 'why the Greeks and non-Greeks fought with one another.'"

prerogative of the Greek side, and especially of the Athenians, not of Eastern peoples.'[123] Nonetheless, it is clear that Herodotus considered her choice an unusual one and that no opprobrium would have accrued to her had she chosen to stay at home and govern her city.

On the death of her husband Artemisia had already shown herself to be capable of ruling Halicarnassus, recalling the mythological Omphale, who also came to power on the death of her husband and ruled successfully thereafter.[124] Herodotus does not say so but one assumes that Artemisia's son was too young to rule on his father's death and she no doubt acted as regent as he grew up. One wonders whether the son stayed behind to rule the city while his mother indulged her taste for action and adventure, but whatever the circumstances, her decision to serve in Xerxes' army reinforces the picture of a woman confident of her ability to succeed in a man's world. Herodotus' comment that her squadron of five ships was considered the best in the fleet after that of the Sidonians may point to her organisational abilities, which in turn would suggest that she was a capable ruler. There is an interesting *hapax legomenon* at this point in that Herodotus says she went to war only because of her courage and manly spirit, ὑπο λήματός τε καὶ ἀνδρηίης.[125] Nowhere else does he use the noun ἀνδρηίη, although he does use the cognate adjective on other occasions.[126] He must have been aware of the striking effect he was creating when he used a noun cognate with the word for man, ἀνήρ, once only and then of a woman.[127] One might have

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[123] Munson 1988: 95.
[124] Apollodorus 2.6.3.
[125] *Histories* 7.99.
[126] *Histories* 1.17, 1.79, 1.123, 2.102, 4.93, 7.153 and 9.37.
[127] Cartledge 1993: 83 notes 'uniquely, Herodotus applies to her conduct the standard Greek word for bravery, *andreia*, despite the formal gender-contradiction that involved.' Romm 1998: 171 also comments on Herodotus use of this word in connection with a woman when he says, 'The noun *andreie*, derived from a word for "male" and used only here in the *Histories*, clearly has ironic point when applied to a woman.' Dewald 1981:109 says that 'Herodotus singles out Artemisia as the only commander in Xerxes' fleet attending through *andreia*, manly courage, rather than compulsion.'

expected the use of the word ἀρετή in this context but as with various other words with heroic resonances used of men, it does not occur in connection with women.[128] Munson comments as follows on Herodotus' characterisation of Artemisia:

> 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.[129]

Herodotus says that of all the allies, Artemisia gave Xerxes the best advice. At the council[130] of Persian leaders and commanders called by Xerxes before Salamis, there is only one dissenting voice in the unanimous vote for the sea battle. In outspoken fashion Artemisia advises Xerxes not to take on the Greeks at sea as he can obtain all his objectives by remaining where he is. It is noteworthy that she too employs the gender dichotomy, informing him that the Greeks at sea will be as superior to his men as men are to women. How & Wells describe this as a 'shrewish saying' and draw attention to the fact that later on Herodotus explains that παρὰ δὲ τοῖσι Πέρσῃσι γυναικὸς κακίω ἀκοῦσαι δέννος μέγιστός ἐστι – 'among the Persians it is the greatest insult to be considered worse than a woman.'[131] It can be argued, however, that Artemisia was using a strong image to bring home to Xerxes

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[128] For this word the entry in Powell's *Lexicon to Herodotus* is instructive. Of 24 occurrences of the word, which is defined generally as 'goodness, excellence,' the majority of instances (17) occur under the rubric 'of men, *valour*'. Herodotus' decision not to use this word may be an example of Long's significant variations (Long 1987 *passim*).

[129] Munson 1988: 94.

[130] Cartledge 1993: 83 remarks that Xerxes' council of war 'would inescapably have recalled Homer's Agamemnon and his councils of war at Troy, but his advisors in the *Iliad* were all men.'

[131] *Histories* 9.107.

the danger that he would incur if he decided in favour of taking on the Greeks in a sea battle rather than that she was indulging in womanly shrewishness, particularly if comparison to a woman was commonly accepted among the Persians as an insult.[132] In the sentence expressing this sentiment - οἱ γὰρ ἄνδρες τῶν σῶν ἀνδρῶν κρέσσονες τοσοῦτόν εἰσι κατὰ θάλασσαν ὅσον ἄνδρες γυναικῶν[133] - note how the triple repetition of the word for men is followed by the word for women in the important position of final word in the sentence for maximum emphasis. This is followed by three short rhetorical questions, enumerating the goals that Xerxes has already met in his campaign, and ending by stating that there is no one to stand against him. Artemisia spells out for Xerxes what he has to do and explains why the Greeks will not be able to oppose him as one if he avoids a sea battle; if nothing else, this establishes her as a commander with a good grasp of strategy, particularly when she is proved to be right.[134] She ends off with an aphorism about good men having bad slaves, leading neatly into some diplomatic flattery – σοὶ δὲ ἐόντι ἀρίστῳ ἀνδρῶν πάντων κακοὶ δοῦλοι εἰσί – 'though you are the best of all men, you have bad slaves.'[135] Though she may project the image of maverick she is not totally unaware of nor incapable of playing the game of manipulating the monarch.

Differing opinions have been expressed concerning the purpose of speeches in Herodotus' work. Guzie[136] maintains that 'we find in almost *all* of the speeches this element of character portrayal.' while Waters[137] believes that 'one motive . . . for the

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[132] Cf. *Histories* 9.107, the story of Masistes' tirade against Artaynte, ἄλλα τε καὶ γυναικὸς κακίω φὰς αὐτὸν εἶναι τοιαῦτα στρατηγήσαντα . . . παρὰ δὲ τοῖσι Πέρσῃσι γυναικὸς καίω ἀκοῦσαι δέννος μέγιστος ἐστι. - 'saying that he was worse than a woman in his style of command . . . among the Persians to be thought worse than a woman is the greatest reproach.'

[133] *Histories* 8.68.

[134] Dewald 1981: 109 comments that 'she (Artemisia) alone of Xerxes' advisors gives advice with an eye to the military situation rather than to her own standing at court.'

[135] *Histories* 8.68.

[136] Guzie 1955: 328.

[137] Waters 1966: 162.

inclusion of such speeches is the conveyance to the public of vital information.' Such contentions are not mutually exclusive; there is no reason why Herodotus should not have had both purposes in mind. In examining the speeches of Artemisia, one can deduce from the arguments and opinions she puts forward that Herodotus wishes his audience to consider her as an intelligent, logical and courageous character. At the same time Herodotus uses her to convey to his audience the factors that militated against the Persians being victorious in a sea battle. Such information is more readily assimilated when conveyed in speech form by an interesting character. It is not difficult to see the provenance of this technique in Homer, where the audience learns about the characters partly from their speeches, yet at the same time information which impels the action along is also disseminated. Herodotus was never one to let slip a technique for maintaining the audience's attention, hence the 'dramatisation' of information transfer.

