CROESUS' GREAT NEMESIS

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This article attempts to account for the fact that *nemesis* occurs only once in Herodotus. It connects the term to Phrygia and the importance of Nemesis there, esp. as seen in 'confession-inscriptions' (*Beichtinschriften*). It argues that the Atys-Adrastus story is meant as an interpretative guide to the rest of the *History* through its use of significant names, comparable to the use of significant names in the Old Testament.

Hdt. 1.34.1 μετὰ δὲ Σόλωνα οἰχόμενον ἔλαβε ἐκ θεοῦ νέμεσις μεγάλη Κροῖσον, ὡς εἰκάσαι, ὅτι ἐνόμισε ἑωυτὸν εἶναι ἀνθρώπων ἁπάντων ὀλβιώτατον.

After Solon departed, a great *nemesis* from a god took Croesus, as it seems, because he considered himself to be of all men most blest.

Introduction

Here we would seem to have a clear declaration by Herodotus about what he thinks was the cause of a historical event – the punishment of Croesus. And yet massive problems attend the interpretation of this apparently simple declaration. First, it is sometimes pointed out that Herodotus qualifies his assertion with a significant hedge: 'as it seems'. Further, while he is specific about the agent of Croesus' misfortune, *nemesis*, and furthermore about its cause, namely Croesus' belief in his own good fortune, Herodotus does not know what the specific origin of this *nemesis* is other than that it is *a* god, unspecified.[1]

Problems multiply when we start to analyse the passage in the larger context of the *History*. What is the nature of the divine punishment of Croesus? In the first instance, it must be the death of his beloved son Atys, for this is the *logos* that immediately follows. But it has long been argued that the story of Atys and Adrastus not only explains Hdt. 1.34.1,[2] it is meant also to account for the larger arc of Croesus' career as detailed by

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1   Cf. Diod. Sic. 23.12.1.

2   All references are to Hude's 1932 edition of Herodotus, unless stated otherwise. Unless indicated otherwise, translations are mine, and dates are BC.

Herodotus in book 1;[3] that, in fact, the earlier stories of both Solon's visit to Croesus and the tragedy of Atys and Adrastus contribute to the characterisation of Croesus *as the kind of man* who was capable not only to form a mistaken sense of his own well-being and its permanence, but also to launch an ill-advised assault upon his powerful neighbour at least partly on the basis of that belief.[4]

It remains a fact, however, that if we want to say that the kind of person whose illusory views about his own prosperity could lead to the tragic conditions in which he lost his son is also the kind of person who could miscalculate on a larger scale in regard to the Lydian empire, that is a link in an argument that we must make, even if Herodotus may in some sense be encouraging us to make it. On the other hand, Herodotus gives us in total five different reasons for Croesus' decision to attack Persia,[5] none of which has to do with him considering himself the most fortunate of men.

I am inclined, along with those who favour reading the Atys and Adrastus story as playing a larger role in the *History*, to understand that the *logos* functions as an explanatory introduction to the sort of causation that will be evident elsewhere in Herodotus' account. Indeed, it strikes me as inherently unlikely that Herodotus meant the Atys–Adrastus *logos* to be limited only to illustrating Croesus' myopia concerning his good fortune. If that were its sole purpose, why spend so much time on the episode, and why in a such a prominent place in book 1, indeed, in the whole of the *History*? The story has much in common with the similarly cautionary tale of Candaules, his wife and Gyges (1.8–14), where personal catastrophe is also linked to the loss of power. Since Herodotus has identified Croesus as the man responsible for initiating the *adika erga* committed against the Greeks (1.5.3), what we are told of his affairs, public and private, and especially at such length, would seem to have to connect in some way to the largest theme of the *History*: the conflict of East and West.[6]

Scott Scullion has objected to this line of reasoning. He argues that 1.34.1 applies only to Atys' death and we are not authorised to apply it further; there is no 'conceptual model' being described in the passage.[7] But Scullion does not address the placement of this *logos* in such a prominent location in the *History*. Further, if a 'conceptual model' is not being offered, what is the purpose of the *logos*? By contrast, Hermann Strasburger, commenting on exemplary speeches in Herodotus, including that of Solon to Croesus, makes the

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3   E.g. Pohlenz (1937) 61; Heuss (1973) 394; Solmsen (1974) 141 and n. 8; Darbo-Peschanski (1987) 58. Cf. Munson (1993) 48 and n.51.

4   E.g. Erbse (1979b) 199; Pelling (2006) 150.

5   Satisfaction of the vengeance of the Heraclids (1.13.2); Croesus' thought to 'restrain' (καταλαβεῖν) the growth of Persian power before the Persians became great (1.46.1); Croesus' confidence in the oracle at Delphi that, in his understanding, assured him that he would be successful should he attack Persia (1.54.1; cf. 46.3). At 1.73.1, three reasons for Croesus' attack on Persia are given, two of which to that point in Herodotus' account are new: in addition to confidence in the oracle at Delphi, a desire on the part of Croesus 'to add to his portion'; and a determination to punish Cyrus on behalf of the Median king Astyages, Croesus' brother-in-law.

6   Cf. Gagné (2013) 325.

7   Scullion (2006) 196.

following observation: these speeches 'are *intended* to create a background and to guide us toward thoughts that are central for Herodotus'.[8]

In what follows, I want to revisit 1.34.1 and review some of its narrative oddities. I will attempt an accounting of these details in the subsequent sections, and will then conclude with a larger reflection on why 1.34.1 and its attendant *logoi* function in the way I have proposed.

A 'great *nemesis*': what is it and why is it 'great'?

We must begin with *nemesis*. It is often pointed out that in Homer, *nemesis* is 'indignation' or 'resentment', typically felt by a human at another's misconduct (e.g. *Il.* 13.122), and can even be extended to mean 'vengeance' (*Od.* 22.40).[9] It should be stressed, though, that both gods and humans can feel this sense of indignation or anger;[10] furthermore, while rare, the divine may on occasion direct their *nemesis* towards humans,[11] as at 1.34.1. While some readers have been inclined to translate the term at 1.34.1 as 'punishment', and often connect the word to a further claim that Croesus is to be punished for his *hybris*[12] (a term Herodotus does not use in the passage), a consensus has developed that, in accordance with its earlier meaning in Homer, we should instead understand something like 'indignation' or 'anger'.[13]

In Herodotus, a god or gods can find human behaviour objectionable of course, but the phrasing, while similar in some ways, is different in one respect from what we find at 1.34.1. Consider 4.205: Pheretime, who has exacted a terrible revenge on her enemies, herself suffers a horrible death (being eaten alive by worms), 'evidently because, among humans, excessive punishments are detested by the gods'.[14] Herodotus introduces a note of doubt with ὡς ἄρα,[15] as he does with at 1.34.1: evidently these moments of divine response to human error require some admission of uncertainty. Pheretime's horrible end may be understood as connected to the gods' reaction to her behaviour, wrong because it was

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8   Strasburger ([1955](#)) 7 = ([2013](#)) 301 (emphasis added).

9   A human feeling, connected with other emotions such as 'shame' or 'anger': Posnansky ([1890](#)) 1 and 3, Wilamowitz ([1931](#)–2) 1.350 n. 1. On *nemesis* at *Il.* 13.122: Janko ([1994](#)) 59; on *Od.* 22.40: Fernández-Galiano ([1992](#)) 228. Cf. Evans ([1991](#)) 47; Fisher ([1992](#)) 358 n. 81.

10   See esp. West ([1987](#)) 275 ad Eur. *Or.* 1361–2.

11   Esp. *Il.* 24.53; Redfield's claim ([1994](#), 213 and n. 80; cf. Allan [2006](#), 14) that this is the *only* place in the *Iliad* where *nemesis* is used to characterise 'the attitude of the gods toward human beings who have broken the moral code' is not accurate: consider e.g. *Il.* 4.507, where Apollo is described as 'angered' (νεμέσησε) at seeing the Trojans give way before the Argive onslaught. A combined case is *Il.* 8.198, where Hera is described as identically 'angered' (νεμέσησε), first at Hector and his boast that the Trojans might drive away the Greeks, as well as by his success more generally; but also at her brother Poseidon for taking no action.

12   E.g. Hellmann ([1934](#)) 59, 67; Grene ([1961](#)), esp. 481–5. Cf. Flower ([2013](#)) 132.

13   Pelling ([2006](#)) 150–1 n. 36.

14   Cf. Nicolai ([1986](#)) 53. Note also 2.120.5: τῶν μεγάλων ἀδικημάτων μεγάλαι εἰσὶ καὶ αἱ τιμωρίαι παρὰ τῶν θεῶν, with Corcella ([2007](#)) 721 ad 4.205.

15   Denniston ([1954](#)) 36.

excessive (αἱ λίην ἰσχυραὶ τιμωρίαι),[16] and it may well be that Herodotus wants us to make that connection, but it is *not stated* to be so. On the other hand, at 1.34.1, *nemesis* is something that issues from a god and that takes hold of Croesus. *Nemesis* may be interpreted to imply that the god first felt indignation at Croesus' sense of good fortune, but (again) we have to fill in the gaps: we must supply the reaction of the divine that in turn generated the *nemesis* that took hold of Croesus.[17] *Nemesis* must, to borrow Anthony Ellis' formulation, 'be a process or personification associated with a god, not an emotion'.[18]

But if *nemesis* cannot be either divine 'indignation' or 'punishment', but a 'process', what exactly would that mean? Well, that is the point of this paper: to define what *nemesis* is in the Atys–Adrastus *logos*. To preview my main claim here: I believe that in some sense *nemesis* will turn out to be Adrastus himself, both as a human agent of divine anger, but also as an emblem of this 'process'.

Another important point to consider here is the remarkable fact, routinely noted, that 1.34.1 is the *only* place in the entire *History* where Herodotus employs the term *nemesis*.[19] While in itself perhaps an unremarkable fact, that *nemesis* occurs only once in an author otherwise so preoccupied by the issue of injustice and its requital, otherwise so informed by a fundamentally moral view of the consequences of human choice and action, the extreme rarity of the term in Herodotus and his notable hedging regarding it suddenly become arresting, indeed seemingly inexplicable.[20]

One response is simply to group the use of *nemesis* at 1.34.1 with occurrences of what are taken to be rough synonyms, namely, φθόνος and τίσις,[21] which each occur in Herodotus with much greater frequency.[22] But this is not a satisfactory solution. These words are not in fact completely interchangeable, though they do often overlap, even in Herodotus himself.[23] Aristotle, for one, can differentiate *nemesis* from *phthonos*, determining that 'indignation' is the 'mean' between 'envy' and 'malice' – that is, these concepts are on

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16 Cf. Nägelsbach ([1857](#)) 47.

17 Again, cf. West ([1987](#)) 275 ad Eur. *Or.* 1361–2. Compare *AP* 12.140.3 (Strato of Sardis): ἁ Νέμεσίς με συνάρπασε.

18 Ellis ([2015](#)) 95 n. 45.

19 E.g. Myres ([1953](#)) 49; Benardete ([2009](#)) 19; Evans ([1991](#)) 47; Renehan ([2001](#)) 177 and 186; Asheri ([2007](#)) 105 ad loc.; Flower ([2013](#)) 146. Relatedly, νεμεσάω is absent from Herodotus.

20 Cf. Giraudeau ([1984](#)) 70: '[d]ans cette longue œuvre qui démontre l'action d'une justice essentiellement punitive, Némésis n'est nommée qu'une fois, dans les temps les plus anciens, dans la tragédie de Crésus, et la raison de sa venue reste imprecise, accompagnée d'un "je suppose"'.

