UDK 821.14'02.09-94 Херодот COBISS.SR-ID 217468172

Stephanie West
Hertford College, Oxford (Emeritus Fellow)
stephanie.west@hertford.ox.ac.uk

Agariste's Betrothal: the adaptability of a cautionary tale

Abstract. The difficulties entailed by confidence in the basic historicity of Hdt.'s story of Agariste's betrothal (6.126–30) are highlighted and its antecedents considered.The details of the rival suitors are puzzling; little is said about their personal qualities, and they do not come from the leading cities of archaic Greece; however, some are said to have kinsmen notable in some way, and we get the impression that Hdt. drew on a much fuller narrative. The thoroughness of Kleisthenes' selection procedure recalls the situation depicted in heroic legend, when succession to the kingship comes by marriage to the king's daughter (as with Menelaos and Helen). Rivalry between the two leading competitors, the Alkmaionid Megakles and the Philaid Hippokleides, provides the climax to the tale. Hippokleides ruins his prospects by an ill-judged display of exuberance in dancing at the symposium where Kleisthenes is to announce his choice; his nonchalant response to rejection became a catchphrase. This tale gained an unexpected interest when a close parallel was pointed out in a bird fable included in the Jataka tales, a collection of stories of the Buddha's previous lives. The transmutation of this Indian fable into an episode of Greek history is a fascinating illustration of the influence of Indian culture on Greek, anthropomorphization being facilitated by the increasing interest in metempsychosis apparent from the sixth century onwards. Hdt. appears to have condensed a much fuller composition in which Agariste's betrothal provided a framework for a cycle of varied stories, the tales relevant to the two Athenians providing an introduction (125) and a climax (129). It should not be assumed that this must have been a written composition. Hdt.'s work presupposes a pre-existing Greek storytelling tradition, an important part of the oral culture destined to suffer devaluation with increasing literacy.

Key Words: Alkmaionid, fable, Indian, metempsychosis,Olympic games, peacock, Sikyon, symposium, tyranny.

Apud Herodotum, patrem historiae … sunt innumerabiles fabulae (in Herodotus, the father of history, there are innumerable tales) observed Cicero

(*Leg.* 1.5).[1] Among the most memorable is his narrative of the betrothal of Perikles' great-grandmother, Agariste, daughter of Kleisthenes tyrant of Sikyon, to the Alkmaionid Megakles (6.126–30). There is an obvious intrinsic appeal in this tale of young aristocrats in competition for the hand of a wealthy ruler's daughter. A traditional theme becomes the framework within which elements drawn from other types of story are given a veneer of historicity. Detail enhances the narrative's persuasiveness, encouraging the hope that, with judicious handling, it might throw some much needed light on early sixth-century history.

Not everyone who has referred to this tale in the century since the publication of How and Wells' commentary (1912) has subscribed to the conclusion there drawn: 'The fact of the wedding of the daughter and heiress of Cleisthenes is doubtless historical, the details are obviously fictitious.' That sober verdict might appear inevitable once we attempt to envisage the outcome of a house-party bringing together for many months a group of wealthy young men thus freed from the constraints of familiar routines and censorious seniors; to try to modify this scenario to a more realistic style of entertainment, such as might appeal to a hard-headed sixth-century statesman, is wasted effort. But a trend to allow the narrative a larger measure of historicity now commands widespread support,[2] despite the difficulty of explaining how oral tradition might have preserved for more than a century such details as, for example, the names and patronymics of the otherwise unknown and undistinguished suitors from Epidamnos and Arcadian Trapezous. To advocate a revival of a more sceptical approach may be thought evidence of a deficient sense of humour and a failure to appreciate what was always intended to be taken with a pinch of salt. But against devaluation of the historical evidence provided by these chapters may be balanced a better appreciation of the skill with which elements of very different origins are combined into a convincing whole, a product of the rich traditions of storytelling to which Herodotus was indebted. My approach owes much

[1] Well discussed by Boris Dunsch, 'Herodot bei Cicero', in *Herodots Quellen – Die Quellen Herodots,* eds. B. Dunsch and K. Ruffing (Wiesbaden, 2013) 153–199.

[2] The retreat from scepticism came with M. F. McGregor, 'Cleisthenes of Sicyon and the Panhellenic festivals' *TAPhA* 72 (1941), 266–87.

to C. W. Müller's very valuable discussion, focussed on the development of Greek prose narrative.[3]

Herodotus tells this story as the centrepiece of an Alkmaionid triptych appended to his defence of the family against the charge of treacherous communication with the enemy at Marathon, when the Persians sought to restore the tyranny with the Peisistratid Hippias as their puppet (115).[4] He argues that the Alkmaionids had over a long period been firmly opposed to tyranny (μισοτύραννοι 121.2; 123.1)[5] and had no reason for any grudge against the Athenian people which might have tempted them to treachery; it is thus inconceivable that they would have collaborated with the Persian attempt to restore the tyranny.[6] He then relates two stories concerning their wealth and distinction. and, by way of a clausula, concludes (131) with the dream which came to Perikles' mother, herself an Alkmaionid and named after her grandmother Agariste, shortly before she gave birth.

This is a peculiar argument;[7] since Herodotus does not offer an alternative suspect for the shield signal (which he regards as indisputable (124.2), though he does not consider the possibility of accident), we might think that he would have done better to pass over the suspicion of Alkmaionid treachery as too absurd to deserve discussion, but presumably it was too well established a part of the legend of Marathon to be ignored. We might suspect that Perikles'opponents had given it renewed currency. At all events the significance of Marathon is highlighted by this pause in the action; as often, Herodotus marks the end of an im-

[3] 'Die dreizehn Freier der Agariste', *Legende – Novelle – Roman* (Göttingen, 2006), 225–76. Unfortunately this is ignored in Lesley Kurke's subtle study (*Aesopic Conversations* (Princeton and Oxford, 2011), esp. 361–431), which is particularly concerned with traditions of Greek popular wisdom and their influence on prose writing.

[4] Where no book number is given in references to Herodotus, 6 is to be understood.

[5] The word is not attested earlier, and could be Herodotus' own coinage; it is nicely echoed by Plutarch, *On the Malice of Herodotus* 21; 27 (*Mor.* 859c; 863a).

[6] He overlooks Megakles' daughter's marriage to Peisistratos (1.61.1); it seems to have escaped his notice that Megakles' son Kleisthenes was archon under Hippias in 525 (ML 6).

[7] As Plutarch stresses (*Mor.*862c–863b).

portant section with an anecdote or biographical note.[8] Here a series of stories about the Alkmaionids and Philaids highlights the end of one phase of Greco-Persian hostilities.

Herodotus notes a significant advance in the family's distinction with the activities of Alkmaion and Megakles (οἱ δὲ Ἀλκμεωνίδαι ἦσαν μὲν καὶ τὸ ἀνέκαθεν λαμπροὶ ἐν τῆισι Ἀθήνηισι, ἀπὸ δὲ Ἀλκμέωνος καὶ αὖτις Μεγακλέος ἐγένοντο καὶ κάρτα λαμπροί).[9] The antithesis between λαμπροί and καὶ κάρτα λαμπροί is a little blunt; Herodotus cannot deny the family's earlier prominence, highlighted in particular by their culpability over the repression of Kylon's putsch, the source of the hereditary pollution (ἄγος) incurred by those guilty of sacrilege (1.61.1; 5.71–72) when an earlier Megakles (I) was the eponymous archon.[10] He seems to imply that the designation Alkmaionidai became current by reason of the achievements of the hero of the first of these stories (125).

This recounts the augmentation of the family's wealth, derived (as Herodotus tells the tale) from the generosity of Croesus' reward to Alkmaion, father of Megakles (II), for his assistance with the king's consultation of the Delphic oracle.[11] Invited to take from the king's treasury at

[8] Cf. 4.143–4; 205; 5.126; 9.122.

[9] For a survey see *APF s.v.* 9688 Μεγακλῆς (I).