The reaction in the council of war to Artemisia's intelligent and well-reasoned advice to Xerxes illustrates the intrigue and factionalism that often attends the court of an absolute ruler. Artemisia's supporters are terrified that Xerxes will have her punished for expressing such an unpopular analysis of the situation, however well-reasoned or accurate. Her enemies are delighted by the thought that Xerxes, exercising the power of such a monarch, may have her put to death. Part of the reason that her enemies are so hostile to her is encapsulated in the words used to describe Xerxes' opinion of Artemisia - τετιμημένης διὰ πάντων τῶν συμμάχων - (Artemisia) 'honoured above all the allies.'[138] Her high standing in the eyes of Xerxes not only provokes the jealousy of his other commanders but throws into relief their inability to advise the king as fearlessly and clearsightedly as she does. Munson has

[138] *Histories* 8.69.

pointed out that in consulting his military commanders Xerxes allows a 'democratic element' to intrude, but that the device fails since all the advisers merely tell the monarch what he wishes to hear.[139] The whole process is subverted from the start because Xerxes as an absolute monarch has no need to heed their advice, even if it is unanimous.

When all the opinions are reported back to Xerxes, with Artemisia in a minority of one advising against a sea battle, Herodotus says that Xerxes, νομίζων ἔτι πρότερον σπουδαίην εἶναι τότε πολλῷ μᾶλλον αἴνεε - 'thinking her before this to be excellent, at that time praised her all the more.'[140] Having reported that nonetheless Xerxes decided to follow the majority opinion, with typical irony Herodotus gives the reason for Xerxes' choice: τάδε καταδόξας, πρὸς μὲν Εὐβοίῃ σφέας ἐθελοκακέειν ὡς οὐ παρεόντος αὐτοῦ, τότε δὲ αὐτὸς παρεσκεύαστο θεήσασθαι ναυμαχέοντας – 'firmly believing that his men had fought badly on purpose off Euboea because he had not been there, he now prepared himself to watch them fight.'[141] Xerxes' decision-making processes have a large component of vanity which contrasts with Artemisia's logical analysis of the factors in her decision to advise him to avoid a sea battle. Her enemies, although they must have been delighted that Xerxes did not in fact follow Artemisia's counsel, must have wondered what could possibly cause her to fall from favour in Xerxes' eyes. The use of σπουδαῖη in the quotation above indicating excellence in a person is a *hapax legomenon*, since this is the only instance where it is used of a person. This second example of a word used only in connection with Artemisia underlines her status as *sui generis* and highlights Herodotus' intention to signal just how unusual she is.

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[139] Munson 1988: 96.
[140] *Histories* 8.69.
[141] *Histories* 8.69.

The theme continues as Herodotus describes Artemisia's daring behaviour during the sea battle when she rams a friendly ship while pursued by an Athenian vessel. The friendly ship sinks with all hands so that there are no survivors to accuse her and those watching the battle, including Xerxes, conclude that she would only have rammed an enemy vessel. As a result of this incident she is said to have enjoyed even more good repute with the king - ἀπ' ὧν εὐδοκίησε μᾶλλον ἔτι παρὰ βασιλέα.[142] The verb εὐδοκιμέω is repeated in the following chapter in connection with the same incident and this repetition, while not being entirely formulaic, nonetheless serves to underline the favour Artemisia enjoys in Xerxes' eyes. Herodotus uses this word on eleven occasions, but only of Artemisia does he use it twice. The other subjects of this verb include Croesus' son, Atys, Pisistratus, Demaratus, Miltiades and the eminent Persian Masistius, so Artemisia is in rather exalted company, notably all male.

Herodotus reports that when Xerxes sees the ramming and is assured that it is Artemisia's vessel he exclaimed 'Οἱ μὲν ἄνδρες γεγόνασί μοι γυναῖκες, αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες ἄνδρες' - 'my men have become women and my women men.'[143] This is a huge insult to his soldiers and sailors, but obviously intended as a compliment to Artemisia. Furthermore it continues the male/female opposition that has been so obvious a component of the narrative concerning Artemisia, indeed what Dewald terms 'another set of deliberate inversions of the traditional sex roles.'[144] Artemisia is in fact a woman acting in a manner befitting a man while Xerxes' men are behaving more like women, or perhaps more accurately, fulfilling the commonly held perceptions about the behaviour of women.

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[142] *Histories* 8.87.
[143] *Histories* 8.88. Cf *Histories* 1.155. This comparison of cowardly men to women is found also in the Homeric poems, e.g. *Iliad* 8.163. When the Achaeans are being taunted with their lack of courage they are referred to as 'Αχαιΐδες, women of Achaea (*Iliad* 2.235 and 7.96).
[144] Dewald 1981: 109.

Forceful personalities like Artemisia are often reported to be attended by good luck but it could be argued that by seizing the moment and ramming a friendly ship to escape a Greek vessel, Artemisia made her own luck; Weil uses a comparison that Herodotus' contemporaries may have made when he says 'fine comme Ulysse, Artemise nuit à ses ennemis,'[145] while Dewald, comments that Artemisia 'saves herself by daring and unscrupulous tactics during the battle.'[146] It is this very daring that sets her apart not only from her fellow women but also from less audacious male commanders. What Dewald construes as unscrupulousness may also be seen as that vital dash of opportunism that allows a bold character to turn certain disaster into success, a characteristic sadly lacking in Xerxes himself. Herodotus himself emphasises Artemisia's luck with the use of the verb συμφέρω, in the sense of to benefit someone, twice in connection with this incident involving Artemisia – ἔδοξέ οἱ τόδε ποιῆσαι, τὸ καὶ συνήνεικε ποιησάση – 'it seemed good to her to do this and the doing of it benefitted her.'[147] Again he labours the point – τά τε γὰρ ἄλλα, ὡς εἴρηται, αὐτῇ συνήνεικε ἐς εὐτυχίην γενόμενα καὶ τὸ τῶν ἐκ τῆς Καλυνδικῆς νεὸς μηδένα ἀποσωθέντα κατήγορον γενέσθαι – 'for as I have said, the rest benefitted her in that no one from the Kalyndian ship was saved to become an accuser.'[148]

After the battle of Salamis has been lost Xerxes has to decide whether to pursue the war against the Greeks himself or leave this task in the hands of Mardonius while he returns to Persia. He consults Artemisia ὅτι πρότερον ἐφαίνετο μούνη νοέουσα τὰ ποιητέα ἦν – 'because before she had shown herself to be the only one

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[145] Weil 1976: 222.
[146] Dewald 1998: 700.
[147] *Histories* 8.87.
[148] *Histories* 8.88.

who knew what had to be done.'[149] Here is a tacit acknowledgement from Xerxes that Artemisia's advice prior to the battle was correct and that his decision to concur with the opinion of the majority of his generals was an error. Her conduct during the battle, during which she fights with daring and courage, even though she believes that the battle itself should have been avoided, undoubtedly helps to persuade Xerxes to ask and follow her advice after his defeat.