21 E.g. Myres ([1953](#)) 49; Giraudeau ([1984](#)) 70–2; Lateiner ([1989](#)) 124 and ([2012](#)) 178 and n. 65.

22 φθόνος (× 9); τίσις (× 14).

23 So, the oracle at Delphi describes the requital that the descendants of Gyges will have to pay as τίσις (1.13.2), but refers later to the same necessary conclusion as the impossibility of avoiding 'the allotted fate' (τὴν πεπρωμένην μοῖραν), and that Croesus 'expiated an offence' (1.91.1: ἁμαρτάδα ἐξέπλησε); cf. Solmsen ([1974](#)) 141 and n. 9; Nicolai ([1986](#)) 53; Gagné ([2013](#)) 327. In the exchange between Solon and Croesus, immediately before 1.34.1, Solon can characterise himself as a man who knows the divine to be 'entirely jealous and disruptive' (1.32.1: τὸ θεῖον πᾶν ἐὸν φθονερόν τε καὶ ταραχῶδες): Pippidi ([1960](#)) 88 and n. 53. Cf. Aesch. *Sept.* 235–6, where mention of νέμεσις is clearly answered with the verb φθονῶ: Tucker ([1908](#)) 52 ad loc.

the same continuum of emotion, but they are not identical.[24] As for *tisis*, it too is distinct from *nemesis*.[25] In almost every case in Herodotus, *tisis* is connected to humans paying for wrongdoing to other humans, a fact that is sometimes revealed or certified by a divine communication, but that uniformly involves humans seeking vengeance.[26] The one instance where *tisis* is not used of human action concerns the 'retribution' meted out to the female flying snake by her own unborn offspring for murdering the father snake during mating (3.109.2).[27] Finally, that the uniqueness of *nemesis* at 1.34.1 is in some way meaningful is further supported by the fact that another significant and connected term, ἄτη, is only found twice in Herodotus, with both uses occurring in a related passage, a couple of chapters earlier (1.32.6).

It is important to note that it is not just any *nemesis* that took hold of Croesus but a *great* one. *Nemesis* is not often modified by an adjective, and when it is, the adjective often denotes speed, i.e. of the goddess Nemesis or retribution in general,[28] or of the difficulty, bitterness and implacability of the goddess or identically named abstraction.[29] There is a certain logic to this situation: *nemesis* by itself implies both large-scale wrongdoing and the reaction to it; it does not need to be described as 'great', because that idea is already implied in the concept. A 'great' *nemesis* seems redundant.[30]

But there is a set of helpful parallels for 'a great *nemesis*', one literary, the rest documentary. There is only one other place in extant Greek literature where *nemesis* is modified by *megalē*: Antimachus of Colophon (end of 5th cent.) fr. 53 Wyss = Strabo 13.1.13:[31]

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24 EN 1108a35: νέμεσις δὲ μεσότης φθόνου καὶ ἐπιχαιρεκακίας. Cf. Versnel (2011) 184 and n. 79, against Shapiro (1996) and Pelling (2006); cf. Munson (2001) 184–5.

25 Cf. Pohlenz (1937) 114 n. 2.

26 In addition to the Mermnads 'paying back' the Heraclids for the murder of Candaules by Gyges predicted by Delphi (1.13.2), also the oracle of Leto at Buto confirming that Psammetichus would get his vengeance on the other eleven Egyptian kings (2.152.3). Cf. Herodotus' judgement that Cleomenes' madness and death were in payment for his earlier treatment of Demaratus (6.84.3: ἐμοὶ δὲ δοκέει τίσιν ταύτην ὁ Κλεομένης Δημαρήτῳ ἐκτεῖσαι; cf. 6.72.1 and 75.3): Lloyd (1979) 30. A more open case is Cyrus' fear of the *tisis* awaiting him should he burn Croesus on the pyre, since we are not told who would carry it out (1.86.1); note, though, that Cyrus comes to this understanding when he remembers that he too is human. Cf. the warning to Hipparchus (5.56.1): οὐδεὶς ἀνθρώπων ἀδικῶν τίσιν οὐκ ἀποτίσει.

27 *Tisis* can be attributed to the gods in other authors: e.g. Alcman fr. 1.36 (PMG): ἔστι τις σιῶν τίσις; Solon 13.25 West: τοιαύτη Ζηνὸς πέλεται τίσις.

28 E.g. Eur. fr. 1040 N = Collard & Cropp 1113a.4: ταχεῖαν νέμεσιν. Also, AP 12.12.2: σύντομος ἡ Νέμεσις; IG ii².4792.2: Νέμεσις εὔπτερος and 10385.8–10: φθι|μένων ὠκυτάτη | Νέμεσις. On the last text, which contains this warning against future tomb violation: Robert (1978) 241–69, esp. 266–7. In later periods, it was not unusual to depict the goddess/goddesses Nemesis/Nemeseis as winged. Attributes of Nemesis/Nemeseis: Karanastassi (1992) 735–6.

29 E.g. Pi. P. 10.44: ὑπέρδικον Νέμεσιν, 'over-' or 'excessively just Nemesis' (with LSJ s.v.); AP 12.160.6: πικροτάτη Νέμεσις.

30 *Atē* is first modified by μεγάλη as well (1.32.6).

31 Strabo derives his notice from Demetrius of Scepsis, who was relying on Callisthenes: FGrH 124 F 28, with Kommentar ii B p. 426; Wyss (1936) 29–30. Cf. Maass (1926) 181–2.

ἔστι δέ τις Νέμεσις μεγάλη θεός, ἢ τάδε πάντα
πρὸς μακάρων ἔλαχεν· βωμὸν δέ οἱ εἵσατο πρῶτος
Ἄδρηστος, ποταμοῖο παρὰ ῥόον Αἰσήποιο,
ἔνθα τετίμηταί τε καὶ Ἀδρήστεια καλεῖται.

There is a great god, Nemesis, who obtained all these
from the immortals; for her an altar he first set up,
Adrastus, beside the stream of the river Aesopus,
where she receives honours and is called Adrasteia.

Commenting on the μεγάλη of line one, Wyss observed that, while it might seem best to dismiss the epithet as ornamental or 'poetic', yet, evidence was to hand that demonstrated that the pairing μεγάλη θεός was a 'cognomen' in the cult of the goddesses (pl.) Nemeseis.[32] I note that the passage not only has the term μεγάλη, it also features Nemesis in a distinctly cultic setting, referring to an altar and honours that celebrate her in a specific locality, and provides a byname for her, Adrasteia – obviously related to Adrastus, the name of the king who founds her cult site by the Aesepus, and of course also the name of the slayer of Atys.

The epithet 'great' is a common one for divinities:[33] most memorably, from the episode in Acts, when the silversmith Demetrius whips up the Ephesians against Paul; the crowd is roused to fury and shouts μεγάλη ἡ Ἄρτεμις Ἐφεσίων – 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!' (Act. Ap. 19:28, 34).[34] Nemesis, both as a god or set of gods, and as an attribute of a like divinity of justice and vengeance, in particular Adrasteia, is not infrequently identified as 'great', particularly in inscriptions, though these are all significantly later, but almost all do come from either Phrygia or Lydia.[35]

The story: repetition and stereophony

In this section I recap in detail the story of Atys and Adrastus. I highlight in particular the narrative repetitions and oddities of Herodotus' presentation.

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32 Wyss (1936) 30, citing Müller (1913) 336–7. Cf. Callim. *Hymn* 4 122: Ἀναγκαίη μεγάλη θεός (with Matthews 1996, 319).

33 Müller (1913); more recently, Versnel (1998) 194–6, (2011) 290–1. There were even deities whose name was simply 'Great': the 'Great Gods' of Samothrace (Cole 1984) and the Θεὸς Μέγας at Istros (Bordenache and Pippidi 1959). Cf. Schweitzer (1931) 178–83 on the epithet μεγάλη for Nemesis in the Roman period.

34 Cf. *SEG* 53, 1344 (Lydia, AD 57/8), a spectacular example of the importance of the epithet μέγας, applied to the Great Mother of Mes Axiottenos (1–2: μεγάλη Μήτηρ Μηνὸς Ἀξιοττη|νοῦ) and Mes himself as ruler over Axiotta (18–19: μέγας οὖν ἐστι | Μεὶς Ἀξιοττα κατέχων), and esp. in the catalogue of the Mother's powers (8–12: μέγα σοι τὸ ὅσιον, | μέγα σοι τὸ δίκαιον, μεγάλη νείκη, | μεγάλαι σαὶ νεμέσεις, μέγα σοι | τὸ δωδεκάθεον τὸ παρὰ σοὶ κα|τεκτισμένον). Cf. Chaniotis (2009) 115–16; Versnel (2011) 295.

35 *SEG* 38, 1236.8: μεγάλαι Νεμέσ(ε)ις (Lydia AD 200); *MAMA* x.12.8–9 ἔστι καὶ ἐν φθιμένοις νέμε|σις μέγα ἐστ' ἐπὶ τύμβοις μὴ ψαύσης [τύμβ]ο[ν] (Phrygia 3rd cent. AD?); *CIG* 3857m.5–6: ἔστι γὰρ ἐν φθιμένοις Νέ|μεσις μέγα, ἔστι ἐπὶ τύμβοις· μ[ὴ β]λάψῃς τύμβον (Phrygia 3rd cent. AD). In these last two cases μέγα is an error for μεγάλη. Also, *IGUR* 1.182.1: μεγάλη Νέμεσις (Rome 2nd cent. AD). Cf. the first line from the Orphic hymn to Nemesis (no. 61 Quandt (1955), 43)): ὦ Νέμεσι, κλήζω σε, θεά, βασίλεια μεγίστη (Imperial period). Cf. Herter (1935) 2362.

After the suggestion at 1.34.1 that a great *nemesis* from god took hold of Croesus for believing himself most blest, Herodotus states that Croesus had a dream in which his favourite son Atys was killed, struck by an iron point – his other son was 'spoilt' (διέφθαρτο), being unable to speak. Horrified by the dream, Croesus set about finding a wife for Atys, and he stopped sending him on military adventures abroad; he also removed all missile weapons from the men's quarters. (35) While Atys was taking in hand his marriage, a man 'beset by misfortune' and with unclean hands came to Sardis, identified only as Phrygian by birth (ἐὼν Φρὺξ … γενεῇ) and of the Phrygian royal family. The stranger immediately sought ritual purification from Croesus, who duly cleansed him. It is only after these formalities that Croesus asked the stranger who he was, from where in Phrygia he came, and whom had he killed. When the stranger gives his answer in response (ἀμείβετο), it is our introduction to him as well, for thus far Herodotus has suppressed his name and patronym: 'O King, I am the son of Gordias the son of Midas. I am called Adrastus (ὀνομάζομαι … Ἄδρηστος); having murdered my own brother unintentionally I am here, driven out by my father and deprived of everything.' Croesus recognised that Adrastus belonged to a family whose members were *philoi* to him and promised him aid.

Two points need stressing. First, the use of ὀνομάζομαι in the first person singular ('I am called') is unique in all of Herodotus (Soph. *OT* 8 has a similar effect); normally, names are assigned to others by the narrator, or characters use the names of others. Second, the occurrence of ἀμείβετο sets off an elaborate chain of uses of that verb, starting with Croesus' response to Adrastus, then his discussion with his son Atys, and introducing and concluding Adrastus' second speech to Croesus accepting the commission to accompany Atys.[36] The uses of the verb by Croesus and Adrastus at 41.2 and 42.2 are linked and refer specifically to reciprocity of action.[37] With both ὀνομάζομαι and the repetition of ἀμείβεσθαι linking words and actions, Herodotus brings notice to Adrastus' name and stresses the reciprocal, give-and-take nature of the episode.