[10] Herodotus uses λαμπρός of a person otherwise only at 7.154.2, of Gelon's military distinction before he became tyrant of Gela. Its connotations of celebrity are indicated by the verb with which Herodotus concludes his account of Megakles' success (131.1): οὕτω ᾽Αλκμεωνίδαι ἐβώσθησαν ἀνὰ τὴν ῾Ελλάδα (thus the Alkmaionidai became the subject of talk throughout Greece). Strasburger's comment is valuable: 'I have no doubt that he [Herodotus] is independently conscious – even if he seldom expresses his own opinion – of a precise scale of human worth. In this scale the Alcmaeonids, the liberators of Athens from tyranny, have the descriptor λαμπροί, but Herodotus applies to the statesmanship of the tyrant Peisistratus the expression καλῶς τε καὶ εὖ [1.59.6], which is considerably more.' ('Herodotus and Periclean Athens', in *Herodotus and the Narrative of the Past*, ed. R. V. Munson (Oxford, 2013), 295–320 (313), originally in *Historia* 4 (1955), 1–25, in German).

[11] Cf, 1.46; 53; 55; 85.1–2; 90.4–91. On the Alkmaeonids' close relationship with Delphi cf. 5.63.1; see further Lucia Athanassaki, 'Song, politics and cultural memory: Pindar's *Pythian* 7 and the Alcmaeonid temple of Apollo', in *Archaic and Classical Choral Song*, eds. L. Athanassaki and E. Bowie (Berlin and Boston, 2011), 235–68.

Sardis as much gold as he could carry about his own person,[12] Alkmaion briefly sacrificed his dignity for lasting gain and Croesus was so amused by the spectacle that he doubled the quantity. (Kindly laughter is unusual in Herodotus.) The generous Lydian comes out of the episode rather better than the money-grubbing Athenian.[13] Chronologically, however, this anecdote is unsatisfactory; Alkmaion belongs to the generation before Croesus. While it would be easy to suppose that the latter, as by far the better known figure, has supplanted his predecessor Alyattes, the story does not in itself command confidence. Some will still wish to see it as evidence for relations of guest-friendship between the Lydian dynasty and the Alkmaionids and/or detect a connection with the First Sacred War. At all events, the family's wealth derived from real estate, not from the whimsical generosity of a Lydian king, but the story would not have been invented had there not been some links between the Alkmaionids and Sardis.[14]

Consorting with an eastern potentate would not naturally be taken as evidence of hostility towards tyranny. Where did Herodotus hear this story? It can hardly come from family tradition, lovingly handed down among the Alkmaionid clan and communicated to their supporters. Taken on its own it might divert the symposium or circulate at the barber's shop, *koureion*, 'the lounging-place where news and scandal were picked up' (LSJ).[15] But this story sets the scene for the centrepiece (126–30), in which the wealth thus established is a prerequisite for the part to

[12] For a reward defined according to the physical capability of the beneficiary cf. 4.7.2.

[13] Among the unflattering qualities attested on the ostraka cast against a later member of the family, Megakles (IV), is greed for money: see S. Brenne, 'Die Ostraka (487 – ca. 416 v. Chr.) als Testimonien (T1)', in P. Siewert, ed., *Ostrakismos – Testimonien I* (Stuttgart, 2002), 36–166 (T1/111). 'The situation almost forces us to think of how differently Solon had reacted to the sight of this treasure (1.30ff.)', Strasburger, loc. cit. (n.10).

[14] The young Athenian named Kroisos and commemorated by the Anavyssos *kouros* (c. 540 or slightly later) has been associated with the family: see *APF* p. 374.

[15] Well documented by Sian Lewis, *News and Society in the Greek Polis* (London, 1986), 15–17. Tzetzes' belief that Pindar related this story (καὶ ταῦτα μὲν Πίνδαρος ὁ λυρικός που γράφει (*Chil.*1.8.18)) rests on a misunderstanding of the introduction to the scholia to *Pyth.*7 (*pace* Kurke (n.3), 425); the story related there corresponds at every point to Herodotus' narrative.

be played by Alkmaion's son, whose marriage brought a connection with Kleisthenes, tyrant of Sikyon.

Herodotus introduces the latter with the formality of a genealogy (126.1), indicating that the tyranny at Sikyon had been unusually durable. He does not remind us of his previous reference (5.67.1), that too introduced into his narrative on the strength of a (rather contrived) Alkmaionid link. Hornblower stresses the relationship between the two passages: 'The present excursus should be seen as half of a pair whose other half is the excursus at 6.126–31'. But at such a distance a reminder would be needed if an ancient reader were to appreciate that point; we might suspect that Herodotus has divided what once formed a single narrative. Both passages are connected with Athenian affairs by the onomastic link between grandparent and grandchild: Kleisthenes the Athenian in his constitutional reforms acted similarly to his maternal grandfather (5.67.1) and Agariste's homonymous Athenian granddaughter had a dream which Herodotus evidently regarded as significant, a few days before she gave birth to Perikles (131.2: see further below). What Herodotus relates at his first mention of the tyrant of Sikyon is strange, and leaves the impression that he did not altogether understand what he reports. Nothing suggests a Sikyonian source. This problematic passage well illustrates the sometimes rather haphazard way in which the histories of Athens and Sparta control the information that Herodotus offers about other Greek cities. With the signiifcant exception of Cyrene, what we learn about the history of other parts of the Greek world depends very much on interaction with what were to become the two leading cities of fifth-century Greece.

Olympia provides a link between this tale and the first: Alkmaion's newly acquired wealth allowed him to keep a four-horse chariot (τεθριπποτροφήσας) and to win an Olympic victory in 592 (cf. Pind., *Pyth.*.8.14f.).[16] In the following generation (γενεῆι δευτέρηι ὕστερον)[17] Kleisthenes, distinguished by victory in the chariot race, the most pres-

[16] The prominence of the Olympic theme in this narrative is instructively highlighted by Simon Hornblower, 'Agariste's Suitors: an Olympic note', in *Patterns of the Past*, eds. A. Moreno and R. Thomas (Oxford, 2014), 217–31.

[17] For the sense 'next' of time see Powell, *s.v.*δεύτερος III 1. Herodotus does not mean that Kleisthenes was two generations after Alkmaion.

tigious event in the Olympic games, [18] took the opportunity to advertise for suitors for his daughter Agariste. The name, 'Best of all', looks like a storyteller's creation, but, as Herodotus tells us in the sequel bringing the story down to his own time (131), it was borne by her granddaughter, Perikles' mother.[19] She appears to be an only child (cf. 130.2); no brothers are mentioned.[20] The scene of this proclamation is in keeping with Pindar's praise of the Olympic games as 'the best' (*Ol.*1.7). The old motif of a girl's fame attracting suitors from far and wide is thus replaced by a new form of publicity. Does this imply that in the sixth century panhellenic games regularly offered opportunities for announcements? Or has a later practice been retrojected to the early sixth century? Or is this just a fantasy of what a wealthy autocrat might do, like Croesus' worldwide test of oracles (1.46–9) and Psammetichos' linguistic experiment (2.2)? Note the unromantic phraseology: the invitation to Sikyon is addressed to 'whoever among the Hellenes thinks himself worthy to become Kleisthenes' son-in-law' (ὅστις Ἑλλήνων ἑωυτὸν ἀξιοῖ Κλεισθένεος γαμβρὸν γενέσθαι), picked up in Kleisthenes' concluding speech (130.2 τῆς ἀξιώσιος εἵνεκα τῆς ἐξ ἐμεῦ γῆμαι). Agariste's qualities must be taken on trust. Kleisthenes plans a lengthy selection process, a clear demonstration of his vast wealth and his pride in the generous exercise of hospitality. Suitors are invited to a year-long house-party.[21] The invitation would be likely to attract only men free from responsibilities at home. In preparation a race-course and a wrestling ring are constructed. We need not doubt that the tyrant was responsible for the provision of

[18] In 580, 576 or 572, if this detail is reliable; there is no independent evidence.

[19] Another Agariste laid information against Alkibiades and others in 415 (Andoc. 1.16).

[20] We do not know how the last tyrant, Aeschines, probably Kleisthenes' successor, was related to him.

[21] The period strains credibility; but while Herodotus' first reference to the outcome of the selection process, ἐν ἐνιαυτῶι ('within a year', 126.2), would be consistent with a shorter time, κατέχων ἐνιαυτόν ('keeping them for a year', 128.1) would not. The Olympic games were held in August or September; Kleisthenes sets the deadline for entry to his competition sixty days later (126.2), when the sailing season would be coming to an end. It might be thought that he would have quite long enough to assess the competitors' merits if they stayed until it re-opened. A year-long test/ordeal is a storyteller's cliché.

such facilities at Sikyon, but may question their occasion. But such details contribute most effectively to the persuasiveness of this narrative.