Once more in outspoken fashion Artemisia advises Xerxes to go home and leave Mardonius either to win glory as the agent of Xerxes or ignominy as the defeated slave of Xerxes, who will still have achieved his object of burning Athens. Either outcome can be seen as favourable to Xerxes. Her advice to Xerxes shows her to be shrewd in her judgement both of the circumstances and of the character of the Great King. She makes great play of the survival of Xerxes himself and his house, οἶκος ὁ σός,[150] repeating the words in consecutive sentences for emphasis, and playing down the importance of Mardonius whom she characterises as δοῦλον σὸν, recalling her previous remarks about good men having bad servants, and his soldiers as οἱ σοὶ δοῦλοι. She ends by reminding Xerxes of his achievement of his objective – σὺ δέ, τῶν εἵνεκα τὸν στόλον ἐποιήσαο, πυρώσας τὰς Ἀθήνας ἀπελᾷς – 'you have done those things on account of which you made this journey and having burnt Athens, you march away.'[151] She has analysed the situation in calculated fashion and Xerxes praises – ἐπαινέσας – her for advice which coincides exactly with his inclinations. This is the second occasion on which Herodotus uses this word to describe Xerxes' reaction to Artemisia's advice. On the first occasion he praised her advice but did not follow it; this time he praises her advice and follows it, either

[149] *Histories* 8.101.
[150] *Histories* 8.102.
[151] *Histories* 8.102.

because he has learnt to trust her judgement or because her acute intelligence allows her to provide the rationale for what he wants to do anyway. Dewald remarks that 'In 8.103, Herodotus sarcastically distinguishes between Artemisia's merit in giving the advice to retreat and Xerxes' cowardice in taking it.'[152]

Despite the fact that the material relating to Artemisia is not extensive when compared with, for instance, Croesus or Cyrus, several things are clear. Courage, whether in a man or a woman, is admired as much by Herodotus himself as by Xerxes, and Artemisia shows herself to be the equal of any man in this respect. It is interesting that Herodotus does not say that she won κλέος by her actions but employs rather the verb εὐδοκιμέω - to enjoy good repute - which does not appear in the Homeric works. It may be argued that the good repute that Artemisia enjoyed may have been only in the eyes of Xerxes, since Herodotus mentions that she had her enemies among the commanders, those who hoped that her outspoken opinions would be her downfall. A woman who fearlessly gives advice at variance with the opinion of the majority of the male commanders cannot have been very popular with the military establishment, particularly when events prove her to have been correct in her judgement. On the other hand, her status as the only female commander in Xerxes' army must have made her generally well known and her bravery in action is not in question, so it would appear that Herodotus must have made a deliberate choice not to use the heroic resonance of the words κλέος or ἀρετή in connection with Artemisia. It could indeed be argued that it is because she is a woman, particularly in the light of the evidence previously adduced that Herodotus does not use κλέος or ἀρετή in connection with any other woman either, a choice which may be cited as analogous to Long's significant variations.

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[152] Dewald 1981: 118 n26.

Artemisia's intelligence allows her to analyse a situation so as to give Xerxes good advice, even when she is alone in favouring a particular course of action. She is so confident of her judgement that she does not hesitate to go against the general run of opinion, so one can infer that she is not easily intimidated by numbers of men antagonistic to her ideas. Her action at the battle of Salamis shows her capacity for daring and swift judgement, even though it may be construed as unscrupulous. Herodotus notes that the captain of the Athenian ship chasing Artemisia would not have withdrawn had he known who was on board, not only because all Athenian captains had orders to capture Artemisia but also because πρὸς δὲ καὶ ἄεθλον ἔκειτο μύριαι δραχμαί, ὃς ἄν μιν ζωὴν ἕλῃ· δεινὸν γάρ τι ἐποιεῦντο γυναῖκα ἐπὶ τὰς Ἀθήνας στρατεύεσθαι – 'a reward of ten thousand drachmae was offered to whoever took her alive for they thought it was a terrible thing for a woman to wage war against Athens.'[153] This remark lends weight to the contention that the myth of the Amazons acts as a subtext to all the material dealing with women in positions of power, since the myth of the Amazon invasion of Attica, if measured by its representation in public art, made a powerful impression on the Greek male psyche, hence the bounty on the head of another woman opposing Athens in the military sphere. Herodotus does not say that a reward was offered for any other commander on the Persian side so it is safe to presume that this distinction may have been reserved for Artemisia alone, highlighting yet again the male/female juxtaposition already noted in the material relating to Artemisia.

More interesting still is the lack of any indication whatsoever that fate had anything to do with Artemisia's success, as was noted previously in the case of Tomyris. Unlike other male leaders throughout the course of the *Histories*, she does

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[153] *Histories* 8.93.

not consult any oracle or god about her course of action, nor are there any oracular responses concerning her. Indeed, Herodotus seems to suggest that Artemisia is the beneficiary of a lucky chance at the battle of Salamis which could easily have gone the other way – τοῦτο μὲν τοιοῦτον αὐτῇ συνήνεικε γενέσθαι διαφυγεῖν τε καὶ μὴ ἀπολέσθαι, τοῦτο δὲ συνέβη ὥστε κακὸν ἐργασαμένην ἀπὸ τούτων αὐτὴν μάλιστα εὐδοκιμῆσαι παρὰ Ξέρξῃ – 'it transpired in this way not only that she happened to escape and was not destroyed but also it occurred that in the very act of doing harm to Xerxes she gained greater favour with him.'[154] There is not the slightest suggestion that the supernatural played any part in Artemisia's survival and subsequent elevation in Xerxes' estimation; she took her chance and as luck would have it, events turned out in her favour. Indeed the cumulative effect of the three different words for 'happen' in the quotation above - συνήνεικε, γενέσθαι and συνέβη - underscores just how likely it was that events could have gone against her. Contrast this with the heavy emphasis on fate or μοῖρα in the story of Cyrus. Herodotus uses μοῖρα in the direct speech of Astyages to the child Cyrus, whose destiny has been foretold in a dream. Astyages says to Cyrus 'τῇ σεωυτοῦ δὲ μοίρῃ περίεις' – 'by your own destiny you have survived.'[155]

The parallels between the stories of Cyrus and of Oedipus and other, similar myth patterns, e.g. Moses or Romulus and Remus, are quite obvious and yet it must be remembered that Cyrus was a historical figure (559-529 BCE) who lived about eighty years before Herodotus was writing his *Histories*. Cyrus was such a well known figure that his life was readily and speedily mythologised, e.g., in the story of his exposure as an infant and his survival. It would seem that the process of

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[154] *Histories* 8.88.
[155] *Histories* 1.121.