(36) In nearby Mysian Olympus, a boar had become a monstrous hazard, devastating the locals' crops.[38] The Mysians made several attempts to kill the beast on their own, but always came off the worse. Finally, messengers were sent to Croesus who brought a report of the devastation caused by the boar and the Mysians' inability to kill it. They asked Croesus to send his son and a picked group of young men and dogs to accompany them back to Mysia.

Herodotus reports that Croesus, remembering his dream, refused to send his son, but agreed to dispatch men and dogs to get rid of the beast. (37) Although the Mysians went away satisfied, making Atys' participation in the boar hunt unnecessary, when he became aware of what they had requested, he confronted his father with hurt and bitter recrimination: 'I used to have the best and most noble possession – namely to

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36 1.35.4 (ἀμείβετο), 37.1 (ἀμείψατο), 38.1 (ἀμείβεται), 39.1 (ἀμείβεται), 40.1 (ἀμείβεται), 42.1 (ἀμείβεται), 43.1 (ἀμείψατο). Cf. Gould (1991) 8–9 = (2001) 287–8.

37 Cf. Long (1987) 94.

38 Cf. Hecataeus, *FGrH* 1 F 6 (Erymanthian boar), with *Kommentar* 1 p. 320.

distinguish myself going to war and the hunt.' Now Croesus had shut him off from those things and had as a result lessened his standing before his fellow citizens and his new wife. He asked his father either to let him go on the hunt or (in a very oblique phrase) explain how 'these things being done thus (ταῦτα οὕτω ποιεόμενα) were better for him', that is, the measures Croesus took to protect Atys. The phrase has been described as 'colorless',[39] and perhaps by itself is unremarkable. However, it is the first of several such colourless expressions in the passage – indeed, we will encounter the phrase ποιέω ταῦτα in Croesus' response to Atys that immediately follows. Rather than 'colorless', I believe that the phrase ταῦτα οὕτω ποιεόμενα is deliberately vague and invites the reader to think about the significance of the events as they unfold, as generalised outcomes of any potential action.[40]

(38) Dismissing his son's suggestion that he saw cowardice or other blemish in his character, Croesus defended the 'things I am doing' (ποιέω ταῦτα) as precautionary against the catastrophe warned about in his dream.[41] He also remarked that he considered Atys his only son, reckoning his other son non-existent because he was 'spoilt' (διεφθαρμένον), a point already made by the narrator at the start.

(39) Atys forgave his father his caution but maintained that certain details of the dream had escaped him: boars do not possess iron points; if the dream had said that he would meet his end thanks to a tooth or something else suitable to a boar, then Croesus was right to do the things he was doing (again, that oblique phrase: χρῆν δή σε ποιέειν τὰ ποιέεις, 39.2).

Persuaded by Atys, Croesus sent 'for the Phrygian Adrastus' (τὸν Φρύγα Ἄδρηστον, 41.1), the ethnic standing out because it is a detail we already know, indeed one we were told just a few chapters before (35.1).[42] After his arrival, Croesus reminded him of the salient facts: 'since you ought to repay me with benefits, I who previously did you benefits (ὀφείλεις γὰρ ἐμεῦ προποιήσαντος χρηστὰ ἐς σὲ χρηστοῖσί με ἀμείβεσθαι, 41.2), I ask you to be a protector of my son as he sets out on the hunt'.

(42) Just as Atys was troubled by what Croesus had said, so too Adrastus was somewhat resistant: 'otherwise I would not go to such a trial of strength, for neither is it appropriate (οὔτε … οἰκός ἐστι) for one who has experienced such misfortune to go among comrades who are prospering, nor do I have the desire, but I would have for many reasons held myself back'. However, since Croesus was so insistent and Adrastus felt the need to honour his request – indeed, he expressed his sense of obligation in precisely the same terms Croesus had used (ὀφείλω γάρ σε ἀμείβεσθαι χρηστοῖσι, 42.2) – he was ready to do

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39 Long (1987) 90.

40 Compare 2.49.1, 133.3; 3.16.1, 81.2; 5.86.2. Cf. Fehling (1969) 133–6. 3.16.1 is particularly illustrative: Cambyses went from Memphis to Sais, 'intending to do what in fact he did' (βουλόμενος ποιῆσαι τὰ δὴ καὶ ἐποίησε): see Munson (1991) 45; Dillery (2005) 392.

41 Croesus' hope has obvious connections to Apollo's thwarted wish (reported later) to delay the punishment of Gyges' family to the children of Croesus, and to his postponement of the capture of Sardis by thirteen years (1.91.2–3).

42 Comparable repetition of name and ethnic in a short space: Mys of Europus × 3 in thirty lines: 8.133, 135.1, 3.

what Croesus had asked, or rather, 'I am ready to do these things' (ποιέειν εἰμὶ ἕτοιμος ταῦτα), echoing Croesus as well as Atys.

The hunting party set out and tracked down the boar, surrounded it and were throwing their spears at it;

ἔνθα δὴ ὁ ξεῖνος, οὗτος δὴ ὁ καθαρθεὶς τὸν φόνον, καλεόμενος δὲ Ἄδρηστος, ἀκοντίζων τὸν ὗν τοῦ μὲν ἁμαρτάνει, τυγχάνει δὲ τοῦ Κροίσου παιδός.

then the stranger/guest, this one cleansed of his murder, called Adrastus, throwing his javelin at the boar misses it, but strikes the son of Croesus (43.2).

That Herodotus wishes specially to mark this statement is in the first place signalled by the repeated use of δή, with the second after οὗτος 'emphasiz[ing] the fact that a person has already been mentioned some little way back'.[43] The person is, of course, 'the stranger/ guest' (ξεῖνος) Adrastus, who not only is elaborately reintroduced, but whose name is flagged as a 'speaking name' with the participle καλεόμενος and is significantly postponed.[44] Such a postponement makes the audience eagerly expect the name and endows it with great significance, prompting its re-examination in light of the immediate circumstances.[45] *Adrēstos* is the 'inescapable one', nearly the familiar byname of Nemesis – 'Adrasteia', important especially in Phrygia and Lydia.[46]

Herodotus observes that in being struck by the spear, Atys 'fulfilled the prophecy of the dream' (43.3). When news reached Croesus that his son had been killed, confounded (συντεταραγμένος), he complained bitterly (ἐδεινολογέετο) that 'he had killed him whom Croesus had himself cleansed of murder' (ὅτι μιν ἀπέκτεινε τὸν αὐτὸς φόνου ἐκάθηρε). The confusion that Croesus experienced reminds us of Solon's dictum: 'the divine is entirely jealous and *disruptive*' (ταραχῶδες, 32.1).

In what follows, we are told that Croesus expressed this confusion specifically by calling bitterly (δεινῶς ἐκάλεε … ἐκάλεε; cf. ἐδεινολογέετο) upon Zeus under three different epithets that proved, in the event, to have been in his perspective false (44.2): Zeus of cleansing (*katharsios*), pointing to the things he had suffered at the hands of his guest/the stranger (τοῦ ξείνου, cf. 43.2 ξεῖνος); Zeus of the hearth (*epistios*), because in receiving the stranger (τὸν ξείνον) into his home he did not know he was nourishing a murderer of his own son; and Zeus of companions (*hetaireios*), because in sending Adrastus as a guard for his son, he had found in him instead a most hostile enemy.[47]

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43 Denniston ([1954](#)) 209.

44 Sulzberger ([1926](#)) 405 n. 1 and 428 n. 3; Ferrante ([1966](#)) 474; de Jong ([2013](#)) 290. On 'speaking names' in Herodotus: Harrison ([2000](#)) 262–3 and n. 48; Hornblower ([2000](#)) 134–5 and ([2013](#)) 23–4 n. 66. Cf. Easterling ([2014](#)) on Sophocles.

45 Cf. Fraenkel ([1962](#)) II.331 ad Aesch. *Ag.* 687.

46 Cf. Baumeister ([1860](#)), esp. 6–7; Posnansky ([1890](#)) 83; Benardete ([2009](#)) 19 and n. 23; Szabó ([1978](#)) 9–10 and n. 5; Burkert ([1979](#)) 190 n. 19; Munn ([2006](#)) 333.

47 Cf. Versnel ([2011](#)) 73–4.

The passage concludes with a brief speech by Croesus, framed by action that is vividly narrated. After Croesus' recriminating address to Zeus, the Lydians were present bearing the corpse of Atys, and following behind, 'the murderer' (ὁ φονεύς, 45.1), Adrastus. Standing before the corpse, Adrastus offered himself to Croesus, stretching out his hands, bidding the king to slaughter him on the corpse, speaking of his earlier misfortune and how he had ruined the man who had cleansed him. Despite his own, great grief, Croesus took pity on Adrastus: 'I have, O stranger (ὦ ξεῖνε), all justice from you, since you condemn yourself.'

In every other exchange with Adrastus, Croesus had used Adrastus' name; now he addresses him as ξεῖνε, the term with which the narrator had marked him before, but then had added 'called Adrastus' (καλεόμενος δὲ Ἄδρηστος, 43.2),[48] stressing Adrastus' relationship to Croesus as a guest-friend.[49] Croesus' reference to the admonitory dream as happening 'long ago' (καὶ πάλαι) is a noteworthy exaggeration; we are not told exactly how much time has elapsed from Croesus' dream to Atys' death, but it cannot have been that long. Divine intervention is inexorable and works over time, a point made clearer if the time in question has been made to seem longer than it was.

After Croesus had buried his son, the account closes:

Ἄδρηστος δὲ ὁ Γορδίεω τοῦ Μίδεω, οὗτος δὴ ὁ φονεὺς μὲν τοῦ ἑωυτοῦ ἀδελφεοῦ γενόμενος, φονεὺς δὲ τοῦ καθήραντος, ἐπείτε ἡσυχίη τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐγένετο περὶ τὸ σῆμα, συγγινωσκόμενος ἀνθρώπων εἶναι τῶν αὐτὸς ᾔδεε βαρυσυμφορώτατος, ἐπικατασφάζει τῷ τύμβῳ ἑωυτόν.

Adrastus, the son of Gordias the son of Midas, this man who became the murderer of his own brother, who became a murderer of the man who cleansed him, when there was a silence of men about the tomb, acknowledging that he was the most heavily unfortunate of men whom he himself knew, slaughters himself upon the tomb.

The rhetorical momentum of the sentence builds to a conclusion marked by the 'great, dragging polysyllables' in the compounds συγγινωσκόμενος, βαρυσυμφορώτατος and ἐπικατασφάζει.[50] The genealogy of Adrastus reminds us both of epitaphic language, and of Adrastus' own words when introduced, and neatly 'contrasts his ancestry with his fortune'; his suicide repeats the language he used when offering his life to Croesus just before (ἐπικατασφάζει, 45.3; cf. 45.1 ἐπικατασφάξαι).[51]

Of the many noteworthy features of this last sentence, I wish to highlight three: how Herodotus places emphasis on Adrastus through repeated information; the puzzling

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48 This may be a case of deliberate 'non-naming': cf. Easterling (2014) 18–21.

49 Dickey (1996) 148–9.

50 Denniston (1952) 8. βαρυσυμφορώτατος has drawn particular notice: Reeve (1993) 261 ('perhaps coined for this passage'). Cf. Gould (1989) 54; Chiasson (2003) 14 n. 30.

51 Reeve (1993) 261; Long (1987) 104. Cf. Xen. An. 1.8.29.

expression he uses of Adrastus as the '*murderer* of the man who cleansed [him]'; and the Herodotean expression 'of men he himself knew' (ἀνθρώπων τῶν αὐτὸς ἤδεε).