Herodotus lists thirteen who, taking pride[22] in themselves and their fatherland. accepted the invitation (127). This is a manageable number. Penelope's suitors originally numbered only 12 (who can go home for the night (*Od.*1.424; 2.397–8)).[23] The length of the list of competitors for Helen's hand, as given in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* (F 196–204), is uncertain; between 25 and 30 is most probable, but only one of the contestants, Idomeneus, comes to Sparta, while others put in bids by proxy (and Helen goes to the highest bidder).[24] Hippodameia had thirteen suitors before Pelops, but they, as in many such stories, were tested successively, and fatally. Here the contestants run no risk if they are unsuccessful; that style of competition belongs to the more savage conditions of the heroic age. While they exhibit their talents, Kleisthenes displays the opulence on which his rule is based and his understanding of the high place of generous hospitality in aristocratic values.

Herodotus starts with the pair who came furthest, from South Italy, Smindyrides from Sybaris and Damasos/Damas from Siris. For his audience the great prosperity which made Sybaris a by-word for luxury was long past,[25] since the city was destroyed c. 510, after joining with Kroton and Metaponton in the destruction of Siris (and was later the site of the panhellenic colony of Thourii).[26] Smindyrides' lifestyle 'reached an unsurpassed level of refinement' (127.1).[27] We would like further details. Later anecdotes highlight his concern for his personal comfort; for Aris-

[22] Ἐξωγκωμένοι 'being puffed up by', repeating, with a figurative sense, the (otherwise unattested) verb used literally in the preceding tale, of alkmaion with his load of gold dust (125.4), πάντα ἐξώγκωτο. The slightly comic effect can hardly be accidental.

[23] Inflated to 108 as the poem evolved; see further M. L. West, *The Making of the Odyssey* (Oxford, 2014), 104.

[24] Well discussed by E. Irwin, 'Gods among men? The social and political dynamics of the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*', in *The Hesiodic* Catalogue of Women. *Constructions and Reconstructions*, ed. R. Hunter (Cambridge, 2005), 35–84. The wooing of Helen was apparently not related in the *Cypria.*

[25] See further R. J. and V. B. Gorman, 'The *Tryphē* of the Sybarites: a historiographical problem in Athenaeus', *JHS* 127 (2007), 38–60.

[26] I doubt if Herodotus' own involvement in that foundation is relevant here.

totle (*Eth. Eud.* 1216a16–19) he, like Sardanapallos, is a quintessential voluptuary. But an unambiguously pejorative sense does not suit his inclusion among the competitors for Agariste's hand, and probably he is characterized as *arbiter elegantiae*.

This opening might lead us to expect that other suitors will be pre-eminent in some way, but this catalogue was not compiled according to so obvious a formula. When Herodotus gives information beyond name, patronymic and homeland, usually the subject has a relative noteworthy in some way. Many (but not all) of the suitors are young men,[28] whose potential may be indicated by the qualities of their kin: a very Pindaric idea. Thus, the second South Italian suitor, Damasos from Siris, has a father with a reputation for wisdom, Amuris;[29] we might expect an anecdote illustrating his shrewdness. Some scholars have seen in the presence of these Italian suitors a reflection of Sikyon's trading interests. With the next suitor we cross the Adriatic northward, to the important city of Epidamnos (later Dyrrachium) (127.2); but Herodotus has nothing to tell us about Amphimnestos son of Epistrophos.[30]

The men listed from this point onwards would not have to undertake a lengthy sea-voyage to reach Sikyon. Moving south-eastwards, with the Aetolian candidate, Males, Herodotus gives intriguing suggestions of an elaborate story about his brother Titormos,[31] the strongest Greek of his day, who lived a solitary life in a remote part of Aetolia. We naturally

[27] Ἐπὶ πλεῖστον δὴ χλιδῆς εἷς ἀνὴρ ἀπίκετο. The translation of χλιδή is problematic; its connotations are of elegance, delicacy, luxury: cf. Plato, *Symp*.197d, [A.] *PV* 465–6.

[28] The detail that only the younger men are tested in gymnastic contests (128.1) implies that some are past the age suited to such activity. Smindyrides' characterization hardly suits a young man.

[29] It has been suggested that Damasos of Callimachus F 33 is to be identified with this suitor; see further Harder *ad loc.*; as the less common name Damasos is to be preferred to the variant Damas. An Amuris from Sybaris is mentioned by Athenaeus (520 ab) and in the Suda *s. v.* Ἄμυρις μαίνεται, where we learn that he alone understood an oracle foretelling the fall of Sybaris, sold all his property, and went to live in the Peloponnese; the name is otherwise unattested.

[30] *LGPN* gives two historical examples of Amphimnestos from Chios; Epistrophos is Homeric (*Il.* 2.517; 692; 856) but *LGPN* gives no historical examples, though Epistrophides is recorded from Amorgos.

[31] Neither name is historically attested.

wonder how his outstanding strength was demonstrated, and why he withdrew from human society. Later legend, as recorded by Aelian (*VH* 12.22), relates how he proved that he was stronger than Milon of Kroton, the most famous athlete of the archaic Greek world.[32] Politically and economically rugged Aetolia was backward in Herodotus' time; the chances of an Aetolian suitor might not be thought promising, though his brother's strange pre-eminence might recommend him.

The fifth suitor, the Argive Leokedes son of Pheidon, has not travelled far (127.3). Herodotus seems to have forgotten what he said earlier about Kleisthenes' extraordinary hostility to Argos (5.67–9); there is no suggestion that Leokedes was unwelcome or that his suit was considered provocative. He is a nonentity, perhaps to be identified with the Argive ruler Lakedes who acquired a reputation for effeminacy because of his hairstyle and walk (Plut. *Mor*. 89e). What Herodotus says about his father leaves no doubt about Pheidon's ability to assert his authority; but the commendable achievement of establishing a common system of weights and measures for the Peloponnese must be balanced against the supreme arrogance (ὑβρίσαντος μέγιστα δὴ Ἑλλήνων ἁπάντων) manifested in his ousting the Elean organisers of the Olympic games. This is the earliest reference to Pheidon, who is named by Aristotle (*Pol.* 1310b) as an example of those who established tyrannies on the basis of pre-existing *basileiai* (whatever that means).[33] The dates of his reign are uncertain, but such other evidence as we have indicates that the famous Pheidon's activity belongs to the early or mid-seventh century, making it highly improbable that he had a son young enough to be a contender for the hand of Kleisthenes' daughter c. 575. Of course, confusion with a younger collateral of the same name cannot be ruled out.[34]

---

[32] Herodotus imagined that Milon's reputation would be known even to the Persian king (3.137.5).

[33] Drews' painstaking study of the term *basileus* establishes that for the archaic and early classical period 'king' is an inappropriate translation where Greek rulers are concerned; in Pheidon's case *basileia* very likely means an office that gave him command of the hoplites (cf. Hdt.7.149.2). See further R. Drews, *Basileus. The Evidence for Kingship in Geometric Greece* (Newhaven and London, 1983), esp. 60–63; H. van Wees, 'Kingship', in *The Homer Encyclopedia* (Oxford, 2011), 436.

[34] See further A. Griffin, *Sikyon* (Oxford, 1982), 54–6.

Herodotus has nothing to tell us about Amiantos, son of Lycourgos,[35] from Trapezous in Arcadia, but a second Arcadian suitor, the Azanian, Laphanes, son of Euphorion,[36] from Paion, can claim a father distinguished for his exercise of hospitality. The story ran that having once welcomed the Dioskouroi in his home, he entertained all comers.[37] This recalls other stories of unannounced divine visitations, when hospitality functions as an index of morality.[38] We might infer that his welcome to the divine visitors had been rewarded with wealth; since Paion lay at the junction of important routes, heavy demands on his hospitality might be expected, and it would have been appropriate for the Dioskouroi to provide him with the resources to entertain his guests adequately. But, again, what we are told is tantalizing. No candidate comes from the more important towns of Arcadia – Tegea, Mantinea, or Orchomenos. About the fourth Peloponnesian suitor, Onomastos, son of Agaios, 'Famous', son of 'Enviable',[39] from Elis, Herodotus has nothing to tell us. For five of the eight suitors so far introduced Herodotus has indicated that he knew that more might be said about them than he relates; we get the impression that he offers extracts from a much fuller narrative.