mythologisation did not attend the accounts of the life of Artemisia quite as thoroughly, despite the fact that she was such an unusual person for the period, but perhaps partly because she lived later than Cyrus as well as partly because she was a woman, the process does not seem to be so all-pervasive, nor is there any suggestion of the intervention of fate in her life. It is striking that the accounts of Pheretime and Artemisia are far less replete with mythological elements than even those of Tomyris or Atossa; the latter are perhaps more conducive to mythologisation since they are more obviously examples of alterity, Tomyris being a barbarian queen distanced both in time and space, while Atossa is 'other' by being Persian. Pheretime lived before Artemisia, but they both wield power in cities that began as Greek colonies; however tenuous, there is still a link that militates against their being categorised as absolutely 'other', but their participation in war and politics is so foreign to the *mores* of Greek societal practices that they are highly problematic figures. Indeed, Artemisia figures as an explicit contrast to her feeble Persian fellow commanders, and also as an implicit one to Greek women who are excluded from the men's world in which she excels. It is a measure of Artemisia's notoriety as a woman playing the part of a man that she is mentioned by Aristophanes in his comedy dealing with the same topic when the chorus of old men says:

> Εἰ γὰρ ἐνδώσει τις ἡμῶν ταῖσδε κἂν σμικρὰν λαβήν,
> οὐδὲν ἐλλείψουσιν αὗται λιπαροῦς χειρουργίας,
> ἀλλὰ καὶ ναῦς τεκτανοῦνται, κἀπιχειρήσουσ' ἔτι
> ναυμαχεῖν καὶ πλεῖν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς, ὥσπερ Ἀρτεμισία.

> If you give women an inch, they take a mile.
> They will not be behind us in our manly feats
> They will build ships and navies to sail
> Against us, just like Artemisia.[156]

The entry concerning Artemisia in the anonymous *Tractatus de Mulieribus* includes information not found in the *Histories*, even though Herodotus is named as the source. Herodotus refers to her as the ruler of Halicarnassus, but the *Tractatus* describes her as the ruler of Cos and Nisyrus as well. Xerxes' comment about his men becoming women is retold but the entry goes on to say that Xerxes thereafter sent Artemisia a suit of armour and the Phoenician commanders distaffs and spindles, τῆς μὲν τιμῶν τὴν ἀρετὴν τοῖς τῆς ἀνδρίας ἐπισήμοις, τῶν δὲ ἐξελέγχων τὴν μαλακίαν τοῖς τῶν γυναικῶν ἐπιτηδεύμασιν – 'honouring her courage with the tokens of bravery and reproving their weakness by means of those womanly pursuits.'[157] If nothing else, it is tempting to believe that the author of the *Tractatus* was familiar with Herodotus' material concerning Pheretime, although for his entry on the queen of Cyrene, despite the fact that he cites Menecles as his source, because of Herodotus' story of Euelthon presenting Pheretime with a golden spindle rather than an army. Gera has also noted the resonances between the two tales:

> This womanly gift sent to the warlike Pheretime in order to put her in her place is very likely to have been the inspiration for the story found in *DM* – whatever the intermediate source – of the spindles and distaffs sent to the cowardly Phoenician commanders. One can

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[156] *Lysistrata* 672ff.
[157] *Tractatus de Mulieribus* s.v. Artemisia. Translated by D. Gera (1996: 10).

see how Xerxes' men-women statement in Herodotus, coupled with the Persian king's reputation for πολυδωρία and the gift given to Pheretime, could lead precisely to such a tale.[158]

Since Herodotus may be described as the first historian, Tomyris, Pheretime and Artemisia can be seen as the first examples of what would later become a stereotype in historiography, the woman making her mark in the world of men, and not infrequently proving to be more effective than her male counterparts.[159] For this kind of woman, the myth of the Amazons, who wield their own political power and fight in wars for their own ends, provides a reference point for Herodotus' audience. It is also possible to interpret the sparseness of mythological elements in the stories of Pheretime and Artemisia as a function of the historical record of their deeds; being relatively close in time and space to Herodotus, the material needed only to be told. Tomyris is 'other' because she is a barbarian queen whose territory is close to the margins of the world and who is distanced in time as well, while Atossa, on the other hand, is 'other' merely by being Persian. In her case, however, it is possible to argue that she is the more traditional type of woman associated with power, since she is the consort of the Great King; Democedes enlists her help because she has the ear of the monarch, not because she has the political power herself to effect his return to Greece. She is a queen with limited power of her own, however excessive the Greeks may have deemed the influence of Persian royal woman over the monarch, but this type of character is frequently asked to intercede on behalf of someone else, simply because of her close association with the source of real power, the King. It is only in the

[158] Gera 1996: 213.

[159] The characters of Tanaquil and Tullia in Livy (*Ab Urbe Condita* 1.34-41 and 1.46-48 respectively) immediately spring to mind as do Sallust's Sempronia (*de coniuratione Catalinae 25)* and Tacitus'

initial stages of their careers that Tomyris, Pheretime and Artemisia owe their status to their male connections; latterly they all maintain their positions through their own efforts and as such have closer resonances with the myth of the Amazons than someone like Atossa.

portrayal of the Roman empresses Livia, the two Agrippinas and Messalina in the *Annals*, where the references are too scattered to quote.

CONCLUSION

The women in Herodotus' *Histories* come from all parts of the known world, and from all walks of life, from queens to slave girls, from warrior women to unnamed mothers of unnamed daughters, and almost all points, both geographical and social, in between. Some are given no more than a passing reference, while others merit more detailed treatment, and for the latter category, the criterion applied is the story attached to them, not their sex or status in itself. It follows that there is something interesting about the women so chosen, but it does not preclude, for example, the story of the humble herdsman's wife whose child is born dead and who therefore persuades her husband to exchange their dead child for the one he has been ordered to expose. The individual women are not always remarkable in themselves but they are part of a story worth telling. And that, perhaps, is the difference between Herodotus and later historians who confine their studies to the military and political spheres only; his cast of characters is not exclusively male and élite, but includes the female and the humble as well, providing a much more comprehensive view of the world than that of his successors. It is this very comprehensiveness that makes the study of his work problematic and the search for categories within that study difficult.

This study has considered the women in the *Histories* against a background of two influences, those of Greek mythology and the Greek social organisation of Herodotus' time, because it is a fair assumption that these two influences informed equally Herodotus' reception of the material he received from his informants as well as his audience's reception of his work. Although Herodotus frequently wrote about far distant places and about peoples with customs differing greatly from those of the Greeks, the point of reference for all his observations was the society for which he was writing, its customs, attitudes and conventions. As he encountered the customs,

attitudes and conventions of other peoples, he naturally compared them with his Greek given to gauge where they lay along the continuum from ordinary, or Greek, to strange, alien or 'other'. Sometimes the comparison is overt and explicitly stated but on other occasions it is merely understood, since his readers or audience could be presumed to share his knowledge of Greek customs and attitudes. Herodotus' material concerning women can therefore be read as a conscious or even unconscious comparison with the attitudes, conventions and practices of Greek society in relation to women.