First of all, the elaborate patronym at 45.3 is repeated from 35.3. The proximity of the second deployment to the first is what is of interest. As with the unnecessary reminder earlier of Adrastus' Phrygian heritage (41.1), the repetition of Ἄδρηστος δὲ ὁ Γορδίεω τοῦ Μίδεω has no true informational value. No one can have forgotten these details in a matter of about three pages. No, its purpose must be something else.[52]

Note that not only is Adrastus' genealogy repeated, it is from the voice of the narrator this time. Information that was transmitted by a character in the narrative has now become an element in the reportage of the narrator. The world inhabited by the characters of Herodotus and the organising persona of his narrator have been linked. Moreover, in the same sentence we also have the repetition of οὗτος δὴ from 43.2, the crucial section renaming the stranger as Adrastus, and in which we are told that he misses the boar and strikes Atys instead. Recall that Herodotus uses this phrase to reintroduce already named persons from just before in the text. Thus, the repeated genealogy and dot-joining of the οὗτος δή phrases both serve the same function and bring the sharpest possible focus on Adrastus, even in a section already heavily marked by repetition.

Second, Herodotus' use of anaphora with φονεύς articulated by μέν/δέ,[53] linking Adrastus' two identical crimes of involuntary murder, captures our attention, but also misleads, obscuring the detail that Adrastus killed Atys, not Croesus. Heinrich Stein and others have drawn parallels from tragic diction, and in particular a line spoken by Hecuba from Euripides' *Hecuba*: σὺν ταῖσδε τὸν ἐμὸν φονέα τιμωρήσομαι 'together with these [women of Troy] I will take vengeance on my murderer' (882), where Hecuba refers to Polymestor, who had earlier killed her son Polydorus, as 'my murderer'. Other passages are also adduced that seem to aim at the same expression of tragic 'exaggeration'.[54] But the parallel from Euripides is, in fact, a problematic reading in the manuscripts, and is in many texts corrected to τὸν ἐμῶν φονέα, following an emendation of Scaliger: 'the murderer of my [children]'.[55] Legrand draws our notice instead to 1.214.5, where Queen Tomyris of the Massagetai vaunts over the dead Cyrus: 'you destroyed me, though I survive and conquer you in battle, having killed my son by deceit' (σὺ μὲν ἐμὲ ζῶσάν τε καὶ νικῶσάν σε μάχῃ ἀπώλεσας παῖδα τὸν ἐμὸν ἑλὼν δόλῳ).[56] In the speech of Adrastus to Croesus, in which he offered himself to be killed, Adrastus even says 'he had destroyed his purifier' (τὸν καθήραντα ἀπολωλεκὼς εἴη, 45.1),[57] employing the same verb

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52 Cf. Slings (2002) 76.

53 Denniston (1952) 370.

54 Stein (1864) 96; How and Wells (1928) 1.72 ad loc.; Reeve (1993) 261; Slings (2002) 76. Stein also cites Soph. *OC* 1361 and *OT* 534.

55 E.g. Diggle (1987); Gregory (1999); Kovacs (2005).

56 Legrand (1932) 57 n. 3.

57 Cf. Legrand (1932) 56 n. 3.

that Tomyris uses to speak of Cyrus 'destroying' her through murdering her son. And yet even Legrand's more apposite parallel suffers from the same problem as do the tragic examples (and thus from a further problem with the standard interpretation): all the passages adduced to explain 45.3 are statements made by characters in the text, in episodes of heightened dramatic and rhetorical moment, where exaggeration is to be expected, whereas the pairing 'murderer of his own brother, murderer of his purifier' at the end of the Adrastus *logos* comes from the voice of the narrator characterising Adrastus' thinking. Furthermore, there is a real difference between 'killing someone' as a slayer or murderer (φονεύς), where actual, direct agency is denoted, and the verb (ἀπ)όλλυμι, 'to destroy' or 'ruin', an action that does not have to involve violent death.[58]

Third, the Herodotean expression, 'recognising that he was the most desperately [lit. heavily] unfortunate of men whom he himself knew' (συγγινωσκόμενος ἀνθρώπων εἶναι τῶν αὐτὸς ᾔδεε βαρυσυμφορώτατος). I call this phrase 'Herodotean' because the locution of superlative + relative clause and either οἶδα or ἴδμεν and the intensive pronoun αὐτός or an emphatically used first-person personal pronoun (ἐγώ or ἡμεῖς) is almost always used by Herodotus of *his own experience*.[59] The phrase is found in Herodotus thirty-four times;[60] of these, only four do not refer to the judgement of Herodotus as narrator: 5.49.5, 7.27.2, 9.78.2 and our passage. Of these, 1.45.3 is the only one where the thoughts of a character in the *History* are reported in indirect discourse; all the others are in the direct speech of a character. Arguably, in all the cases of direct speech, the characters involved are expressing perspectives aligned with those of Herodotus himself.[61]

The three features of 45.3 I have isolated – Adrastus' repeated genealogy, Adrastus as 'murderer' of Croesus, and the reported use by him of a favourite Herodotean locution – all find an explanation in the same phenomenon. The entire *logos* concerning Croesus, Atys and Adrastus abounds in repetitions,[62] some of which I have noted. The repeated use of the concept of 'exchange' or 'requital' (ἀμείβεσθαι) underscores this fact. John Gould has observed that there is an analogy between the exchanges of benefits between characters in the *logos* and the 'give and take' we see in their speeches. The whole passage, in other words, follows this same logic of reciprocity, in word and action.[63]

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58   The expression ἀπολεῖς (με) 'you will ruin (me)' is common in comedy (e.g. Ar. *Ach*. 470), but rare in tragedy. Cf. Soph. *El*. 830 and *Phil*. 1172, Eur. *Hipp*. 353; Finglass (2007) 359 ad *El*. 830 and Barrett (1964) ad Eur. *Hipp*. 329.

59   Cf. Shimron (1973).

60   Powell (1939a) s.v. οἶδα 1.

61   At 5.49.5, Aristagoras gives Cleomenes a tour of his map; on πάντων τῶν ἐγὼ οἶδα, Hornblower (2013) 165 ad loc.: 'Aristagores is made to use a characteristically Herodotean expression'; cf. Pelling (2007) 196. At 7.27.2 Persians identify Pythius as 'the first of men in wealth whom we know after you' (πρῶτος ἀνθρώπων πλούτῳ τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν μετὰ σέ). At 9.78.2 the Aeginetan Lampon asserts after Plataea that a god granted to Pausanias the opportunity to win the greatest glory of the Greeks 'of whom he knew' – recalling 9.64.1: Flower and Marincola (2002) 245 ad 9.78.2.

62   See esp. Long (1987) ch. 5.

63   Gould (1991) 8–9 = (2001) 288.

We can go further. Comments that are found first in the narrator's voice are later articulated by characters in the text (e.g. Croesus' 'ruined' second son, 34.2, 38.2), and vice versa (the genealogy of Adrastus). Adrastus proclaims that 'I am called Adrastus …', identifying himself in a way that is otherwise only found in the voice of the narrator or in reported naming by others. Moreover, just before his suicide, he gains an understanding of his nature in language that Herodotus reserves almost exclusively for himself in other passages. In other words, there is an interpenetration of textual registers between characters' views and the narrative. The effect that is created can be labelled 'stereophonic'.[64] The words, thoughts and feelings of characters in the story merge with the evaluations of the narrator, and the other way around.

Adrastus realises that he was most unfortunate of men; that is, on the authority of Herodotus as narrator, Adrastus possesses the very thing which Croesus notably lacked and that was exposed through his encounter with Solon: self-knowledge.[65] Indeed, there is a significant difference between the verbs Herodotus gives to each man at the start and end of the *logos*: Croesus '*believed* himself' the most fortunate of men (ἐνόμισε ἑωυτὸν εἶναι ἀνθρώπων ἁπάντων ὀλβιώτατον), whereas Adrastus 'acknowledged' that he was the most unfortunate of all those whom he knew (συγγινωσκόμενος ἀνθρώπων εἶναι τῶν αὐτὸς ᾔδεε βαρυσυμφορώτατος). The force of νομίζειν allows for error, either on the basis of faulty knowledge, or through reliance on knowledge that may or may not be true, but the interest in which is badly motivated. We see this situation most memorably in Candaules and his belief that his wife was the most beautiful by far of all women,[66] a detail that explains his self-destructive infatuation with her. The middle of συγγιγνώσκειν ('acknowledge, own, confess') allows for no such uncertainty.[67] And recall: Herodotus' articulation of Adrastus' realisation of his status as most unfortunate is itself cast in language that elsewhere Herodotus reserves almost exclusively for *his own activity* as the judge of what are the superlative achievements of humans or the remarkable features of the world.

Nemesis Adrasteia: Lydia, Phrygia and the confession inscriptions

That Adrastus can be linked to *nemesis* through a byname of the goddess Nemesis, namely Adrasteia, has been recognised for some time.[68] But it has not been sufficiently stressed that the goddess Nemesis Adrasteia is specifically linked to Phrygia, also the homeland of Adrastus,[69] as well as Lydia, the homeland of Croesus. The problem with the evidence

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64 The term comes from Hornblower (2013) 165 ad 5.49.5. Cf. Gould (1989) 54; Moles (1996) 266 ad 1.32.9 and 1.33.
65 Lloyd (1987) 23 n. 5.
66 Compare 34.1 with 1.8.1: ἐνόμιζέ οἱ εἶναι γυναῖκα πολλὸν πασέων καλλίστην.
67 LSJ s.v. συγγιγνώσκω II.2.
68 E.g. Pott (1856) 271; Baumeister (1860) 9–10; Posnansky (1890) 83; Maass (1926) 182–3; How and Wells (1928) I.71 ad 1.35.3; Benardete (2009) 19.
69 Exceptions: e.g. Ramsay (1895) I.169–70; Hepding (1903) 101–2 and n. 6.

establishing the connection between Adrastus and Adrasteia/Nemesis, however, is that it is all later in date than Herodotus, indeed considerably later (above, n. 35). Nonetheless, the Phrygian Mother Cybele, with whom Nemesis Adrasteia is connected,[70] first appears on sculpted monuments in the early seventh century, and images associated with her are even older (eighth century); her earliest attestations in the Greek world date to the early sixth century on the west coast of Anatolia,[71] including Miletus, Cyme and Smyrna (Smyrna was also a major location for the cult of Nemesis in the form of the two Nemeseis).[72] Further, many see in the name 'Atys' a reflection of the name Attis, the consort of Cybele, and point to the similar ends of both figures (youths whose deaths are linked to wild boars).[73] Sophocles in the *Philoctetes* (391–4) locates Cybele's origins in Lydia, and Euripides later in the *Bacchae* (78–9 and 126–9) connects her to Lydia and Phrygia.[74] Most important for us here, Herodotus even refers to Cybele (Κυβήβη) as 'a local god' (ἐπιχωρίη θεός) of Sardis (5.102.1),[75] and identifies the mountain where the source of the Hermus is located as 'sacred to the mother Dindymene' (1.80.1), another byname for Cybele.[76]

The name 'Adrastus' (Atrastas), probably Lydian in origin, is attested at Sardis from the late sixth century to the late fourth century on funerary stelae.[77] Pausanias states (7.6.6) that a statue of one Adrastus, a Lydian, who died in the Lamian War (323/322), was dedicated in front of the sanctuary of 'Persian Artemis' (Anahita) by the Lydians, presumably at Sardis.[78] It is certainly the case that another Adrastus at Sardis is known from an inscription dated to 306–303.[79] This shows us that the name had a rich history at Sardis, and was associated with a female deity who was assimilated to the Phrygian Mother type. I should add that further inland, on the edge of the Maeander valley in Caria, at Attouda, three inscriptions of Roman Imperial date have been found, all attesting a divinity known as 'the Goddess Mother of Adrastus'.[80] As for 'Atys', it is a genuine Phrygian name;[81] but note also the Lydian king

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70 Cf. Herter (1935) 2379; Borgeaud (2004) 32–3 and 144 n. 2.