Athens is the only community to offer two candidates, who are now introduced (127.4), Megakles son of Alkmaion and Hippokleides son of Teisandros. Megakles' father, Alkmaion, figured in the immediately preceding tale (125), but about the man himself Herodotus adds no further

[35] Müller ([n.4] 241 n.62) argues that the father's name, Lykourgos, in an Arcadian context implies descent from the ruling family (cf. Paus. 5.5.5; 8.4.8–10; Apollod. *Bibl.* 1.8.2; 9.16; 3.9.1–2).

[36] Both names are widely attested historically.

[37] Cf. Diomedes' victim (*Il.* 6.12–15) Ἄξυλον ... Τευθρανίδην, ὅς ἔναιεν ἐυτιμένηι ἐν Ἀρίσβηι / ἀφνειὸς βιότοιο, φίλος δ᾽ ἦν ἀνθρώποισι·/ πάντας γὰρ φιλέεσκεν ὁδῶι ἔπι οἰκία ναίων, 'the oldest philanthropist' (Calvert Watkins, *How to Kill a Dragon* (New York and Oxford, 1995), 387).

[38] Cf. *Od.* 17.483–7; Ovid, *Met.* 8.626ff.; Callim. *Aetia* F 54; *Matth.* 25.34–5; *Hebr.* 13.2. The topic is excellently treated by John Taylor, *Classics and the Bible. Hospitality and Recognition* (London, 2007).

[39] Both names are fairly popular in the Peloponnese.

details.[40] Hippokleides, who has not previously been mentioned,[41] was (Herodotus says) outstanding among the Athenians in wealth and looks (πλούτωι καὶ εἴδει προφέρων Ἀθηναίων), an enviable, but potentially dangerous, combination of advantages; his name celebrates family success in chariot-racing. We know that he belonged to the rich and powerful family of the Philaids (as did Miltiades, the victor of Marathon); a reasonably well informed Athenian audience[42] might be expected to know this, but others would miss this not unimportant point.

Herodotus has little to say about the three remaining suitors, Lysanias from Eretria in Euboea, (though he thinks it worth noting that this was the only contestant from Euboia, as if more might have been expected), Diaktorides of the Skopad clan, from Krannon in Thessaly (a rare suggestion of some relationship between the Thessalian aristocracy and other regions of the Greek world), and the Molossian Alkon[43] from rough and primitive Epirus. Herodotus does not even give their fathers' names.

The group as a whole cannot be supposed to represent the early sixth century panhellenic aristocracy (though this is often claimed): no one comes from Aegina, Sparta, Thebes, or Corinth, nor from Sicily or Ionia. Of course, many élite families would form matrimonial plans well on advance; Kleisthenes' field of candidates is restricted to bachelors not otherwise committed. Only with the Athenian pair are there two contestants from the same community. The complementary qualities of the Argonauts have no counterpart here: the young men are not personally distinguished by various talents. Several names have the charm of rarity.

---

[40] A Megakles, who *may* be the same man, is mentioned near the start of the *Histories* as the leader of 'the men of the shore' (*paraloi*) at the time of Peisistratos' bid for power (1.59.3).

[41] *APF* 7617: see 8429. He does not appear again in Herodotus, though we know that he was eponymous archon 566/5, when the Panathenaia was reorganised.

[42] I prefer 'audience' to 'readership', as it is very likely that in composing his work Herodotus envisaged that it would be read aloud to a group, and thus saw no need to change many features which might appear better suited to listeners than to solitary readers. See further W. A. Johnson, 'Oral performance and the composition of Herodotus' *Histories*', *GRBS* 35 (1994), 229–54.

[43] Lysanias is an immensely popular name; neither Diaktorides nor Alkon is very common.

On the day appointed as the deadline for arrival Kleisthenes asked each about his country and kin (128.1). Homeric custom leaves such enquiries until a new arrival has been fed and generally made comfortable, but we are probably not meant to sense a breach of etiquette. Herodotus could assume that Kleisthenes would leave to his servants practical details of his guests' reception. It may be taken for granted that they would be accompanied by trusted servants, along with favourite horses and dogs.

The suitors are then under Kleisthenes' observation for a year, as he tests their characters and abilities in various situations. The procedure follows a conventional pattern of stories in which suitors come from a distance: their physical and intellectual level must be assessed on the basis of tasks calling for courage, ingenuity, strength, and swift reactions.[44] This group is not said to be tested in military expertise nor in the nearest peacetime equivalent, hunting; we may be reminded of the Phaiacians. Instead there is unusual emphasis on social skills; Kleisthenes attached particular importance to their conduct in feasting together (128.1).[45] Herodotus does not comment on the mixture of dialects implied by the party's diverse origins, though it might have been expected to cause some difficulties (cf. Thuc. 3.94.5); the habits of linguistic accommodation which must have come fairly easily to those doing business (whether public or private) with people from a different dialect region would have been hard to maintain over months of regular socializing; but Herodotus generally tends to ignore language problems. The Aetolian Males and the Molossian Alkon would have been greatly disadvantaged; the sophistication and wit of the symposium would not have been a regular part of their life-style on the fringes of the Hellenic world. Agariste's views are treated as irrelevant, while her suitors appear to be expected to take her qualities on trust; it is not suggested that she is introduced to them.

---

[44] See further *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* 5 (1987). 227–36 *s.v.* Freier, Freierproben; W. Hansen, *Ariadne's Thread. A Guide to International Tales found in Classical Literature* (Ithaca and London, 2002), 56–62. Of course, many such stories include an element of risk: failure in the task prescribed commonly means death.

[45] I prefer συνεστίηι 'feasting together' to the equally well attested variant συνεστοῖ 'in society', as the more specific; neither word is attested elsewhere.

The thoroughness of the procedure might give the impression that Kleisthenes' primary concern was the choice of his successor; certainly his decision is presented as a matter of interest to the whole of Sikyon (129.1). In heroic legend succession by marriage to the king's daughter or the deceased king's widow is extremely common. Thus Menelaus became king of Sparta by marrying Tyndaros' daughter Helen, and Oedipus came to reign at Thebes by marriage to Iocasta; thus Penelope's suitors are attracted not just by her beauty but by the prospect of rule in Ithaca. Alkinoos seems to entertain similar ideas for Nausikaa and Odysseus, and the sporting competitions of *Odyssey* 8 are occasionally (22–3; 197) presented as if intended to test the hero.[46] Certainly there is a strong appeal in the idea that Kleisthenes was imitiating heroic precedent. The wooing of Helen comes immediately to mind (cf. Dio Chrys. 11.46), as related in Stesichorus' *Helena* (*PMG* 187–93), in which the suitors went to Sparta and bound themselves by an oath to assist her husband if she were abducted (F 190). Kleisthenes goes to great trouble and expense to imitate the kind of matrimonial competition associated with the remote heroic past:[47] the ground is prepared for managing the succession in a style characteristic of the epic environment. Familiarity with this type of story would suggest that some of those who came to Sikyon hoped that Kleisthenes was planning to designate his son-in-law as his successor, so that at his death power might pass smoothly to a young man, among whose qualities was a gift for making himself agreeable.[48] But it is idle to speculate as to whether in sixth-century Greece it might have seemed

[46] See further M. Finkelberg, 'Royal succession in heroic Greece', *CQ* 41 (1991), 303–16.

[47] I should note the suggestion that the 'Hesiodic' narrative of a competition among Helen's suitors reflects Agariste's betrothal: see L. Bertelli, 'Hecataeus: from genealogy to historiography', in *The Historian's Craft in the Age of Herodotus*, ed. N. Luraghi (Oxford, 2001), 67–94. This implies great confidence in the historicity of Herodotus' story.

[48] I had supposed that Robert Fowler interpreted the situation similarly, since he refers to the suitors as 'would be tyrants' ('Herodotus and Athens', in *Herodotus and his World*, eds. P. Derow and R. Parker (Oxford, 2003), 305–18 (313)). but in response to a query of mine he explained (*per litteras*): 'I don't think Kleisthenes was looking for a successor for himself here; his status allows him to offer his daughter as a way of securing alliances and influence elsewhere, while the potential sons-in-law hope to use that status to their own advantage back home.'

feasible for a tyrant to hand on power to a son-on-law who was not originally a citizen; Herodotus' audience knew that such would not be the outcome of this episode.

