REDATING CROESUS: HERODOTEAN CHRONOLOGIES, AND THE DATES OF THE EARLIEST COINAGES

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Abstract: The dates of Croesus' reign, traditionally 560–546, derive mainly from the Nabonidus Chronicle, for Cyrus' conquest of Lydia, and Herodotus 1.86.1, that Croesus ruled Lydia for 14 years. Part I of this essay questions the reliability of 1.86.1's '14'. Herodotus often uses formulaic or traditional numbers, including seven, for dating and elsewhere. Seven, twice seven, 14 and 70 recur frequently in the Croesus *logos*. Croesus' reign may be a formulaic twice seven: seven prosperous years before Solon's visit, followed by seven disastrous years. It therefore may be unhistorical. Part II adduces other passages in Herodotus, and other evidence, that Croesus ruled Lydia already in the 580s. Nothing dates Alyattes after 585. Part III considers possible consequences of redating Croesus for the dates of early electrum and bimetallic coinages, the latter beginning perhaps in the 570s, as does Croesus' Artemision at Ephesos. Part IV doubts what happened to Croesus when Sardis fell. Herodotus adapted one version for his own purposes. He probably invented Croesus' role as wise warner to Cyrus and Cambyses.

Keywords: Croesus, Herodotus, chronology, electrum coinage, Alyattes

I.

The dates of Croesus' reign have long been a cornerstone of sixth-century Anatolian chronology. These dates, traditionally 560–546 or 561–547, were based mainly on the Nabonidus Chronicle, a cuneiform text thought to date Cyrus' conquest of Lydia to 547 or 546, and Herodotus 1.86.1, stating that Croesus ruled for 14 years: 'In this way Sardis was captured by the Persians and Croesus was taken prisoner, having ruled for fourteen years and for fourteen days having been besieged' (ἄρξαντα ἔτεα τεσσερεσκαίδεκα καὶ τεσσερεσκαίδεκα ἡμέρας πολιορκηθέντα). In 1.86.2 Herodotus adds that Cyrus placed Croesus on a funeral pyre with 'twice seven' (*dis hepta*) Lydian boys.

Although for some years scholars have rejected the reading *Lu-* and so no longer use the Nabonidus Chronicle to date Cyrus' conquest of Lydia, more recent work has restored *Lu-ˊú ̕-[du]* and its date for Croesus' overthrow.[1] As we shall see, 547 or 546 will in any case not be far wrong for these events. By contrast, Herodotus' '14' for the length of Croesus' reign has received no similar scrutiny. In part I of this essay I shall question the reliability of that number, which may be formulaic.

Although judgments on Herodotus as chronologist have varied (E. Meyer concluded that he 'had not the slightest interest in chronology'; Wilamowitz said, 'he despised chronology'), recent scholars have been more sympathetic,[2] acknowledging source difficulties, especially before the

[1] Against *Lu-* see Grayson (1975) 282 n.ii 16 (citing personal collation); Cargill (1977); Kuhrt (1988) 120 n.62 (also citing personal collation); (2007) 50, 53 (a translation and discussion of the Nabonidus Chronicle); Kalaitzoglou (2008) 46–48 (with a photograph);

Rollinger (2008) 56–61 (arguing for the reading U[rartu]). For the new collation, see van der Spek (2014) 256 n.184, in collaboration with M. Geller, S. Zawadzki (see earlier Zawadzki (2010) 146–47) and I. Finkel (curator of cuneiform inscriptions at the British Museum). They dismiss Rollinger's *ú* as 'impossible'.