71 Roller (1999) 108–9 and 119.

72 Herter (1935) 2352–4.

73 Stein (1864) 95; Posnansky (1890) 87–8 and n. 2. For Atys = Attis see esp. Meyer (1896); Hepding (1903) 101; Gow (1960) 93; Pedley (1972) 31; Burkert (1979) 104 and n. 19; Lightfoot (2003) 358 and n. 7, 399. Cf. Attes in Hermesianax (fr. 8 Powell = Paus. 7.17.9–10).

74 Cf. Dodds (1960) 76 and 85; Roller (1999) 121 n. 2; Schein (2013) 192.

75 Roller (1999) 128–31; Versnel (2011) 69 n. 173; Hornblower (2013) 285 ad loc. Cf. Neumann (1988) 7. More generally: Robert (1975) 322–3.

76 Stein (1864) 143; How and Wells (1928) I.96; Roller (1999) 66, 189; Asheri (2007) 138 ad loc..

77 Van Bremen (2010) 448–50. Cf. Munn (2006) 334 n. 66, citing Hanfmann and Ramage (1978) nos. 17, 234, 240, 242, Zgusta (1964) 111 no. 124 and Gusmani (1964) 70 and (1988) 183–4.

78 Cf. Mierse (1983) 121.

79 Buckler and Robinson (1912) 29–30.

80 Θεᾶς Μητρὸς Ἀδράστου: *MAMA* VI.74.3, 75.3–6; *SEG* 31, 1104. See van Bremen (2010) 446–7. Her interpretation confirmed by a second-century AD inscription from Aphrodisias: van Bremen (2010) 453.

81 Neumann (1988) 15; van Bremen (2010) 448.

Atys in Herodotus, son of Manes and father of Lydus (1.7.3, 94.3; 7.74), as well as Atys, father of the Lydian tycoon Pythius (7.27.1).

   If it is fair to say that Herodotus puts unusual stress on Adrastus' Phrygian heritage, and furthermore if it is also fair to say that Nemesis was a god particularly associated in Antiquity with Phrygia, Lydia and Mysia, and further, that 'Adrasteia' was a common byname for Nemesis, then another line of inquiry opens up. In precisely the same area of the Atys–Adrastus *logos* – that is, Lydia and Phrygia – there developed over a period of three centuries (1st–3rd cent. AD) a relatively large (and ever-increasing) corpus of documents that scholars have called 'confession inscriptions' (*Beichtinschriften*).[82] The texts, often accompanied by a relief depicting the dedicator, begin with an acclamation of the local divinity (e.g. the Great Mother, Men, Apollo) and her/his *dynamis*, in not a few cases relying on the repeated use of the term 'great'. Then follows the reason for the setting up of the stele, often in the form of an admission of guilt on the part of the dedicator who was 'forced by the punishing intervention of the deity' (illness or accident); the dedicator not infrequently asks the deity the reason for the punishment. The 'confession', punishment and eventual cure of the dedicator together appease the god, who through these actions demonstrates his/her power. The texts often end with a statement of faith in the deity, the circumstance of the publication of the text and, in Phrygia in particular, a warning: 'I warn all mankind not to disdain the gods, for they (i.e. mankind) will have this stele as a warning.'[83]

   It is significant that the goddesses Nemeseis and the concept *nemesis* (noun and verb) figure in an important sub-set of these texts.[84] In one remarkable case, the concept is found three times (Petzl 1994, no. 59.18, 21 and 25). In the final lines of this text, it is clear that *nemesis* means, essentially, the 'the report of sin, divine punishment, and relief from it' – in other words, all the major points in a confession story.[85] In other words, *nemesis* could in effect mean 'an accounting' or 'a story of *nemesis*'. If anything like this practice existed in Herodotus' day, with its attendant set of religious beliefs, it could be argued that his narrative of Croesus, Atys and Adrastus conforms to the same pattern, and in fact the practice might even help to explain some of the narrative's unusual features: a *nemesis* that is 'great'; the insistence on the Phrygian background of Adrastus; the payment of the penalty through one's child, leading to the confusion as to whom Adrastus in fact 'killed'; Croesus' later admission of guilt after he had complained to the oracle at Delphi (ἑωυτοῦ … τὴν ἁμαρτάδα καὶ οὐ τοῦ θεοῦ, 1.91.6), where the key term is ἁμαρτάς, a concept that is common in allied terms in the confession inscriptions.[86] Herodotus' 'confession' narrative about the workings of Croesus' *nemesis* becomes aligned

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82 Petzl (1994); Ricl (1995a); new texts noted: Chaniotis (2009) 116 n.7.
83 Versnel (1991) 75. Cf. Lightfoot (2003) 79; Chaniotis (2009).
84 Petzl (1994) nos. 3.5, 7.8, 15.3, 57.12.
85 Petzl and Malay (1987) 471 ad lines 19–22. Note lines 23–5: Συγτύχη … ἡ προγεγραφοῦ|σα τὴν νέμεσιν. Cf. Petzl (1994) 69 ad 57.12; Belayche (2013) 268, favouring the term 'catechism'.
86 See Petzl (1994) 151–2 s.vv. ἁμαρτάνω, ἁμάρτημα, ἁμαρτία.

with, or simply becomes, historical narrative. This situation can be paralleled by Herodotus' citation of oracles and his adoption of oracular judgement in his own historiographic 'voice'.[87]

There are major complications to this suggestion. The confession inscriptions are not only confined in space to Lydia and Phrygia, they are also confined in time to the Roman Imperial Period – the first to third centuries AD.[88] Robert Parker, for one, has argued that these texts are unique in their sentiments and are not representative of more general Greek religious attitudes – indeed they reveal 'a very un-Greek climate'.[89] On the other hand, Henk Versnel and Angelos Chaniotis have stressed the need to locate the 'confession' texts within the larger orbit of the whole class of Greek expressions of 'divine justice' as found in, for example, aretalogical texts, prayers for justice and funerary curses.[90] Furthermore, Chaniotis has linked the rituals referred to in the confession inscriptions with earlier Hittite practice,[91] suggesting a continuity of view that would then have to be understood as going well back in time in Anatolia, one that would have included Herodotus' own period.

Athens: Nemesis at Rhamnous and Nemesis/Adrasteia on the Athenian stage

Many see in Herodotus a writer who needs to be connected to Athens.[92] On the basis of very slender ancient evidence, it is widely assumed that Herodotus read portions of his history out at Athens.[93] Others will point to a presumed closeness with Sophocles, or an alignment with the views of Pericles.[94] Further, there is the approach to the *History* that sees Herodotus as urging the Athenians to avoid the dangers of empire as represented by the Persians, one that assumes an Athenian readership.[95] Without subscribing to any one of the biographical particulars of Herodotus, I do think that overall it is fair to say that he was sympathetic to Athens (if also critical) and convinced of its importance in repelling the Persian invasion of 480/479 (7.139.5), and further that he knew the city and

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87 Kindt (2016) 23–4; cf. Bischoff (1932) 19–20; Murray (1980) 30.

88 Petzl (1994) vii: the earliest text AD 57/8, the latest 263/4. Ricl (2006) may be a 'confession' inscription from Jerusalem (2nd/3rd cent. AD).

89 Parker (1983) 254–5; cf. Chaniotis (2009) 143.

90 Versnel (1991); Chaniotis (2009) 117 and n. 10 (citing additional discussions by Versnel), and 143. Cf. McLean (2002) 193 n. 49.

91 Chaniotis (2009) 138 and n. 112, 146 and n. 158, following Varinlioglu (1989) 48–9 and Ricl (1995b) 68. On the related persistence of 'Iranian religious sentiment' in Asia Minor in connection with a cult of Zeus at Sardis: Robert (1975) 326–7.

92 E.g. Jacoby (1913) 226–42 = (1956) 17–25; Strasburger (1955) = (2013); Fornara (1971) 37–58; Ostwald (1991).

93 Euseb. *Chron.* Olympiad 83.4; cf. Diyllus *FGrH* 73 F 3 = Plut. *De Herod. Mal.* 26, *Mor.* 862B; Marcellin. *Vita Thuc.* 54. Consult e.g. Jacoby (1913) 226–7 = (1956) 17–18; Legrand (1942) 16–18; Ostwald (1991) 138.

94 Cf. Stella (1935–6) 87–95; Ostwald (1991) 142–4.

95 Esp. Fornara (1971); cf. Moles (1996); Strasburger (1955) = (2013); Stadter (2013); Luraghi (2018).

its *chōra* well, even assuming that his audience was familiar enough with the Attic peninsula to compare a Scythian one to it (4.99.4).[96]

This information is important because, in addition to Asia Minor,[97] a major cult centre for Nemesis was located in Attica at Rhamnous, where she was worshipped together with the goddess Themis.[98] Furthermore, evidence suggests that the cult of Nemesis in Attica became associated in particular with the victory over the Persians in the Persian Wars. The earliest attestation for the cult is a bronze Corinthian-style helmet found in a cistern near the sanctuary with the following inscription (SEG 35, 24 = Petrakos (1999) no. 86, IG I³.522bis): Ῥομνόσιοι hοι ἐν Λέμνο[ι ἀ]νέ[θεσαν Νεμ]έσει ('the Rhamnousians dedicated [this, taken] on Lemnos, to Nemesis', trans. Sekunda). It has been dated to 499/498, that is, from the time of Athens' occupation of Lemnos during the Ionian Revolt; another argument has been made that the dedication should be put later, 475–450.[99] Whatever the precise date, that the cult of Nemesis at Rhamnous received new and lasting attention after the Persian Wars is widely believed; indeed, it is asserted that the new focus on the goddess can be connected to the construction of other temples in the middle decades of the fifth century,[100] which, taken together, helped to proclaim 'that Athens was a city of craft and of military might by both land and sea, which had inflicted on the Persians a bitter *nemesis*'.[101]

Pausanias reports a story that connects Nemesis at Rhamnous and the Persian Wars. At 1.33.2–3, he states that when the Persians invaded at Marathon, they brought with them a piece of Parian marble from which they intended to fashion a victory monument, but that was later used instead by Pheidias to make the cult statue of Nemesis at Rhamnous. The story is an absurdity of course and bears all the marks of an oral account generated from a physical memorial (a *Monument-novelle*);[102] but if this legend is datable to the fifth century, it would show that the repulse of the Persians and the Nemesis of Rhamnous were directly connected in the minds of the Athenians.[103]

Given the importance of the cult of Nemesis at Rhamnous, to judge by the building of her shrine in the second half of the fifth century and the surge of interest in her earlier in the same century,[104] what, if anything, can we say about the mention of *nemesis* at Hdt. 1.34.1 that incorporates these facts? If Herodotus imagined that an important part of his audience were

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96 Ostwald (1991) 139.

97 As well as, later, Syria: Seyrig (1932); then much of the Roman world: Schweitzer (1931). Popular among gladiators: Robert (1940) 51.

98 Themis and Nemesis: Herter (1935) 2347–8; Burkert (1985) 185. Joint priestess of Nemesis and Themis: IG II2.3109, 4638 (4th/3rd cent.); Parker (1996) 127 n. 21.

99 Sekunda (1992) 325, with Wade-Gery (1951) 217. David Lewis at IG I³.522bis proposes the later date.

100 Dinsmoor (1940) 47 dates the temple of Nemesis at Rhamnous to 436–432; Miles (1989) 227 redates to 430–420; Petrakos (1999) 223 to shortly after 450 (cf. Parker 2005, 406 n. 79).