As the evaluation process drew to a close (129), it somehow became clear that the Athenian pair were the favourites (καὶ δή κου ἠρέσκοντό ‹οἱ› οἱ ἀπ᾽ Ἀθηνέων ἀπιγμένοι). This will not surprise us; it corresponds to Herodotus' view of the city's standing when Croesus, seeking allies, investigated which were the most powerful Greek cities (1.56.1–2) and found that Athens and Sparta were the leaders. (Herodotus was retrojecting the fifth-century political scene.) Powerful friends at Athens were highly desirable. We may imagine that Kleisthenes was observed spending increasing periods in confidential conversations with the pair. Hippokleides was in the lead, partly on the strength of his own qualities (κατ᾽ ἀνδραγαθίην) and partly because of his family connections with the dynasty of tyrants ruling at neighbouring Corinth, the Kypselids (cf. 6.34.1). Herodotus has already mentioned that the father of Miltiades, the *oikist* of the Thracian Chersonese, was called Kypselos (6.34.1). Solidarity between tyrants is a recurrent motif in Herodotus, and matrimonial alliances have long been a valuable political tool; this detail reminds us of the political implications of Agariste's marriage. Geography is relevant: from Sikyon the Aegean was accessible only by sailing west and round the Peloponnese with its various hazards or by using the *diolkos*, which required Corinthian co-operation. So connection with Hippokleides' family offered very substantial advantages. His kin were certainly not hostile to tyranny in principle. Miltiades the victor of Marathon was prosecuted for tyranny in the Thracian Chersonese (6.104.2), a role in which Herodotus presented him at the time of Darius' Scythian campaign (4. 137).

When the day came for the announcement of Kleisthenes' decision (129.1), he feasted the suitors and all the people of Sikyon with a sacrifice of a hundred oxen. Lavish celebration, which puts prosperity on display, is appropriate on the occasion of Agariste's engagement (ἐγγύησις). The actual wedding will take place at a later date, and require her presence; this feast marks her betrothal, as agreed between her father and her future husband. We may be reminded of the opening of Pindar's *Olympian* 7, with its simile of a rich man pledging his future son-in-law.

When the meal was over, the occasion took the form of a symposium,

as the suitors competed in music and verbal skill.[49] Their number (thirteen plus their host) nicely fits the symposiastic convention of seven couches each holding a pair.[50] As the drinking proceeds the exuberant Hippokleides monopolizes attention with a display of dancing in various styles, on a table serving as a makeshift stage. His performance culminates with his standing on his head, waving his legs in the air (Greek males, it should be remembered, wore no underwear).[51] There can be no doubt about the shocking effect of Hippokleides' performance amid the elegance of the symposium. Kleisthenes found the dancing altogether distasteful, but Hippokleides was too self-absorbed to observe the effect of his performance on his silent host until the finale elicited the memorably expressed verdict: 'Son of Teisandros, you've danced away your marriage' (ὦ παῖ Τεισάνδρου, ἀπορχήσαό γε μὲν τὸν γάμον).[52] The catchphrase, οὐ φροντὶς Ἱπποκλείδηι, 'Hippokleides has no cares' originated, says Herodotus, in the young man's prompt (and metrical) response, expressing a general attitude to life rather than a reaction to a single setback, a fine illustration of the traditions of symposiastic repartee by which his name would be long remembered.[53] Robert Fowler well writes: 'This story would have gone down a storm in democratic Athens.

[49] Τῶι λεγομένωι ἐς τὸ μέσον: it is hard to decide just what Herodotus has in mind here: 'speaking on a given subject' (Rawlinson), 'talking in company' (de Sélincourt), 'public speaking' (Waterfield); game of riddles, story-telling?

[50] For the ἑπτάκλινος οἶκος cf. Phrynichos F 69 K-A; Xen. *Symp.*2.18. But τρισκαίδεκα can function as an indefinite number, like our colloquial use of 'dozen'; see *RAC* 4 (1959) 313–22 *s.v.* Dreizehn (R. Mehrlein).

[51] Like Alkmaion, he has little concern for his own dignity; the stories share a taste for unconventional behaviour. See further Alan Griffiths, 'Kissing cousins: some curious cases of adjacent material in Herodotus', in *The Historian's Craft in the Age of Herodotus*, ed. N. Luraghi (Oxford, 2001), 161–78 (esp.167–8).

[52] The form of address should be noted; address by patronymic in a negative statement adds force to the utterance with 'an ironic imitation of politeness' (E. Dickey, *Greek Forms of Address* (Oxford, 1996), 55. The compound ἀπορχεῖσθαι is otherwise unattested. The force of γε μέν is not clear; perhaps indicating an ellipse ('You've danced very well, but...), Kleisthenes being at a loss for words from indignation, or marking a coinage? D. Ogden, *The Crooked Kings of Ancient Greece* (London, 1997), 117, suggests a calembour on ὄρχις 'testicle': 'you have ballsed up your marriage', reproduces the pun, though this short-lived slang for making a mess of something is alien in register.

Hippokleides, not Megakles who wins the bride, is the true hero of the story; the man who beats all those would-be tyrants at their own game, and then shows he doesn't give a fig for the prize. He is the buffoon with whom the audience identifies'.[54]

Kleisthenes now declares his choice. His grand opening ᾿Ανδρες παιδὸς τῆς ἐμῆς μνηστῆρες (130.1) has suggested to some scholars that the wooing of Agariste had been celebrated in epic; but Hippokleides' exuberant slapstick could never have found a place in high poetry and such cannot have been Herodotus' source. Kleisthenes' speech is well calculated to defuse resentment among the unsuccessful. They are to receive a talent of silver each, while Megakles gets the girl. Since the marriage is to be in accordance with Attic law, a point given particular emphasis by its position at the end of its sentence, a substantial dowry is to be expected, which will, in due course, become part of her husband's family's assets.[55] Is the emphasis on this point significant? Was it to be taken for granted that whatever the origins of the man chosen to be Agariste's husband the marriage would follow the system of his country? At all events, Megakles' connection with Kleisthenes has thus substantially enhanced the family's wealth and prestige: thus, says Herodotus, the Alkmaionids became famous (ἐβώσθησαν) throughout Greece; we imagine the unsuc-

[53] Iambic dimeter catalectic; for its interpretation see A. B. Cook ('Hippokleides' dance', *CR* 21 (1907) 169=70); the usual translation 'Hippokleides doesn't care, no problem for Hippokleides', corresponds to οὐδὲν μέλει ῾Ιπποκλείδηι. The phrase gained further publicity in the 1930s, when the charismatic and enigmatic WW1 hero T. E. Lawrence, Lawrence of Arabia, had *ou phrontis* carved on the kintel above the doorway of his cottage. ἀπὸ τούτου τοῦτο ὀνομάζεται: 'hence the saying;' νομίζεται ci. Stein (cf. 6.138.4 ἀπὸ τούτου … νενόμισται … καλέεσθαι. It is not clear whether Hermippos' allusion in the *Demotai* (F 16 K-A) can be regarded as independent testimony. The saying's currency is no guarantee of the historicity of its alleged origin: compare the different aetiologies offered for the saying 'Is Saul also among the prophets?' (1 *Sam.*10.10–12; 19.23–4); well discussed by R. Alter, *The World of Biblical Literature* (London, 1992) 11–17.

[54] loc. cit. (n.48); cf. Strasburger (op. cit. (n.10) 311) 'It is he [Hippokleides] who has the laughter on his side, exchanging a rich bride and the favour of a powerful tyrant for a priceless piece of slapstick.'

[55] It is hardly relevant that Perikles' citizenship law would have made such a marriage impossible.

cessful competitors going home and telling of their experiences among the splendours of Kleisthenes' court.

For those who regard this narrative as basically historical, it offers a rare glimpse of the customs and outlook of the 'international aristocracy' of archaic Greece though Herodotus' source and the extent to which details may be pressed are awkward questions. But the story took on a rather different aspect when, towards the end of the nineteenth century, attention was drawn to a strange parallel in the collection of Indian stories of the Buddha's previous lives, known as *Jātaka* tales, of which a translation by T. W. Rhys Davids, entitled *Buddhist Birth Stories,* was published in 1880. The close resemblance of the tale of the *Dancing Peacock* was noted by several scholars independently.[56] Macan was alerted to the parallel, and gives a translation of the Indian story in Appendix 14 of his commentary (1895). It runs as follows:

> Once upon a time the birds chose as their king the Golden Goose.[57] He had a lovely daughter, who asked to be allowed to choose a husband for herself. So her father called together all the birds of the Himalaya region, and told his daughter to make her choice. As she surveyed the crowd she saw the peacock, with his splendid neck and tail, and chose him. When the peacock was told, he was carried away by his great joy; wishing to display his powers more fully than he

[56] See S. J. Warren, 'Herodot VI 129', *Hermes* 29 (1894), 476–8; C. W. Mulvaney (in Benares), 'Herodotus VI 129 and a Buddhist Birth Story', *CR* 19 (1905), 304–5.