The main difficulty in a study of women in any part or period of the ancient world is the almost complete absence of material produced by women themselves, and even the small amount that we have, the poetry of Sappho for example, is in itself fragmentary. In order, therefore, to gain some idea of the expectations of Greek society concerning women and in this way to recover some idea of Herodotus' background knowledge, it was found necessary to consult various sources, always bearing in mind that they are generally male-authored and, at the very least, reflect a man's idea of the lives of women. Such sources are mainly of a legal, medical or literary nature, but material concerning religious practices also proved fruitful, since women participated in ceremonies involving the whole city as well as in single-sex ceremonies. Legal and medical sources provide material which facilitates an understanding of both the workings of Greek society and its aims, since the laws of any society are framed to regulate interactions between citizens, while the medical sources' emphasis on, for example, the reproductive capacity of women sheds light on the importance of this function for society. Literary material often provides an idea of how a society sees itself, or would like to see itself, and is therefore intrinsically a source of information about the assumptions and values of that society. By assigning

the women in the *Histories* to the categories of daughter, sister, wife and mother it has been possible to examine each stage of a woman's life in relation to these sources and to see how and at what point the law and medicine of ancient Greek society impinged on their lives, or how, in the case of literature, the society represented women to itself. This last is particularly relevant in relation to women and power, since the women in this category provide examples of exceptional women who define the norm by being outside it.

Besides attempting to recover as much material as possible concerning the lives of women so as to have some idea of the point of reference against which Herodotus measured all the other societies he was describing, it has proved useful also to consider the part Greek mythology might have played in his intellectual processes, not only as a factor in the selection of his material or as a medium through which he shaped the stories he received from his informants into a form recognisable to his audience, but also as a means of understanding how Greek society thought about women. One of the functions of myth is to allow a society the opportunity to examine, explore and explain its own institutions, to hold up certain paradigms as ideals to be striven for while offering others as warnings to those who would transgress the norms of that society. Greek myths about women, both human and divine, allow us a glimpse of how the citizens of such a patriarchal society thought about women through the medium of the stories they told. In the stories of Greek mythology we find the examples of various powerful and powerless women, those who controlled their circumstances and those whom circumstance, or the gods, controlled. We find just such women in the pages of Herodotus, the former in the shape of women like Artemisia or Tomyris, and the latter in the shape of Mycerinus' daughter or the Babylonian wives strangled by their husbands. Because none of these

women is Greek, the reception of their alterity by Herodotus' audience is facilitated by mythological elements in the narrative in which they are found; a Greek or Athenian audience would perceive the suicide by hanging of an Egyptian princess such as Mycerinus' daughter as a motif familiar from Greek mythology.

In the course of this study it became increasingly clear that most of the daughters, sisters, wives and mothers who appear in the stories of the *Histories* behave generally as Greek women were expected to behave, whether they are Greek or not. Where they do not, as in some of the ethnological sections, Herodotus is at pains to highlight departures from Greek practice in the customs of other peoples concerning women. Astyages and his daughter Mandane are Persian but the story of the prophetic dream and Astyages' attempts to frustrate its fulfilment fit Greek mythological patterns, while his arrangement of his daughter's marriage conforms entirely to the practices of Greek society and would have appeared quite unremarkable to his audience. Father-daughter relationships play a large part in the tales featuring women in the *Histories*; for example, both Nitetis and Phaedymia find their way on to Herodotus' pages through the actions they take as a result of their relationships with their fathers. The rape of a young girl before marriage seems to have been as heinous a crime in both Egypt and Persia as in Greece since Herodotus reports in the former case that the victim hangs herself, while in the latter the perpetrator is sentenced to a gruesome death as punishment, and neither outcome would have seemed strange to Herodotus' Greek audience, even if impalement was regarded as a custom peculiar to barbarian societies. The sister of the Persian Intaphrenes shows the same regard for her brother and her natal family as does the Greek heroine, Antigone, while the sister of the Paeonians Pigres and Mastyes is decked out by her brothers with all the appurtenances considered by the Greeks to

epitomise the most desirable qualities in a woman, despite the fact that the intention of her brothers is to attract the attention of the Persian monarch. Alexander of Macedon, whose Greekness was called into question when he chose to compete in the Olympic Games,[1] allows himself to be persuaded to acquiesce in alleged Persian custom by allowing the sisters and mothers of the court to attend a banquet for the Persian ambassadors, but when the situation threatens to get out of hand, the honour of the women is defended in entirely Greek terms. Candaules' queen is a Lydian but beauty as a curse is an element in Greek myth and her horror at the outrage perpetrated by her husband would have resonated with Greek audiences, as would her Clytemnestra-like response. The case of Agetus' wife, who is given, albeit unwillingly, to Ariston as a result of a compact between the two men, reflects the *mores* of a society where marriages are arranged by men for women. Cyrus' foster mother behaves just as all the foster mothers in Greek myth who bring up children who should have been exposed, and the mother of the Egyptian thieves is as concerned about the proper burial of her son as any Greek mother. Sataspes' mother pleads with her brother, Xerxes, for the life of her son in contrast to the mother of Sesostris' sons, who proposes the death of two of her children, but precedents for both can be found in Greek myth.

The examples above demonstrating generally Greek-like behaviour on the part of Herodotus' female characters have all been taken from the chapters on daughters, sisters, wives and mothers. The situation is very different with regard to women in power. Since Greek society did not allow for women to exercise political or military power, such women are by definition 'other'. Greek myth may examine situations where women exercise power over men, but it is frequently apotropaic mode, in order

[1] *Histories* 5.22. The Greekness of the Macedonians was a vexed question in Herodotus' time; with this story and the one at 8.137-39, Herodotus gives his support to their claim.

to illustrate the dire consequences of such aberrations and thereby to forestall their occurrence. The myth of the Amazons is the most detailed exploration of this inversion of Greek thought and practice, and serves as an underlying motif for all the stories concerning women in power. Indeed Romm comments as follows on the portraits of individual women in the Histories,

> 'who, though they do not loom large in the narrative, are nonetheless striking and memorable. In their cases, though, Herodotus has hewed rather closer than usual to the templates he inherited from the mythic tradition. For the Greeks had long been fascinated with warrior women, especially those thought to inhabit the far North and East; from these regions the legendary Amazons had come to do battle with Hellenic armies . . . It was perhaps inevitable then that the Amazon myth was present to Herodotus' mind when he dealt with the warrior queens of the barbarian world, whose strength and independence made them objects of both fear and admiration to his own primarily male audience.'[2]

It is noteworthy that the women in power in the *Histories* are not Greek; the idea of the woman in power is an alien concept for the Greeks, even though Herodotus exploits the potential for contrast with even more compelling degrees of 'otherness'. Indeed, it has become apparent during the course of this study that there is a hierarchy of 'otherness' so that in situations involving two foreign, alien or 'other' protagonists, the less 'other' of two characters assumes Greek attributes; for