101 Parker (1996) 154 (emphasis added). Cf. Garland (1992) 57.

102 Cf. 1.66.3: the Spartans bringing shackles with them before fighting the Tegeans. On the cult statue of Nemesis at Rhamnous and the problem of connecting it to Marathon: Hornblower and Pelling (2017) 3 and n. 5. The statue: Knittlmayer (1999).

103 Cf. Parker (2005) 406.

104 Esp. IG I³.248 = ML 53; Parker (2005) 65; Blok (2010) 69–72.

Athenians, and further if the emergence of the cult of Nemesis had associations for them with their defeat of the Persians as an act of revenge and as justification for their imperial status, then the mention of *nemesis* at this juncture in the narrative of Herodotus may have linked the Croesus story in their minds to the Persian Wars and its aftermath. This association may have been yet more noticeable to an Athenian audience given that the *nemesis* that seized Croesus was due to his resistance to the judgements of an *Athenian* wise man, Solon. It could be argued that the account of Croesus, which is only tangentially linked to the main narrative of the *History* (if at all; see below), is brought squarely into the larger narrative arc that Herodotus is developing concerning the conflict between the Greeks and Persians.

There is another connection that I wish to explore that may be even more relevant: Nemesis/ Adrasteia as a concept in Athenian drama. Pride of place must go to a comedy entitled *Nemesis* by Cratinus. The play dealt with Zeus's pursuit of the goddess, during which he changed Nemesis into a goose and himself into a swan, and then raped her; Nemesis then produced an egg from which in turn would come Helen. It is an arresting thought that, if the widely accepted date of its production is correct (431),[105] then contemporary with the later years of Herodotus' life, and contemporary with the start of the Peloponnesian War, a play was produced that centred on Nemesis. I should add that Nemesis is depicted in an image concerning Helen from an *amphoriskos* dating to *c.* 430 (Heimarmene Painter, Berlin 30036).[106]

There are several places in both Attic comedy and tragedy where the goddess Adrasteia is mentioned in connection with the sudden need to propitiate her when a character either says something boastful or contemplates an action that would be offensive to the gods. A good example is Menander, *Perikeiromene* 304. Moschion, speaking to himself, expresses the hope that Myrrhine found him attractive when they met the night before (lines 301–4):

> προσδραμόντ' οὐκ ἔφυγεν, ἀλλὰ περιβαλοῦσ' ἐ[πέσπα]σε.
> οὐκ ἀηδὴς ὡς ἔοι[κε]ν εἴμ' ἰδεῖν οὐδ' ἐντ[υχεῖν,
> οἴομαι, μὰ τὴν Ἀθηνᾶν, ἀλλ' ἑταίρ[α]ι[ς προσφιλής.
> τὴν δ' Ἀδράστειαν μάλιστα νῦν ἄρ' [ὥρα] προ[σκυνεῖ]ν.

When I sprinted up, she didn't run away, she hugged and pulled me to her. I'm not bad looking, by Athena, so it seems, nor bad company, I fancy – no, the ladies fall for me. – For that boast I must this instant make amends to Adrasteia. (Arnott 1996, 396–7; text and trans. modified)

This locution, where a character seeks to forestall punishment from either the goddess Adrasteia or an allied abstraction (divine *phthonos*) by a propitiatory statement, is widespread in Athenian dramatic texts, as well as prose authors.[107] Note also Moschion's hedge ὡς ἔοικεν.

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105 Date: Godolphin (1931); cf. Bakola (2010) 223. Fragments: Kassel–Austin *PCG* IV Cratinus frr. 114–27.

106 Ghali-Kahil (1955) 59–61; Shapiro (1986) 13 and (1993) 23–4.

107 E.g. [Aesch.] *PV* 936; Soph. *Phil.* 776; [Eur.] *Rhes.* 330 and 456; Men. *Sam.* 503. Also, e.g. Pl. *Resp.* 451a; Dem. 25.37. Note esp. Headlam (1922) 295–6. The favoured verb is προσκυνεῖν (cf. Yunis (2011) 143 ad Pl. *Phdr.* 248c3); significantly, Nemesis is never mentioned in such expressions until the third century AD: van Bremen (2010) 452.

If we think again about the circumstances leading up to the Atys and Adrastus episode in Herodotus, Croesus is little different from the Moschion of Menander, except that the latter immediately self-corrects. Both men form exaggerated senses of themselves. We are even told by the narrator at 1.34.1 that this is the case for Croesus. Crucially, as at least a couple of parallels suggest, the person who earns the anger of Adrasteia need not boast; it can be an act or gesture too[108] – which is to say, it is the thoughts of the person in question that draw the notice of Adrasteia as revealed through word and/or deed.

Instructive in this connection is a passage from Theognis (278–81):

> εἰκὸς τὸν κακὸν ἄνδρα κακῶς τὰ δίκαια <u>νομίζειν</u>,
>   μηδεμίαν κατόπισθ' ἀζόμενον <u>νέμεσιν</u>·
> δειλῷ γάρ τ' ἀπάλαμνα βροτῷ πάρα πόλλ' ἀνελέσθαι
>   πὰρ ποδός, ἡγεῖσθαί θ' ὡς καλὰ πάντα τιθεῖ.

It is likely that a bad man will form bad ideas about justice, caring not at all for the resentment that comes afterwards. For the vile man to choose reckless deeds lies ready right before him, and the belief that he is able to make all his doings turn out well.

The bad (*kakos*) man does not boast but forms incorrect, even morally flawed, beliefs regarding correct behaviour (κακῶς τὰ δίκαια νομίζειν), without sufficiently worrying that he may generate the resentment of others (mortals, divine?); furthermore, the vile (*deilos*) man thinks that he can act recklessly and yet will still be able to manage all his affairs well – he will not 'pay for it' later. To judge by the arrangement of words in the first couplet, Theognis meant νομίζειν and νέμεσιν to be contrasted, located as they are in final position in consecutive lines. Hence, the Theognis passage suggests that a connection between *nomizein* and *nemesis* was an intuitive and real one. What Herodotus may have been attempting at 1.34.1 was to establish a similar connection between Croesus' belief (ἐνόμισε) that he was most fortunate of men and the *nemesis* (νέμεσις) from a god that seized him.

That there is wordplay going on in both the lead-up to and the Atys–Adrastus episode itself has long been accepted, and I will return to this topic in earnest below. What I want to note here is the possibility that Herodotus prepares us for the linking of *nomizein* with *nemesis* at 1.34.1 by deploying yet another term that is related to them shortly before. The clearest reason why we know that Croesus believed himself the most fortunate of men, and the evidence for this mistaken opinion of himself found closest to 1.34.1, was Croesus' rejection of Solon's views and his curt dismissal of the sage (he sends Solon away, 'thinking him of no account', 1.33). Croesus, while shocked (ἀποθωμάσας) by Solon's finding that Tellus the Athenian was the most blest of men (1.30.3), only became

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108 Seymour (1891) xlix; cf. Griffith (1983) 252 ad [Aesch.] *PV* 936; Jebb (1898) 127–8; Schein (2013) ad Soph. *Phil.* 776.

completely dismissive of Solon's views after the sage had proposed Cleobis and Biton as the second most blessed. It is at this point that Croesus verbally assaults Solon (1.32.1):

Σόλων μὲν δὴ εὐδαιμονίης δευτερεῖα ἔνεμε τούτοισι, Κροῖσος δὲ σπερχθεὶς εἶπε· Ὦ ξεῖνε Ἀθηναῖε, ἡ δ' ἡμετέρη εὐδαιμονίη οὕτω τοι ἀπέρριπται ἐς τὸ μηδέν ...

So, Solon assigned second place in happiness to these men, but Croesus became incensed and said: 'O Athenian guest, is our good fortune held by you so worthless ...'

The key term is ἔνεμε 'assigned'. νέμειν is related not only to νέμεσις, but also to νομίζειν/νόμος.[109] It is thus tempting to speculate that Herodotus had in mind a suturing of sorts between the main acts in the drama of Croesus' life before his invasion of Persia through words deriving from the same νεμ- root: stage (i) the formation of the belief that he was the most blest of men (ἐνόμισε ἑωυτὸν εἶναι ἀνθρώπων ἁπάντων ὀλβιώτατον); stage (ii) the assignment of this title by Solon to others (δευτερεῖα ἔνεμε τούτοισι), one that made explicit stage (i) in the form of Croesus' violent reaction; stage (iii) the punishment visited upon Croesus for holding his mistaken view of himself (ἔλαβε ἐκ θεοῦ νέμεσις μεγάλη Κροῖσον).[110]

This is a good place to revisit the idea of the influence specifically of tragedy on Herodotus, in particular on his construction of the Croesus *logos*. It is a commonplace to speak of Herodotus as having narratives that are somehow 'tragic' in conception.[111] Both the *Brill* and *Cambridge Companion to Herodotus* contain chapters entitled 'Herodotus and tragedy'.[112] In particular, readers of the entire story of Croesus detect tragic elements, even a tragic architecture, in his *logos*, subdivided into 'episodes' of a drama: a historical prologue that mentions the distant crime of Gyges; the warnings of Solon; the 'domestic tragedy' of Atys and Adrastus, followed by the oracular warnings from Delphi at the height of Croesus' prosperity; the defeat of Croesus by Cyrus, followed by his rescue from the pyre and Croesus' recognition of his fate.[113] *P.Oxy.* 2382, containing a speech by Candaules' wife to Gyges, has only added further to the conviction that in several narratives in Herodotus the influence of tragedy is felt, with the Atys–Adrastus *logos* serving as a leading example. It is perhaps tempting, therefore, to look for parallels in Attic drama, tragedy and comedy, for the use of significant naming and personification for what Herodotus has done. But while both tragedy and comedy do deploy personified

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109 Chantraine (1984) II.742–4 and 755 and Beekes (2010) II.1005–7 and 1023 s.vv. νέμεσις, νέμω and νόμος. Also, Pohlenz (1937) 114 n. 2; Laroche (1949) (with caution: Robert and Robert 1951); Nagy (1990) 88 and 246. Cf. Herter (1935) 2338.

110 Similar wordplay at Aesch. *Sept.* 233–5, with Lupas and Petre (1981) 87 ad loc. Also, Verrall (1887) 21. Cf. Arist. *De mundo* 401b.

111 E.g. Myres (1914); Meiggs (1957) 730–1.

112 Saïd (2002) and Griffin (2006) respectively.

113 So Myres (1953) 137–8. Cf. Meunier (1968) 3–4; Rieks (1975); Laurot (1995).

abstractions on the stage, they are not carefully realised characters; they are not really capable of undergoing change or experiencing feelings as Adrastus and Atys clearly do. Dramatic abstractions are, in other words, essentially props.[114] While the story of Adrastus and Atys is undoubtedly 'tragic', it is so only in a general sense, and this affiliation does not explain their names and their characterisation.