[57] As the prologue explains, the father bird represents the *Bodhisatta* (the future Buddha, the Buddha before his awakening) in a previous incarnation. Different translations vary; but I am assured by Sarah Shaw that 'goose' is the correct translation, though less dignified than 'mallard' or 'swan'. She adds: 'In *Jātaka* stories, when the Bodhisatta is a goose, he is a very wise one, and often teaches kings.' For the verses, thought to be the oldest element, I have adopted Chalmers' translation (*The* Jātaka, *or Stories of the Buddha's Former Births,* ed. E. B. Cowell; vol. 1, translated by R. Chalmers (Cambridge, 1895), 83–4). Many of the stories simply encourage good conduct and prudence, even though in the form in which they have been transmitted the focus is on the path to buddahood; see further N. Appleton, *Jātaka Stories in Theravāda Buddhism,* Burlington, 2010. Another tale (No. 67), not a fable but an anecdote, embodies the argument by which the wife of Intaphernes explains her choice of her brother when Darius offers to spare one of the trio husband, son, or brother (Hdt. 3.119); more fortunate than Intaphernes' wife, she wins a reprieve for all three. On Sophocles' use of the theme see further S. West, 'Sophocles' *Antigone* and Herodotus Book Three', in *Sophocles Revisited. Essays presented to Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones,* ed. J. Griffin (Oxford, 1999), 109–36.

had done before, he began to dance, and thus exposed himself. The King Goose was disgusted at such indecency, and uttered this verse:

> 'A pleasing note is yours, a lovely back,
> A neck in hue like lapis lazuli;
> A fathom's length your outstretched feathers reach.
> Withall, your dancing loses you my child.'

Overriding his daughter's decision, he gave her to a young goose, a nephew of his. The peacock was overwhelmed with shame, and fled away.

The Buddhist prologue and epilogue present this story as illustrating the sad results of a lack of regard for decency; it might be given a more general application, as a warning against showing off.[58] This collection of tales seems to have been compiled in the third or second century BC, when the frames adapting them to distinctively Buddhist edification were provided, but it is generally agreed that the stories themselves are much older and represent the traditional folklore of Indian villages. The verses, which highlight the point of the story, were the only fixed element; the narrative could be improvised at any performance until the text was stabilised by writing. Such a mixture of prose and verse is a common feature of oral story-telling.[59]

Here among the birds is depicted a method of contracting a princely marriage exemplified many times in classical Indian literature, known as *svayamvara*, literally 'self-choice', though the maiden's 'choice' is a fiction; she follows instructions or, as in this case, her choice is conditional, and can without difficulty be over-ridden. The occasion functions as a general public festival.[60] Evidence for the custom is not limited to India.

---

[58] The peacock is given a similar role in a passage of the *Pañcatantra* (World's Classics translation (1992), 59): 'An enemy, however long he may try, cannot find a weakness to exploit in a wise man with a deep personality, unless he himself carelessly reveals it. This verse puts it well: "Who can see the anus of a peacock, / however much someone may try, / if the foolish bird himself does not dance?"'

[59] Imitated in the Herodotean *Life of Homer*.

[60] See further S. Jamison, 'Penelope and the Pigs', *ClAnt* 18 (1999), 227–72. It is an odd coincidence that the topic of hatred of tyranny led an interpolator (surely not Herodotus himself) to mention the case of Kallias, who allowed his three daughters to choose their husbands for themselves (122; absent from a large part of the MS tradition); 'the wedding of the daughters would have had more verisimilitude if the names of the chosen bridegrooms had been added', observes Macan.

From the Eurasian steppe the story of Odatis and Zaradres, recorded by Chares of Mytilene (*FGrHist* 125 F 5; Athen. 13.35, 575a–f), shows how a spirited girl and her lover might conform to the convention and still achieve their hearts' desire, against her father's wishes. Chares reports that the story was very popular and depicted in sacred buidings, palaces, and even in private houses, while the name Odatis was popular among the nobility.[61]

The relevance of the Indian fable to Herodotus' tale of Agariste's betrothal, however it is to be explained, appears to have been generally accepted[62] until the publication in 1930 of a paper by the Russian scholar Salomon Luria, arguing that the fable of the vixen and the monkey related by Archilochus (F 185–7) and Aesop (fab. 81 Perry) lay behind the episode.[63] This starts with the monkey's dancing at a gathering of the beasts which leads to his election as king, a role for which he is quite unsuited, but has otherwise very little in common with the Indian fable. But this alleged parallel, adduced at a period when scholars were much less ready to allow eastern influence on Greek culture than they are now, seems to have led to neglect of the tale of the Dancing Peacock.[64] How-

[61] Chares' report used to be a staple in discussions of the origins of the Greek novel; see E. Rohde, *Der griechische Roman und seine Vorläufer,* 3rd ed. (Leipzig, 1914), 47–55; it has recently enjoyed renewed attention from E. Mignogna in *Ἔρως. Antiche trame greche d'amore,* ed. A. Stramaglia (Bari, 2000), 201–8. From the far west Aristotle (F 560 Gigon) records a story of a similar custom among the natives when Massalia was founded; there the colony's founder, Euxenos, was the choice of the chieftain's daughter. This report has been treated with some scepticism; we may suspect wishful thinking by later Massaliots about the natives' reaction to their forefathers' arrival. But if we see it as a genuinely Indo-European élite custom, its currency in the south of France should not be dismissed out of hand.

[62] See W. Aly, *Volksmärchen, Sage und Novelle bei Herodot und seinen Zeitgenossen* (Göttingen, 1921 (1969^2)), 158–9.

[63] 'Der Affe des Archilochos und die Brautwerbung des Hippokleides', *Philologus* N.S. 39 (1930), 1–22.

[64] Brief mentions in McGregor (n.2), 269; J. L. Myres, *Herodotus, Father of History* (Oxford, 1953), 212; Nenci's note (on 129) refers to it, but Luria's approach is preferred. Scott ignores it. I do not claim that my list is complete, but it is surprising how many careful discussions of these chapters fail to mention the Indian parallel. The lack of a modern English translation of the *Jātaka* tales partly explains this neglect, while Macan's great commentary is too often ignored as outdated.

ever, its relationship to Herodotus' narrative has recently been illuminated by the discussions of Müller and Kurke.[65] The topic is not yet exhausted.

Animal fables travelled well in antiquity. What we know as Archilochus' fable of the fox and the eagle (F 174–84; Aesop fab. 1 Perry) is attested some centuries earlier in a Babylonian version in which the earthbound animal is not a fox but a snake; in a Demotic text from Roman Egypt the beasts are a cat and a vulture. But in this tale no other bird can replace the peacock, and the fable must have originated where the bird was familiar.

Its homeland is India; it is a sociable, and promiscuous, bird, whose courting behaviour would have been well known to Indian villagers. Though peafowl were brought westward as beautiful pets, the fable is far more likely to have been created in their homeland than on the strength of observation of rare specimens adorning the gardens of satraps and the wealthy.[66]

Macan argued forcefully that the Greek story derived from the Indian. 'It is infinitely more probable that an Indian fable had reached Hellas and been historicised before the days of Herodotus than that a page of Herodotean history, so to speak, was torn out and carried to India in the train of Alexander, and then dissolved and desiccated into a bird-fable.'[67] There is no problem in envisaging such stories traveling westward, with merchants and soldiers, among whom must often have been found young men whom their elders judged too pleased with themselves, and likely to benefit from the fable's moral.

---

[65] See n.3.

[66] Herodotus, for all his interest in zoological curiosities, never mentions the peacock. Aristophanes' references (*Ach.* 62–3; *Birds* 102: see Dunbar *ad loc*.) imply that the bird was a novelty at Athens. The tradition of its association with the temple of Hera on Samos (Antiphanes F 173 K–A; Menodotos of Samos (c. 200 BC) *FGrHist* 541 F 2) might suggest that it first appeared in Athens at the end of the Samian War in 439. See further P. Cartledge, 'Fowl play: a curious lawsuit in classical Athens', in *Nomos. Essays in Athnian Law, Politics and Society,* eds. P. Cartledge, P. Millett, and S. Todd (Cambridge, 1990) 41–61; M. C. Miller, *Athens and Persia in the Fifth Century BC* (Cambridge, 1997) 189–92.