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[2] Romm 1998: 171.

example, in the confrontation between Cyrus and Tomyris, she, despite being doubly 'other' as a female in a position of power, is credited with the qualities of courage and straightforwardness normally attributed to the Greeks, qualities which are in stark contrast to the excessive pride and deviousness exhibited by Cyrus. Whether Herodotus' sympathies towards her are aroused by her opposition to the Persians or by his distaste for Cyrus' overt ὕβρις, there is no doubt that she is presented as the more admirable character of the two. The portrayal of Artemisia in the *Histories* likewise demonstrates the proposition of degrees of alterity; although both Xerxes and Artemisia are 'other' because they are not Greek, it is the female Artemisia who is credited with the qualities most admired by Greek society. On the continuum from Greek to 'other' envisaged above, one might expect to find Artemisia closer to the extreme of 'other' by virtue of being not only female but also a woman in power, whereas in fact it is the male absolute monarch Xerxes who occupies that position. In both cases, the alterity of the foreign male monarch proves stronger than that of the foreign woman in power.

Herodotus does not, however, always regard the woman in power as favourably as he does Tomyris and Artemisia; his characterisation of Pheretime is not very positive and he specifically attributes her gruesome death to her crimes, passing judgement on her in a way he does not do in the case of Tomyris. The deviousness of the Babylonian Nitocris seems to be of a piece with the general reputation of women among the Greeks and it is possible that Herodotus' interest in the story stems from its portrayal of Darius the Persian king as victim of another's duplicity rather than from Nitocris' deviousness as perpetrator. Atossa and Amestris are both examples of the stereotypical Greek idea of the Persian queen as a woman who exercises power as a result of her relationship with the Great King and in the case of Amestris, her

ruthlessness acts as a foil to her weak-willed, bombastic husband Xerxes. Democratic Greece vested all political power in men and the idea of Persian women exercising their influence in the political sphere in the way, for example, that Atossa is purported to do in Herodotus' account of the prelude to the Persian invasion, is 'other' to every tenet of Greek thought. This particular episode concerning Atossa is an interesting one since the invasion of Greece did not occur until many years after the bedroom scene in which she urges Darius to invade Greece; consequently, the episode must of necessity be a product of Herodotus' desire to portray Atossa in terms of the stereotype, and in effect therefore to gloss over the actual time scale involved. This raises the difficult question of the extent to which Herodotus manipulates the material received from his informants. The example of the Atossa episode just noted would suggest that on occasion he does manipulate his information to suit his narrative purposes, in this case to depict Atossa as the sinister female power behind the throne. Add to this the amount of cumulative material gathered in this study indicating his frequent use of Greek mythological elements in his retelling of stories, as well as the example of the curse form in which Herodotus frames the inscription on the tomb of Babylonian Nitocris, a form not usual in Babylonian practice but frequently found on Greek tombstones, and it becomes apparent that Herodotus is concerned to facilitate the reception of his material by his Greek audience by conveying it in comprehensible and easily assimilable terms. To accomplish this end, he makes use of cultural constructs familiar to his audience, such as stereotypical characters, mythological elements and even funerary inscriptions. This is not to accuse Herodotus of intellectual dishonesty but rather to recognise that in dealing with so much material foreign to the experience of his audience he found it natural to provide enabling mechanisms for its reception.

One of the most striking aspects of Greek mythology is its pre-occupation, some might even term it an obsession, with the figure of the young girl ready for marriage. Her characterisation as a wild and turbulent creature needing to be tamed by a man in the institution of marriage is an interesting contrast with later Roman thought where the most important female figure is the Roman *matrona*, whose chastity, dignity and authority are her distinguishing features. In a previous study of the women in the *Annals* of Tacitus,[3] it became clear to me that the implicit point of reference by which Tacitus measures his various female characters is the *matrona*, and even clearer that the women of the imperial court do not generally emerge from the comparison very favourably. Roman society was hardly less patriarchal than Greek, especially given its exceptional feature of the *patria potestas*, but the ideal of the *matrona* seems to illustrate a different perspective on the relationship between the sexes. The respect accorded to the Roman ideal of womanhood is distinctly at odds with the adversarial nature of the relationship of the Greeks to the παρθένος, a relationship in which male power must be exercised in order to obtain and maintain control of a disruptive element in society. There are, of course, Roman stories about young women, but they do not seem to feature the same type of figure as the παρθένος. Livy's story of Virginia,[4] whose father killed her rather than have her fall prey to the lust of a powerful man, does not in fact echo the stories in Greek myth about fathers imprisoning their daughters out of fear that their rampant sexuality will lead them to lose their virginity before marriage: Virginia is on her way to school through the public forum, when she is accosted by Appius Claudius. The story of Cloelia,[5] the young girl who leads the other female hostages in swimming the Tiber to escape from the Etruscans, is a straightforward tale of bravery and initiative, two

[3] Delany 1994 *passim*.
[4] Livy *Ab Urbe Condita* 3.44-48.
[5] Livy *Ab Urbe Condita* 2.13.

characteristics of some παρθένοι in myth, such as Nausicaa, but without the ever-present sexual subtext of Greek myth when dealing with these figures. It is worth noting at this juncture that in the *Metamorphoses* Ovid is presenting Greek myth as something rich and strange to the Roman mind, an aspect frequently overlooked by modern readers and commentators. From the standpoint of this study, it is possible to suggest that Herodotus' selection of his stories mirrors the interests of Greek society, since there is a greater proportion of material relating to the categories of daughters and of wives, in other words, female characters before and after marriage, than there is relating to the categories of mothers and, in particular, of sisters. Furthermore, although there are few women in power in numerical terms, the extended treatment he affords them provides the stereotype for similar studies in later Western historiography, including the works of Tacitus.

Whatever support and assistance it has been possible to obtain from extraneous sources such as legal and medical texts as well as material relating to religious practices in order to recover some idea of the role played by women in ancient societies, it remains only to be said that Herodotus himself, while still worthy of the designation 'this first and most Homeric of historians,'[6] nonetheless remains one of the earliest sources of our information concerning the part played by women in the ancient world, since he recorded their participation in society in a way and to an extent that his successors did not.

[8] Lang 1984: 5.

NOTES TO APPENDICES

An asterisk indicates women whose stories are examined in the text of this study. Block capitals at the end of the entry indicate the chapter in which the women appear.

APPENDIX A

DAUGHTERS IN HERODOTUS' *HISTORIES*

1.1-5: Io, Europa and Medea identified as kings' daughters.*

1.5: Io fled when pregnant so as not to face parents.*

1.60: Phya.

1.61: Megacles' daughter married to Pisistratus.*

1.74: daughter of Alyattes Aryenis given to Astyages to cement peace.*

1.91: Daughter of Astyages also mother of Cyrus.