Personification and allegory

To whatever degree it can be said that the Atys–Adrastus *logos* is tragic, it could be argued that Herodotus paid a significant cost in relating it in that way. Bernard Laurot has argued that the story of Croesus, once we get past the marking of him as 'the first to initiate wrongful acts against the Greeks' (1.5.3) and the notice that the Lydian king reduced the Greeks of Ionia to tribute-paying status (1.6.2), in fact detracts from the account of imperial ambition and warfare that is only resumed at 1.46.1.[115] The stories first of Gyges and then of Solon's visit to Croesus, followed by the king's domestic tragedy, have little to do with the larger narrative arc of the *History*: the conflict between Greeks and barbarians.[116] There is a disjunction between the proem and the first chapters in the Croesus *logos*. Although much is made of Croesus' grief at the end of the episode, it is never mentioned in the *History* again. Instead, with disconcerting ease we move by means of μὲν … δέ from Croesus' suffering to the formation of his plan to check the growth of Persia (1.46.1).[117]

Furthermore, by making the story of Atys and Adrastus into a tragic account specifically, Herodotus has taken figures who were at least notionally historical – Croesus himself certainly so – and put them into a generalised or legendary past: the 'heroic vagueness' of tragedy, as Pat Easterling has styled it.[118] At some level it is important to recognise that this staging of the Atys–Adrastus *logos* seems to run counter to what a historian ought to be doing, that is, Herodotus is taking the specific and historical and making it general and legendary. Remember that in his remarks following the proem, Herodotus carved out a new space for himself in treating the past by 'pass[ing] over the Heroic Age' and moving on 'to the present world', thereby 'consciously emphasiz[ing] the progress implied in this step'.[119] Yet, the very figures that he mentioned in this extensive *praeteritio*

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114 Tragedy: e.g. Eur. HF and 'Madness', with Wilamowitz (1895) I.123–24, II.184, 194–5; [Aesch.] Pr., 'Force' and 'Bia': Griffith (1983) 6–7. Comedy: notice esp. Aristophanes' treatment of 'Peace' in the play of that name, with Olson (1998) xliii–xliv; also, Newiger (1957); Dover (1972) 46–8, 93, 132–3, 202–4; cf. Kanavou (2011). Greek personification of abstractions in general: Deubner (1902–9); Nilsson (1960); Reinhardt (1960b); Burkert (1985) 184–5 and nn. 16 and 17.

115 Laurot (1995) 96; cf. Powell (1939b) 14.

116 Lang (1984) 151 n. 6.

117 Fränkel (1924) 113–14 = (1968) 84.

118 Easterling (1997), esp. 24–5; cf. Meiggs (1957) 731; Pelling (2000) 164. On the story's anti-historical effects: Rieks (1975) 38; cf. Laurot (1995) 100.

119 Jacoby (1949) 199; cf. Fowler (2015) 200–3.

are precisely the subjects treated in Athenian tragedy: Io, Medea, Helen. And now he has reverted to this same narrative and thematic register in his own telling of the story of Atys and Adrastus!

A return to the very beginning of the Atys–Adrastus *logos* will help me to propose an interpretive framework through which to appreciate the episode (1.34.1–2).

αὐτίκα δέ οἱ εὕδοντι ἐπέστη ὄνειρος, ὅς οἱ τὴν ἀληθείην ἔφαινε τῶν μελλόντων γενέσθαι κακῶν κατὰ τὸν παῖδα. (2) ἦσαν δὲ τῷ Κροίσῳ δύο παῖδες, τῶν οὕτερος μὲν διέφθαρτο, ἦν γὰρ δὴ κωφός, ὁ δὲ ἕτερος τῶν ἡλίκων μακρῷ τὰ πάντα πρῶτος· οὔνομα δέ οἱ ἦν Ἄτυς. τοῦτον δὴ ὦν τὸν Ἄτυν σημαίνει τῷ Κροίσῳ ὁ ὄνειρος, ὡς ἀπολέει μιν αἰχμῇ σιδηρέῃ βληθέντα.

And straightway there appeared to him in his sleep a dream that was showing him the truth of the things that were about to turn out badly in the matter of his son. For there were two sons to Croesus, one of whom was ruined, for he was dumb; the other one was the first in all respects by a long way among his age-mates; the name to him was Atys. Now then it was this Atys the dream indicates to Croesus, that he was to lose him, struck by an iron point.

The existential use of εἶναι at the start of section 2 (ἦσαν δὲ τῷ Κροίσῳ δύο παῖδες) in the first instance can be interpreted as part of a dative of possession.[120] But the expression can also be regarded simply as existential. The naming of Atys and the focusing of the action on him are also sharply signalled: introduced in contrast to his dumb brother, he is also characterised as 'first among his age-mates'; we then learn his name and are told that it was 'this Atys' about whom the dream was warning Croesus (οὔνομα δέ οἱ ἦν Ἄτυς. τοῦτον δὴ ὦν τὸν Ἄτυν σημαίνει).

The beginning 'there (once) was a …' is a strongly marked introductory statement,[121] and is associated with the language of fable.[122] Recall that we are at the start of a story whose pivotal moment is a boar hunt – the stuff of folk tale (cf. Meleager and the Calydonian boar; Heracles and the Erymanthian boar). When this formula introduces an individual, it is certain that the person in question, despite the simplicity of the statement and therefore possibly their insignificance, will be on the contrary significant

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120 See e.g. Kühner and Gerth (1966) II.1.416; Smyth nos. 1476 and 1480.

121 Consider, of places: Hom. *Il.* 6.152 ἔστι πόλις Ἐφύρη μυχῷ Ἄργεος ἱπποβότοιο …; Hdt. 2.75.1 ἔστι δὲ χῶρος τῆς Ἀραβίης κατὰ Βουτοῦν πόλιν μάλιστά κη κείμενος …; 1.67.4 (from an oracle) ἔστι τις Ἀρκαδίης Τεγέη λευρῷ χώρῳ; Thuc. 1.24.1 Ἐπίδαμνός ἐστι πόλις ἐν δεξιᾷ ἐσπλέοντι ἐς τὸν Ἰόνιον κόλπον … (on which see Hornblower (1987) 116: a 'Homeric' beginning); Longus 1.1 πόλις ἐστὶ τῆς Λέσβου Μιτυλήνη, μεγάλη καὶ καλή … Of time: Pl. *Prt.* 320c ἦν γάρ ποτε χρόνος, ὅτε θεοὶ μὲν ἦσαν, θνητὰ δὲ γένη οὐκ ἦν. Cf. Norden (1913) 370; Verzina (2014). Compare 'once upon a time …'; Dillery (1995) 72 and 229 with notes.

122 See Pohlmann (1912) 59–60; Fraenkel (1924) = (1964) 235–9; Aly (1928) 258; also, Norden (1913) 369 n. 1, on Ar. *Lys.* 785 οὕτως ἦν νεανίσκος Μελανίων τις … and *Vesp.* 1182 οὕτω ποτ' ἦν μῦς καὶ γαλῆ. On the larger question of the 'mythodic' and 'historical' in Herodotus see esp. Baragwanath (forthcoming), building on Griffiths (2006); also, Luraghi (2013).

in the subsequent narrative.[123] The significant person is identified and then an elaborate recapitulation turns our attention back on him as a character of immediate interest. In Greek, this introduction is worked out very precisely: existential εἶναι 'there (once) was a so-and-so' (ἦν ὁ δεῖνα), sometimes with indefinite τις, followed by a recapitulating demonstrative οὗτος + δή + οὖν (Ionic ὦν) 'now this so-and-so …'.[124] This is exactly the situation at 1.34.2, with the variation that a naming formula intrudes between the existential statement and the recapitulation. Compare the introduction to the connected, and similarly paradigmatic, story of Gyges, Candaules and Candaules' wife: ἦν Κανδαύλης, τὸν οἱ Ἕλληνες Μυρσίλον ὀνομάζουσι … οὗτος δὴ ὦν Κανδαύλης ἠράσθη τῆς ἑωυτοῦ γυναικός (1.7.2, 8.1).

There is an important and related formula that is used to introduce gods and deified abstractions, one that is especially common in 'Greek admonitory literature': ἡ δέ τε παρθένος ἐστὶ Δίκη, Διὸς ἐκγεγαυῖα 'and there is that maiden Right, daughter of Zeus …' (Hes. *Op.* 256, trans. West).[125] Of the examples Martin West cites as parallels to this line from Hesiod's *Works and Days* for the existential use of ἐστί, all have to do with Dike, Oath, Aidos, Nemesis, Adrasteia, or the vengeance of the gods – indeed two of the parallels are passages I have already brought up above (Antimachus fr. 53 and Alcman 1.36). I find it significant that while Herodotus employs a personified, divine abstraction at 1.34.1, elsewhere it is not the historian but characters in his *History* who use such abstractions in reported speech (e.g. Demaratus: *peniē*, 7.102.1, *despotēs nomos*, 104.4; Themistocles: Peitho and Ananke at 8.111.2; Andrians' reply: Penie and Amechanie at 111.4).

But while Herodotus' deployment of significant or 'speaking' names in Solon's encounter with Croesus and in the Atys–Adrastus *logos* has long been noted, it has seldom if ever been asked how these names were meant to work in the *History*. What is the purpose of such a deployment? How were they to be understood as functioning in the text?

The register that explains best the Atys–Adrastus *logos* in Herodotus is Greek wisdom literature, in particular Phoenix' allegory of the Litai and Ate from the *Iliad*, Hesiod and the poet Solon (by which I mean, the poet independent of the character in Herodotus).[126] Such an affiliation is signalled by the beginning of the story, discussed above: 'now there were two sons to Croesus …'

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123 Cf. Hom. *Il.* 10.314 ἦν δὲ τῶν τις ἐν Τρώεσσι Δόλων, Εὐμήδεος υἱός …; Hdt. 7.143.1 ἦν δέ τις Ἀθηναίων ἀνὴρ ἐς πρώτους νεωστὶ παριών, τῷ οὔνομα μὲν ἦν Θεμιστοκλέης …; Xen. *An.* 3.1.4 ἦν δέ τις ἐν τῇ στρατιᾷ Ξενοφῶν Ἀθηναῖος (with Fornara 1971, 68). Also e.g. Empedocles DK 31 B 129 (of Pythagoras) ἦν δέ τις ἐν κείνοισιν ἀνὴρ περιώσια εἰδώς; NT Ev. Jo. 11:1 ἦν δέ τις ἀσθενῶν, Λάζαρος ἀπὸ Βηθανίας …

124 Bloch (1944) 245–6.

125 West (1978) 220 ad Hes. *Op.* 256, referring back to pp.142–3 ad *Op.* 11–46. In addition to Antimachus and Alcman, West cites Hom. *Il.* 6.86.γ.2, Soph. *OC* 1267–8, *Trag. Adesp.* 421 = Men. *Mon.* 225, Cerc.? fr. 18.34 Powell, Lucian, *DMeretr.* 12.2. 'Cercidas' 18.34–6 is particularly instructive: ἔστιν γάρ, ἔστιν, ὃς τάδε σκοπεῖ δαίμων | ὃς ἐν χρόνῳ τὸ θεῖον οὐ καταισχύνει | [νέ]μει δ' ἑκάστῳ τὴν καταίσιον μοῖραν. Note the possible *figura etymologica* in the first word of 36 νέμει, identifying the unnamed δαίμων of 34 as Nemesis (cf. Wilson 1979, 14). If the restoration is correct, this would lend further support to ἔνεμε of Hdt. 1.32.1 anticipating 1.34.1.

126 Cf. Hainsworth (1993) 128 ad *Il.* 9.502–12, citing West (1966) 33; Wilson (1996) 26.

Unlike Homer, for whom *nemesis* is not a god but a thing,[127] Hesiod refers to the deity Nemesis twice: in the *Theogony*, among the offspring of Night (*Th.* 223); and in *Works and Days*, where she is paired with Shame (Aidos) (*Op.* 200). In general, personified elements of the natural world and abstractions such as Death, Strife, Battles, Victory and so forth populate much of Hesiod's world;[128] and, just as important, they are capable of characterisation and the performance of meaningful action.

But perhaps more relevant to this discussion are the personifications that we find in the poetry of Solon.[129] In particular, 4 West features several personifications of abstract concepts, all having to do with morality and justice. When 'evils roam' (στρέφεται κακά, line 23) among the people, not only do the poor suffer, but 'public ill' (δημόσιον κακόν, line 26) finds its way into the houses of everyone, even those with high walls and inner rooms (lines 28–9).[130] Solon states that his heart commands him to instruct the Athenians that 'Lawlessness (Δυσνομίη) provides the most evils to a city' (line 31), whereas 'Lawfulness (Εὐνομίη) renders all things well ordered and fitting' (line 32).