[67] Pp. 302–3. But How and Wells' note *ad loc*. is agnostic.

The story of Darius' comparative investigation of funerary practices (3.38.3–4) illustrates how dealings with the Persian Empire could expose Greeks to Indian ideas and customs. The anecdote is clearly Iranocentric; Greek custom is presented as just as odd as Indian.[68] Here we see Sousa (or wherever the Persian court is supposed to be) as a centre for cultural interchange. An element of Indian influence in Greek storytelling need not presuppose Greeks travelling to the eastern limits of the Persian empire. Many of those who came to its heart would have been fluent in Aramaic.

As Macan noted, 'the complete anthropomorphism of the story as compared with the fable may be taken to imply more than one intermediary'. Adaptation has gone well beyond anthropomorphization.[69] The tale's moral has evaporated: contrast the peacock's departure, in shame and disappointment, with Hippokleides' nonchalant response to Kleisthenes' rebuke. The formality of Kleisthenes' solemn arangements and his evocation of the heroic world are mocked, while Hippokleides' debonaire reaction gains long-lasting currency. His lively defiance of convention puts in the shade the successful Megakles.

The basic plot of the Indian tale is not simply anthropomorphized but adapted to function as a crucial element in a more elaborate structure. Herodotus appears to condense a much fuller composition, in which Agariste's betrothal provided the occasion for a cycle of stories, drawn from various parts of the Greek world (we may compare Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*).[70] As with Callimachus' *Aitia* the symposium can offer an excellent framework, unifying very diverse material, and Kleisthenes' reasonable curiosity about the family and community into which his daughter will marry provides a natural motivation for a series of stories

[68] Well discussed by H. Humbach in *Musa Iocosa. Festschrift für A. Thierfelder* (Hildesheim/New York, 1974) 26–8.

[69] I owe to Glenn Most the suggestion that anthropomorphization would have been facilitated by the tale's association with re-incarnation.

[70] As Aly ([n.63)] 159–60) saw: 'Sieht man sich in Hdt's Erzählung die einzelnen Freier oder ihre Verwandten etwas näher an, … so erkennt man in der Geschichte von der Werbung die Rahmenerzählung, in die viele andere Geschichten ... eingefügt werden konnten.' Herodotus' work is itself designed on such a principle, the Greek confrontation with the Persian Empire providing a framework for very various material.

featuring his guests. This aspect of Herodotus' narrative has been masterfully illuminated by Müller. What we are told of the eleven non-Athenian suitors goes far beyond the requirements of Herodotus' narrative; a list of the regions from which men came would have satisfactorily indicated the range of the competition. Herodotus offers tantalizing allusions to fuller stories, suggesting a lost wealth of local legend. The process by which the suitors introduce themselves to Kleisthenes (and thus to each other) (128.1) would provide a very suitable context for some to tell of their kinsmen's claims to distinction; so, too, would the symposium. Kleisthenes sought 'the best of the Hellenes' for his daughter (126.1); that might be judged over-ambitious. The eleven non-Athenians figure in this narrative by reason of their association with an interesting, and not too familiar, story. But whereas Megakles is provided with a story in the preceding tale of his father, we are told nothing about Hippokleides beyond his general excellence and a reference, at rather a late point, to his connection with the Kypselids of Corinth, until his antics bring the tale to its climax. Rivalry between the two Athenian candidates gives a sharper focus to the old theme of a crowd of eligible young nobles competing for a ruler's daughter. Hippokleides' performance delays the predictable decision in favour of Megakles and illustrates the hazards of over-confidence, though his insouciance brings the affair to a happy conclusion. We do not need to account for the details of Agariste's wooers being preserved for more than a century: surely this roster developed long after Agariste had left Sikyon for Athens. Smindyrides, Damasos, Males, Leokedes and Laphanes were selected by a storyteller for inclusion because they were thought to have flourished at roughly the right period and interesting, but not over-familiar, stories were told about them or their kin. Whether there were likewise tales to be told about those who are no more than names, Epistrophos, Amiantos, Onomastos, Lysanias, Diaktorides, and Alkon, must remain uncertain; perhaps they were just added (invented?) to produce a Panhellenic effect.

Agariste's betrothal to Megakles, foreseeable from an early point in the story, anchors in Athenian history the elaborate narrative's culmination. The fable of the Dancing Peacock has not merely been anthropomorphised. The lesson which the peacock has clearly learned as it flees in shame is subverted by Hippokleides' nonchalant response, while the gilt

is taken off the gingerbread of Megakles' success in a demanding competition. But there are weaknesses in Herodotus' narrative which reflects the problems created by different cultural conventions: Hippokleides' exuberance is evidently fuelled by his confidence that he has won this competition (128.2): but how can he be so sure? In the Indian fable the desirable gosling has declared her choice, and the peacock's triumphant response is perfectly motivated. The virtual seclusion of upper-class Greek women precluded this motif. The adaptation of the timeless fable into an episode of archaic Greek history has not been entirely smooth.[71]

We notice too a difficulty with the courteous opening of Kleisthenes' concluding speech, as he claims that he would have liked to be free of the need to make a choice and to gratify them all. This is now a cliché of the finale of TV competition programmes, but it sounds rather hollow and conventional just after Kleisthenes' firm rejection of Hippokleides.

The background to the narrative of Agariste's betrothal thus appears quite complex. Hippokleides is a curiously marginal figure,[72] who makes a far more vivid impression on us than any of his rivals.They are brought together to provide competition for Megakles, the original principle of selection, we may suppose, being the entertaining or instructive stories that could be told about them, their kin or their community.

We need not envisage a written composition. Such stories do not call for accurate verbal reproduction; details could be replaced, elaborated, or discarded. Greek traditions of oral narrative in prose are hard to trace, but the skill in structuring a complex, many stranded narrative demonstrated in the *Odyssey* (and particularly in its first half) could develop independently of mastery of the traditional epic phraseology. Pindar is a key witness to the existence of a type of narrative that was not in verse and rose above the level of folk-tale, *Märchen*.[73] Compare in particular *Pyth.* 1.92–4: 'Fame's declaration alone outlasting mortality reveals the

[71] Unlike Kurke, I do not think Herodotus was aware of the animal fable in the background, though admittedly the symbolic lion of Agariste's dream might be taken to hint at this. We could of course take the episode as illustrating the principle of 'many a slip between cup and lip', cf. Lyc. *Alex.* 489–90.

[72] As Katharina Wesselmann well emphasises (*Mythische Erzählstrukturen in Herodots "Historien"* (Berlin and Boston, 2011), 180), though her discussion is distorted by her insistence on the importance of the Trickster figure.

life of the departed to *logioi* and to singers. Croesus' generous excellence does not perish. But everywhere hostile report overwhelms Phalaris, who cruelly had men burned to death in a brazen bull.' *Logios* is not attested before Pindar, whose usage supplies our best evidence for the word's connotations for Herodotus' audience, who meet it at the very start of his narrative, with his reference to the *logioi* among the Persians. Pindar's *logioi* are not merely well informed about the past but skilled in presenting their material.[74] The term is difficult to translate; Gregory Nagy's rendering 'masters of speech' well conveys its connotations, while simpler renderings which have enjoyed some support – 'chroniclers', 'historians', 'learned men', 'intellectuals', 'memorialists' – are variously misleading.[75]

Herodotus uses *logioi* only of foreign experts on tradition, with reference to Persians (1.1.1) and Egyptians (2.3.1; 77.1);[76] but he must have expected his audience to interpret the term by reference to Greek counterparts. The activity of Persian *logioi* is implied when he prefaces his narrative of Cyrus' rise to power by saying that he will follow the most sober of four accounts known to him (1.95.1); correspondingly, he knows of vatrious reports of Cyrus' death, and relates what seems to him the most persuasive (1.214.5) – though Xenophon preferred a different version (*Cyr.* 8.7). That Herodotus' work issued from a complex pre-existing Greek story-telling tradition will seem to many self-evident. His sophisticated narrative art cannot have sprung into life fully developed, like Athena from the head of Zeus, but had matured among men who were recogniuzed in their communities as familiar with local traditions, blessed with retentive memories and a gift for words.[77]

It is very characteristic of Herodotus to give the impression that he

[73] These terms are used very loosely, the essential feature being some affinity with the type of story popular among Europe's illiterate peasantry in the early nineteenth century, when it began to attract serious scholarly attention.