1.93: Lydian daughters work as prostitutes to get dowry& arrange own marriages.*

1.107: Mandane, Astyages' daughter - dream & birth of offspring.*

1.146: Athenians married daughters of Carians they murdered.*

1.196: Eneti fathers not allowed to arrange daughters' marriages*.

2.1: Cassandane daughter of Pharnaspes also wife of Cyrus.

2.35: Egyptian daughters must look after parents.*

2.47: No Egyptian will marry daughter to swineherd nor marry daughter of one.

2.135: Rhodopis.*

2.121: Egyptian king instructs daughter to become prostitute.

2.126: Daughter of Cheops instructed to become prostitute.

2.129: Mycerinus' daughter - raped by father - suicide.*

2.156: Aeschylus made Artemis daughter of Demeter.

2.171: Daughters of Danaus brought rites of Thesmophoria from Egypt.

2.181: Ladice daughter of Battus or Critobulus.* WIVES.

2.182: Sanctuary of Athena in Lindos founded by daughters of Danaus.

3.1: Daughter of Apries revealed Amasis' deception.*

3.2: Cassandane daughter of Pharnaspes.* MOTHERS.

3.14: Psammetichus' daughter seen as slave.

3.50: Periander's sons also sons of Procles' daughter.

3.53: Periander sent daughter to reconcile with son.*

3.68: Daughter of Otanes identified false Smerdis.*

3.88: Darius married Cyrus' two daughters Atossa & Artystone.* WIVES.

3.124: Polycrates' daughter - dream concerning father.*

3.133: Atossa daughter of Cyrus.* WOMEN IN POWER.

3.137: Democedes engaged to marry daughter of Milo.

4.5: Targitaus, son of Zeus and daughter of River Borysthenes.

4.43: Rape of Zopyrus' unmarried daughter by Sataspes.*

4.69: Daughters of executed men not killed as are sons in Scythia.

4.80: Octamasades son of Teres' daughter.

4.117: No Sauromatian maiden may marry until she has killed a man.

4.154: Phronime, Etearchus' daughter persecuted by stepmother.*

4.164: Arcesilaus' wife also daughter of king of Barcaeans.

4.180: Auseës claim Athena is daughter of Poseidon & Lake Tritonis.

5.6: Thracians allow daughters total freedom.

5.32: Pausanius became engaged to Megabates' daughter.

5.39: Anaxandridas married sister's daughter.

5.41: Anaxandridas' new wife is daughter of Prinetadas.

5.47: Philippus of Croton engaged to daughter of Telys of Sybaris.

5.48: Gorgo, Cleomenes' daughter - child warns father.*

5.80: Two daughters of Asopus are Thebe and Aegina.

5.92: Labda, daughter of Amphion. * MOTHERS.

5.116: Persian military commanders married to three daughters of Darius.

5.118: Mausolus married to daughter of king of Cilicia.

6.39: Miltiades marries Hegesipyle, daughter of Olorus, king of Thrace.

6.41: Miltiades' eldest son not son of Hegesipyle, daughter of Olorus.

6.43: Mardonius married to Darius' daughter Artozostra.

6.52: Aristodamus' wife the daughter of Autesion.

6.57: Spartan kings allocate heiresses – brotherless daughters.

6.61: Nurse motivated by wealth of daughter's family.

6.65: Leotychidas engaged to Percalus, daughter of Chilon.

6.71: Leotychidas had daughter called Lampito.

6.122: Callias' daughters - allowed to choose husbands.*

6.126: Agariste, Cleisthenes, daughter - competition for her hand.*

6.137: Athenian daughters & sons fetched water from Nine Springs.

7.2 Atossa daughter of Cyrus.* WOMEN IN POWER.

7.61: Otanes' daughter was Amestris, Xerxes' wife.* WIVES.

7.69: Arsames' favourite wife was daughter of Cyrus, Artystone.

7.73: Artochmes married to one of Darius' daughters.

7.97: Gobryas' daughter was mother of Ariabignes.

7.99: Artemisia, daughter of Lygdamis.* WOMEN IN POWER.

7.107: Boges' daughter(s)? - murdered by father with mother.*

7.150: Andromeda daughter of Cepheus.

7.165: Anaxilaus married to Terillus' daughter, Cyndippe.

7.178: Thyia daughter of Cephisus.

7.205: Leonidas married to Cleomenes' daughter.

7.224: Artanes married his daughter to Darius.

7.239: Gorgo guessed secret of tablet.*

8.53: Sanctuary of Aglaurus, daughter of Cecrops

8.136: Argeia, daughter of Amyntas, married to Persian.

9.51: Oeroe daughter of Asopus.

9.76: Hegetorides' daughter - captured in war - saved through ξενία.*

9.109: Masistes' daughter - mistress of Xerxes.*

APPENDIX B

PHRASES REFERRING TO WIFE/WOMEN AND CHILDREN

1.164: Phocaeans leave city with children and women: τέκνα καὶ γυναῖκας.

1.166: Phocaeans collected children and women: τέκνα καὶ τὰς γυναῖκας.

1.176: Xanthian children and women burnt to death in acropolis: τάς γυναῖκας καὶ τὰ τεκνα.

2.30: Psammetichus asked them not to abandon children and women: καὶ τέκνα καὶ γυναῖκας.

3.1: Amasis forced doctor to leave children and women: γυναικός καὶ τέκνων.

3.45: Polycrates imprisons Samian children and women: τὰ τέκνα καὶ τὰς γυναῖκας..

4.121: Scythians sent away children and women from Darius: τὰ τέκνα καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες.

5.98: Paeonians took children and women and sailed to Chios: παῖδας κα γυναῖκας.

6.19: Milesian children and women sold into slavery by Persians: γυναῖκες καὶ τέκνα.

6.139: Pelasgians murder own children and women: παῖδας καὶ γυναῖκας.

7.52: Ionians have left wives and children: τέκνα καὶ γυναῖκας.

7.107: Boges killed children and wife: τὰ τέκνα καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα.

8.36: Delphians send away children and women from attack: τέκνα καὶ γυναῖκας.

8.40: Athenians evacuate children and women from Attica: παῖδὰς καὶ γυναῖκας.

8.60: Salamis is where we have taken our children and women: τέκνα καὶ γυναῖκες.

8.106: Panionius moved children and women: τὰ τέκνα καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα.

9.5: Athenian women stoned Lycides' wife and children: τὴν γυναῖκα, κατὰ τὰ τέκνα.

APPENDIX C

SISTERS IN HERODOTUS' *HISTORIES*

2.54-6: Egyptian sisters abducted - one founds oracle at Dodona.*

2.100: Nitocris (Egyptian).* WOMEN IN POWER.

3.31-2: Cambyses' wife/sister.*

3.53: Lycophron's sister.*

4.43: Mother of Sataspes is Darius' sister.* MOTHER.