In her acute reading of this poem, Fabienne Blaise has suggested that while the divine is very much understood to be 'prior and necessary', the gods are not to be found in the working out of the consequences of wrongdoing in the political world of humans.[131] Solon, Blaise argues, 're-works' 'Hesiodic theological fiction' by associating activities attributed to Zeus, as especially found in the hymn to him which opens the *Works and Days*, with the abstractions of Dike and Eunomia.[132] Similarly, Renaud Gagné has argued that in Solon's 13 West, the notorious break in the poem and the discontinuities that are felt in it as a result can be explained by a change in perspective: until line 32, the poet, with the authority granted to him by the gods and specifically Mnemosyne ('Memory', a *men*-word), speaks through an 'I' voice, and the justice that is presented there is understood as divinely authorised and effected; from line 33 onwards, 'we' notice (with *noos*-words) the same topics, but from a partial, human perspective.[133] Again, the influence of Hesiod is felt, but the workings of justice have been 'depersonalized', and the voice of the poet 'desacralized'.[134]

It strikes me as distinctly possible that Herodotus was attempting a similar 'reworking' of what justice is with his story of Atys and Adrastus: Adrastus is Adrasteia/*nemesis*, and Atys is Ate/*atē*.[135] The divine has been made human in the working out of justice in Herodotus'

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127 West ([1966](#)) 230 ad *Th.* 223.

128 Cf. West ([1966](#)) 32–4; ([1978](#)) 142–3 ad *Op.* 11–46.

129 Chiasson ([2016](#)) 26–8.

130 δημόσιον κακόν paralleled in Theognis (50) and in an epitaph from Corcyra (*c.* 625–600) ML 4.4 = *LSAG* 232 no. 9: Meiggs and Lewis ([1969](#)) 5; Mülke ([2002](#)) 143; Noussia-Fantuzzi ([2010](#)) 254.

131 Blaise ([2006](#)) 126.

132 Blaise ([2006](#)) 120.

133 Gagné ([2013](#)) 234–8. He takes the *men*-word vs *noos*-word distinction from Bakker ([2005](#)).

134 'Depersonalizing' Hesiod's justice: Gagné ([2013](#)) 239. 'Desacralization' from Edmunds ([1985](#)) 96–7; Gagné ([2013](#)) 232–3 and n. 131.

135 Atys and *atē*: e.g. Immerwahr ([1966](#)) 158 n. 25; Nagy ([1990](#)) 246 and n. 133. Recall that *atē* occurs only twice in Herodotus, and those just before our *logos* (1.32.6).

story: divine Nemesis Adrasteia has become the all-too-human Adrastus, with his sense of obligation towards Croesus, his shame and remorse, and his poor aim. Like Solon, Herodotus has inherited a mechanism for the distribution of justice that he recognised must have a divine component – it must be supported by the gods in some way. But we also see in his *History* a commitment to the belief that the working out of issues relating to wrongdoing is a process that happens over time and involves human agency. This parallel, 'overdetermined' vision is precisely modelled for us in the Atys–Adrastus *logos*.

How is the Atys and Adrastus story to be read?

Herodotus' account of Atys and Adrastus fits almost seamlessly with what has gone before, indeed so seamlessly that Hartmut Erbse has argued that the story was created by Herodotus for this very purpose.[136] On the other hand, in terms of exemplarity, scholars have found in the entire episode of Solon and Croesus, as well as the follow-up story of Atys and Adrastus, the most definitive articulation of important Herodotean concerns. The Atys–Adrastus *logos* and the larger story of Croesus are both contrived and yet are central to what Herodotus is trying to say through his *History*. To borrow the thinking of Gould, the tale of Atys and Adrastus is one of the clearest cases in Herodotus of a 'story [that] has a scale and a power and weight out of all proportion to its function as an explanatory link in the larger narrative'.[137] This same tale is also unusual for the amount of stereophonic effect that it displays. Judgements of the characters in the story and those of the omniscient narrator echo with each other and do so to a degree that is unparalleled in the rest of the *History*.

So, what exactly is the Atys and Adrastus story? Do we have a sort of Renaissance morality play,[138] with personifications performing actions with tragic consequences? Or is the passage to be understood as a long excursus built around an elaborate etymology – a massive pun? I hope I have already cast sufficient doubt on the first possibility. Regarding the latter one, I think 'pun' is not a useful concept in helping us understand the Atys and Adrastus story, though wordplay involving their names is a major element in the account.[139] Herodotus is certainly capable of providing stories that feature what we would call punning on names: Crius ('Mr Ram') was told by Cleomenes to get his horns sheathed in metal (6.50.3); Cambyses rebukes Prexaspes, 'this is how you carried out (Πρήξασπες … διέπρηξας) my command!' (3.62.2); Leotychidas accepts the *nomen omen* when Hegesistratus ('host-leader') tells him his name (9.91.2). And so forth.[140]

But 'pun' implies, I think, a specific if also fortuitous connection between a name and an external, unrelated matter. Furthermore, the cases most often cited from Herodotus seem

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136 Erbse (1992) 16–17. Cf. Lightfoot (2003) 399 and n. 76.

137 Gould (1989) 53.

138 A play featuring Nemesis was in fact produced in Tudor England (1553): the anonymous *Respublica* (Farmer 1907, 177–272); Carpenter (2012).

139 Cf. Ahl (1988).

140 See Harrison (2000) 263 n. 48, with bibliography.

actually to feature characters in the *History* being reported as the ones who fabricate the pun; in those cases, the connection is not one that Herodotus makes in his voice as narrator. They are like those kings and commanders in Herodotus who recognise the true purport of divine messages, not infrequently after the fact.[141] Tellus the Athenian, 'Mr End', who demonstrates the importance of looking to the *telos*, may fit this pattern, inasmuch as he is reported as an exemplum by Solon to Croesus. But Atys and Adrastus, if their names are being significantly deployed, are named and their actions and motivations characterised by Herodotus himself, and their connection to *atē* and *nemesis*, if authentic, would be one that is sustained through several sections of text; it is not revealed by a quip or aside that is then forgotten.

We need to rethink what more extensive wordplay on names may have meant for Herodotus in connection with the Atys and Adrastus episode. In the first place, we need to dispense with the concept of 'pun', if by that we mean 'trivial' or 'humorous'.[142]

Second, we need a model for wordplay that extends over a substantial amount of narrative and yet that is not to be understood as relating to the actions of personified abstractions, but, rather, to humans who are at the same time emblems of larger concepts. I think that good parallels are provided by the Old Testament.[143] Aetiological naming abounds in the OT, and in particular in the Book of Genesis.[144] One of the best-known cases is the renaming of Jacob: having wrestled with a man till daybreak, Jacob is finally overwhelmed but will not release his adversary unless he blesses Jacob: when the man asks 'what is your name', Jacob responds 'Jacob'; 'the man said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you strove with God and with men, and prevailed"' (Gen 32:27–8),[145] with 'Israel' being explained as 'God strove'. The point of the etymology, and what is especially important to stress, is that the new name for Jacob explains not just his striving with God, but, as the text suggests, that Jacob is in general a 'striver', one who contends with men and the divine. The name frames and explains his life.[146] That is, we do not have, or not only, a scene of *nomen omen*; rather, several episodes and the character of the person involved are encapsulated in the name. This accounting of Jacob/Israel strikes me as similar to what we see in Adrastus, though we do not have a change-of-name scene such as we find in Genesis, but rather, a repeated naming scene.

And, in fact, there are also in the Bible other, coded, accountings for names, such as I am arguing for in Herodotus, as well as explanations relating to names that are not

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141 Cf. Pisistratus and Amphilytus before the battle of Pallene (1.63.1). Also, Cambyses and Cleomenes and the recognition of their error in the places meant by 'Ecbatana' (3.64.4) and 'Argos' (6.80): Lateiner (2005).

142 Powell (1937) 103, on name-puns in Herodotus: 'often the intention is unmistakably humorous'. Contrast Macleod (1982) 150 ad *Il*. 24.730.

143 Cf. Garsiel (1991a) 380 and n. 6; (1991b) 26–8. On name puns in the NT: Moles (2011). On the OT's utility for parallels with Herodotus: Hornblower (2003) 46 and n. 22, with bibliography.

144 Fichtner (1956) 373; Barr (1969) 16.

145 *The New English Bible* (Oxford Study Edition, 1976).

146 Garsiel (1991b) 17.

mentioned but are nonetheless referred to obliquely.[147] Indeed, with special reference to Israel/Jacob, the one name can be explicitly mentioned while reference is also made to the other: at Amos 4:12, we read, 'therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel; <u>Because</u> (ʿqb) I will do this to you, Prepare to meet your God, O Israel'. As Moshe Garsiel explains, 'the name of "Israel" appears here twice, while "Jacob"... does not – but it is to "Jacob" that ... ʿqb refers'.[148] The sole occurrence of *nemesis* in Herodotus, just before the appearance of 'Adrastus', could I think be said to be a similar phenomenon.

While no one biblical example exactly parallels what I take to be happening in the Atys and Adrastus story, and I would never maintain in any case that Herodotus was influenced by the OT or its antecedents, these examples of wordplay with significant names from the OT help me to imagine a way in which significant or 'speaking' names might work in Herodotus that goes beyond either punning or allegory, though those elements are perhaps also present. James Barr reads the story of Abigail and Nabal from 1 Sam 25 in ways similar to what I am arguing here.[149]

It is a mistake to see the story of Adrastus either as only that of a man cursed to live out the fate of his name, or only one of a person who is somehow a two-dimensional stand-in for *nemesis*. He bears an unlucky name, and he also is cursed, it seems, to commit unintentional homicide. His name is connected to other significant names, specifically Atys (*atē*). Adrastus can most definitely be seen as an agent of the 'great *nemesis*' that came from a god to correct Croesus' view of himself; he hails from Phrygia – a point emphasised by Herodotus – a place that is the homeland of Nemesis, the goddess who corrects not only wrongdoing, but boasting self-importance in particular, and who sees to it that some sort of 'confession' is made later, when the criminal recognises his error. But Adrastus is also human, complete with hesitation, regret and shame.

What in the end does the story of Atys and Adrastus *do* for Herodotus? The Atys–Adrastus *logos* can be seen to do two, not necessarily competing, things at one and the same time. In the first instance, we must trust Herodotus' text and see that it is not just *a*, but *the*, explanation, in a relatively short space and dramatic way, of how 'a great *nemesis* from a god' took hold of Croesus for his belief that he was the most fortunate of men. But an even larger, more generally applicable purpose is also in play. *Pace* the view that Herodotus did not understand causation systematically, location and uniqueness (or near-uniqueness) of narrative register for the episode argue that Herodotus wanted the Atys–Adrastus *logos* to function as a guide to help us see 'why things happen' elsewhere in the *History*. Such an exposure of the inner workings of the author's understanding is delicate to manage: it can be seen as heavy-handed and overly explicit, necessitating perhaps its rarity (cf. Phoenix' allegory of the Litai, unique in Homer) and its

147 Garsiel (1991b) 127–64; Moles (2011) 126.
148 Garsiel (1991b) 133–4. Cf. Soph. *OT* 30: Ἀιδης ... πλουτίζειν (with McCartney 1919, 348–9). Also, Moles (2011) 126 ad Hor. *Ep.* 16.2.
149 Barr (1969) 27.

unparalleled vocabulary – the once-occurring *nemesis* in all of Herodotus, a historian otherwise so preoccupied with price-paying.[150]

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