[74] Cf. *Nem.* 6.30; 45–7.

[75] See further *Pindar's Homer* (Baltimore and London, 1990) 215–49; N. Luraghi, 'The importance of being *logios*', *CW* 102 (2009), 439–56. Democritus F1 λογίων ἀνθρώπων πλείστων εἰσήκουσα should not be overlooked, but its authenticity is questionable.

[76] Perhaps also of the Scythian Anacharsis (4.46.1), though I would prefer the variant λόγιμον 'important, well known'.

could draw on the traditions of Athens' leading families (though he names no individual Athenian among his informants), and the following report of Perikles' mother's dream (131) has encouraged the idea that Alkmaionid tradition was his source here. But, as Rosalind Thomas has forcefully argued,[78] it would have been absurd for the family to cherish details of a competition in which Megakles was originally only the runner-up. Perikles' pre-eminence must have stimulated talk about his mother's family; it is probably futile to try to pin down more exactly how Philaid/Alkmaionid rivalry was absorbed into the story. As often, while we must allow that Herodotus' creative imagination was constantly at work in shaping the *Histories* as a whole into a coherent narrative, there is no straightforward way of assessing the extent of his own contribution in any individual case.

We are left with the problem that this memorable narrative does not appear to serve Herodotus' purpose of clearing the Alkmaionids of the suspicion of favouring tyranny; it simply reduces the glamour of Megakles' success if he becomes the winner only by default. In terms of narrative logic, the winner ought to gain not only a highly desirable bride but also the prospect of succeeding to her father's power. In the mid-fifth century it might not have seemed too unlikely that a Greek tyrant a century earlier could hope to establish as his successor a man who was not a citizen of the state he ruled. Autocrats, whether tyrants or oriental kings, are liable in Herodotus' narrative to behave with an extraordinary disregard of convention, as his reference to Pheidon's outrageous interference with the organization of the Olympic games illustrates. If it might be supposed that Megakles' success could have brought him the prospect of inheriting supreme power in Sikyon, his return to Athens for a marriage according to Attic custom would take on great significance. Hippokleides' family had no qualms about ruling as hereditary tyrants in the Thracian Chersonese, and the qualities which attracted Kleisthenes' par-

[77] See further the very valuable discussion by Nino Luraghi, 'The stories before the *Histories*: folktale and traditional narrative in Herodotus', in *Herodotus* I: *Herodotus and the Narrative of the Past,* ed. R. V. Munson (Oxford, 2013) 87–112; R. Waterfield, 'On "fussy authorial nudges" in Herodotus', *CW* 102 (2009), 485–94.

[78] See further R. Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens* (Cambridge, 1989), 264–72.

ticular favour towards him might be supposed to be such as would equip him well for guiding the city after his father-in-law's death. But all that can properly be regarded as historical in these chapters is the marriage of Megakles and Agariste, and the temptation to extract more substance must be resisted.

It is a tribute to the fascination of this story that it has been cherished so tenaciously as a reflection of the élite culture of archaic Greece. Kleisthenes' year-long house-party belongs to a fairytale world. If nothing worse occurred than Hippokleides' unseemly dancing, the host of such a gathering might count himself extraordinarily fortunate. Much here is invented, but responsibility for the fiction should not be laid at Herodotus' door. We should be cautious about treating the details as solid evidence for anything.

With the final story Herodotus brings us down to his own times, with the birth of Perikles to Agariste's granddaughter, likewise Agariste (131), thus helping his audience to place the preceding episode chronologically.[79] A few days before she gave birth, Herodotus tells us, she dreamed that she bore a lion cub. He would not have regarded such a trans-species birth as impossible (cf. 1.84.2), though if his ideas about lion reproduction (3.108.4) were widely shared, its effect would have been disheartening. This is Herodotus' only reference to Perikles, and the symbolism of the lion cub is ambiguous. But against the report that the tyrant Hipparchos dreamed that he was addressed as 'lion' the night before he was assassinated (5.56.1) may be set the manifest popularity of lion-names (Leon, Leonidas etc.), suggesting a favourable interpretation.[80] Homer bears witness to the belief that the dreams of kings are more likely to be divinely inspired than others' (*Il.* 2.80–3), and such politically significant dreams are more typical of the world of Near Eastern autocrats than of democratic Athens. The only other woman's dream which Herodotus thought worth recording is the terrible forecast of Polykrates' fate which came to his daughter (3.124–5). Again, it makes little sense to suppose that Herodotus was indebted to family tradition for this

[79] The customary re-use of personal names in alternate generations also provides a connection between the Sikyonian tyrant and the Athenian statesman (5.69.1).

[80] So too the mock oracles of Aristophanes, *Eq.* 1037–40, 1043–4; see also *Thesm.* 514 with Austin-Olson *ad loc*.

report. It is interesting that the story of this dream was circulating in Perikles' lifetime.[81]

Though there may be little historical substance to this Alkmaionid triptych, it provides a pause underlining the importance of the battle of Marathon, the last act of the Ionian revolt. Its conclusion with Herodotus' only reference to Perikles, in itself decidedly enigmatic, gives weight to these anecdotes. These chapters admirably illustrate F. A. Wolf's apparently paradoxical characterisation of Herodotus as *veri amantissimus pariter et fictorum cupidus narrator* (*Prolegomena ad Homerum*, § 14). Their historical value lies in what they show about conceptions of archaic Greece current in mid-fifth–century Athens.[82]

Stephanie West
Hertford College, Oxford

Веридба Агаристина: о уподобљивости једне поучне приче

Апстракт

У чланку се истичу тешкоће које произлазе из веровања да је Херодотова прича о веридби Агаристиној (6.126–30) у основи историчка, и разматрају се антецеденти те приче. – О Агаристиним просцима детаљи су збуњујући: има мало речи о њиховим одликама; они не долазе из главних полиса архајске Грчке; међутим, неки од њих наводно имају знаменитих рођака. Стиче се утисак да се Херодот ослањао на неку знатно потпунију причу. – Клистенов брижљиви поступак избора подсећа на ситуацију из легенди о

[81] Macan *ad loc*. raises an interesting question about the date at which this passage was composed: 'It is natural to suppose that special circumstances at the time when Hdt. was writing had emphasised the connexion of Perikles with the "accursed" house...; but it is difficult to imagine that Perikles was *dead* (429 B.C.) when this story was written. The whole passage, cc. 121–131, or 125–131, might very well be a παρενθήκη made after 432 B.C. and before 428 B.C.'

[82] This article has evolved over some time and has benefited from the comments of audiences in Oxford, Poznań, Toruń, Rome, Belgrade and Pisa. I am particularly indebted to Nick Allen, Benedetto Bravo, Jerzy Danielewicz, Robert Fowler, Simon Hornblower, Glenn Most, Chris Pelling, and Marek Węcowski (who allowed me to read his paper 'Wine and the tyrant: the wedding of Agariste and the ideal of sympotic equality', to be published in *Wine Confessions: production, trade and social significance of wine in ancient Greece and Cyprus* (*Hesperia suppl.*), ed. E. Margaritis).

јунацима, кад уз руку краљеве кћери иде и краљевина у наследство (као у случају Менелаја и Хелене). Прича излази на врхунац са ривалитетом двојице главних просаца, Алкмеонида Мегакла и Филаида Хипоклида. Хипоклид упропаштава своје изгледе на успех тиме што у непромишљеном наступу весеља плеше на симпосију на којем Клистен треба да објави за кога се одлучио. Одбачен, он нехајно одговара једном реченицом која је постала пословична. – У овој Херодотовој причи нашло се неочекиваног интереса пошто је указано на њену блиску паралелу у једној птичјој басни у *Џатакама* (збирци прича о Будиним пређашњим животима). Преображај те индијске басне у епизоду грчке историје фасцинантан је пример утицаја индијске на грчку културу; до антропоморфизације је дошло утолико лакше што се код Грка почев од VI в. опажа све веће интересовање за сеобу душа. – Херодот као да је у својој причи сажео неки много опсежнији састав у којем је веридба Агаристина служила као оквир читавом циклусу разних прича, при чему су увод (125) и климакс (129) чиниле приче које се тичу двојице Атињана. Тај састав није морао бити писан; Херодотова историја има за претпоставку приповедно наслеђе као важан елемент усмене културе, који ће тек с растом писмености изгубити на значају.

Кључне речи: Алкмеониди, басна, Индија, сеоба душа, олимпијске игре, паун, Сикион, симпосиј, тиранида.