4.80: Octamasades is 'my sister's son'.*

5.12: Sister of Pigres and Mastyes.*

5.18: Alexander of Macedon allows mothers and sisters to attend banquet.*

5.21: Alexander of Macedon marries his sister to Bubares the Persian.*

5.39: Anaxandridas married sister's daughter.*

5.65: Pisistratid children – possible sisters.*

5.80: Aegina is Thebe's sister.

6.27: Children killed in school accident – possible sisters.*

6.71: Eurydame sister of Menius.

7.5: Mardonius son of Darius' sister.*

7.82: Nephews of Darius - sisters' sons.

8.136: Alexander's sister married to Bubares, a Persian.*

APPENDIX D

WIVES IN HERODOTUS' *HISTORIES*

1.3: Alexander wanted a wife from Greece.

1.8: Candaules' wife.*

1.34: Croesus marries his son Atys to a wife.

1.51: Croesus dedicates wife's necklaces and girdles.

1.59: Hippocrates told to divorce wife or not marry.

1.61: Pisistratus' wife – Megacles daughter.* DAUGHTERS.

1.92: Croesus born to Alyattes of Carian wife.

1.109: Harpagus tells his wife about orders to expose Cyrus.

1.110: Herdsman's wife.* MOTHERS.

1.135: Persians have many wives.*

1.146: Carian wives snub husbands.*

1.198: Babylonian purificatory rites after lying with wife.

1.216: Wives of Massegetae and Nasamones.*

2.60: Men and women take part in festival of Artemis at Bubastis.

2.61: Men and women take part in festival of Isis at Busiris.

2.65: Men and women keepers of sacred animals in Egypt.

2.85: Mourning of men and women in Egypt.

2.89: Egyptian women not embalmed immediately.

2.92: Egyptians have only one wife.*

2.98: City of Anthylla supplies shoes to wife of king.

2.107: Sesostris' wife.* MOTHERS.

2.111: Pheros' wife.*

2.114: Alexander has stolen host's wife.

2.131: Mycerinus' wife.* MOTHERS.

2.181: Ladice.*

3.3: Cassandane, wife of Cyrus.* MOTHERS.

3.50: Melissa, Periander's wife.*

3.65: Cambyses wishes wives of Persians to be fruitful.

3.68: Phaidyme among wives of magus.* DAUGHTERS.

3.69: Persian wives visit husbands in strict rotation.*

3.119: Intaphrenes' wife.* SISTERS.

3.130: Darius sends Democedes to visit king's wives.

3.133: Atossa, wife of Darius.* WOMEN IN POWER.

3.150: Babylonian wives strangled *.

3.159: Darius has to organise replacements for strangled wives.*

4.1: Scythian wives cohabit with slaves.*

4.45: Asia named from Prometheus' wife.

4.59: Scythians regard Earth as Zeus' wife.

4.71: Scythian king's concubine throttled & buried with him.*

4.78: Scyles married wife in Borysthenes.* MOTHERS.

4.104: Agathyrsi hold women in common.*

4.146: Minyan wives.*

4.154: Etearchus' wife persecutes stepdaughter.* DAUGHTERS.

4.160: Aresilaus' wife murdered Haliarchus.

4.172: Wives of Nasamones enjoyed by all male wedding guests.*

5.5: Most loved wife of Thracians killed and buried with husband.*

5.6: Thracians guard wives.*

5.16: Lakedwellers have number of wives.

5.39: Anaxandridas' wife also his niece.*

5.70: Cleomenes love of Isagoras' wife.

5.87: Athenian wives kill sole survivor of battle.*

5.92: Melissa, wife of Periander.*

5.92: Labda, wife of Eetion.* MOTHERS.

6.41: Miltiades' son by another wife.

6.52: Aristodemus' wife gave birth to twins.* MOTHERS.

6.62: Ariston's third wife.*

6.71: Leotychides' second wife.

7.3: Atossa wife of Darius.* WOMEN IN POWER.

7.61: Perseus' wife Andromeda.

7.69: Darius loved Artystone best of all his wives.

7.107: Boges' wife.*

7.114: Amestris, wife of Xerxes.*

7.120: Men of Abdera and their wives.

7.189: Boreas' Attic wife, Orithyia.

7.239: Gorgo, wife of Leonidas.*

8.137: King's wife cooked for banished brothers.

8.142: Spartans offer to feed Athenian womenfolk for duration of war.

9.5: Athenian women stone wife & children of Lycidas.*

9.108: Masistes' wife.*

9.109: Amestris.*

APPENDIX E

MOTHERS IN HERODOTUS' *HISTORIES*

1.31: Mother of Cleobis and Biton.*

1.61: Mother of Megacles' daughter.*

1.91: Cyrus' mother a Mede, father a Persian.*

1.110: Herdsman's wife.*

1.121: Astyages sends Cyrus to real mother and father.*

1.137: Persians believe no child could kill own mother & father.*

1.173: Lycians take name from mother.*

1.184. Semiramis.* WOMEN IN POWER.

1.205: Tomyris, mother of Spargapises.* WOMEN IN POWER.

2.63: Egyptian ceremony involving mother of Ares.

2.91: Perseus had heard of Chemmis from his mother.*

2.107: Sesostris wife proposes sacrifice of two of her sons.*

2.121: Mother of Egyptian thief.*

2.131: Mother of Mycerinus' daughter cuts hands off serving maids. *

3.3: Cassandane mother of Cambyses.*

3.30: Cambyses and Smerdis have same mother.

3.50: Grandfather asks grandsons if they know who killed their mother, Melissa.*

3.119: Intaphrenes' wife has no mother & father.* SISTERS.

3.150: Babylonians strangle all women except mothers.* WIVES

4.10: Heracles and the μειξοπάρθενός Folktale - third son.

4.43: Mother of Sataspes.*

4.78: Istrian mother of Scyles.*

4. 147: Theras brother of mother of Eurysthenes & Procles.

4.162: Pheretime, mother of Arcesilaus.* WOMEN IN POWER.

5.18: Greek mothers and sisters brought to banquet against tradition.* SISTERS

5.92: Labda, mother of Cypselus.*

6.52: Mother of twins - Aristodemus' wife, Argeia.*

6.68: Demaratus asks mother about his father.*

6.107: Hippias' dream about his mother.*

6.131: Agariste, mother of Pericles.*

6.138: Athenian mothers teach children Attic ways.*

7.2: Heirs of Darius and their mothers.

9.109: Amestris takes revenge on mother of Xerxes' mistress.* WIVES.

APPENDIX F

WOMEN IN POWER

1.184: Semiramis.*

1.191: Nitocris of Babylon.*

1.205: Tomyris.*

2.100: Nitocris the Egyptian.*

2.112: Helen of Troy.*

3.133: Atossa.*

4.110: Amazons.*

4.162: Pheretime.*

7.99: Artemisia.*

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