[2] Meyer (1892) 185; von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1926) 220–21; more recently, Strasburger (1956); Lateiner (1989) chapter 5 ('The place of chronology'); Vannicelli (1993) 9–18, especially on the contributions of Strasburger and Musti; Rhodes (2003). At p.62 Rhodes observes that in Herodotus, 'before [500/499] life becomes a great deal less certain'.

fifth century, and noting Herodotus' use of synchronisms (for example Croesus and the Spartan Anaxandridas II in 1.67), generational dating (although his generations vary in length) and right-looking numbers for the length of Athens' Peisistratean tyranny (36 years: 5.65.3) and the reigns of Cyrus (29 years: 1.214.3) and Darius (36 years: 7.4), although not the reign of the Spartan Kleomenes (5.48).[3] For Persia beginning with Cyrus, Herodotus' regnal figures are often confirmed by Near Eastern sources.[4] P.J. Rhodes calls his regnal figures for the Medes, the Assyrians and the Mermnads of Lydia, 'more difficult'.[5] Croesus was the last of the Mermnads.

In addition to Herodotus' seemingly accurate dates, formulaic or typical numbers recur throughout his text, including for lengths of time.[6] For example, with epic antecedents he sometimes includes fictional intervals based on ten. At 2.111.2 the Egyptian king 'Pherōs' (= 'Pharaoh', transposed into a proper name) is blind for ten years, a fiction. At 3.14.1 'on the tenth day' is a fictional interval between two events in Cambyses' Egypt. The five ten-day journeys across Africa at 4.181–85 are fanciful. Illustrating other types of formulaic numbers, Herodotus' generic 600 for the size of the Persian fleet has often been noted.[7] D. Fehling spotted that the numbers six, 60 and 600 are often associated with mixing bowls (1.14.1–2, 1.51.2, 4.81.3, 4.152.4). A personal favourite are alternative dates invented to intimate scholarly precision, enhancing the credibility of fanciful stories. According to 'learned Persians', 'four or five days' after the Phoenicians arrived at Argos, King Inachos' daughter Io and her friends went down to the beach to shop (1.1.3, 1.2.1). 'Two or three days' after his arrival at Sardis, Croesus' attendants gave Solon a tour of his treasuries (1.30.1). 'Four or five days' after Polykrates threw his signet-ring into the sea, a fisherman caught a 'large and beautiful fish which he thought worthy to give' to that ruler (3.42.1). Herodotus presents himself as a careful historian reporting alternative dates seemingly from his sources (this in itself is important), while inventing these dates.

Some numerical passages are what may be called densely formulaic. For example, in 5.72.1 Herodotus says that (in 508/7) the Spartan king Kleomenes 'invaded Athens with a small force and expelled 700 Athenian families' cursed by the Alkmaionids' sacrilegious killing of the Kylonians. In 5.73.1, these 700 families are recalled. Many scholars doubt or question whether 700 families can have shared Alkmaionid blood or been expelled from Athens apparently without a fuss.[8] Shortly afterwards, at 5.77.1, Athenian forces engage the Boeotians, 'killing large numbers of the enemy and taking 700 prisoners' who are later ransomed and return. At 6.91, recounting the history of civil strife on Aegina, Herodotus mentions that the wealthy were 'taking 700 prisoners out of the town for execution when one of them broke free' and sought refuge at a temple of Demeter, clutching its door handles with both hands which his pursuers then cut off. The prisoners were killed, but the wealthy were cursed and banished from the island.

In these passages, 700 prisoners return or are revenged (Aegina's wealthy, accursed for impious homicide, do not return) and 700 Alkmaionid families, accursed for impious homicide, are driven out by the Spartans but return.[9] Seven hundred is a typical or formulaic number elsewhere in Greek literature, along with seven and seventy (cf. six, 60 and 600).[10] Herodotus uses it in related contexts,

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[3] On Kleomenes, see conveniently How and Wells (1912) 2.347–48.

[4] Asheri (2007) 158, 216, with references.

[5] Rhodes (2003) 64–65.

[6] Whatever one thinks of the 'liar school' of Herodotean studies, Fehling (1989) chapter 4 ('Typical numbers and their use in Herodotus') is mostly not challenged by Rubincam (2003). Rubincam admits (p.462) that, especially in the absence of good information, Herodotus uses 'typical' or 'rhetorical' numbers.

[7] 4.87.1 (at Darius' Scythian invasion), 6.9 (at the Ionian Revolt), 6.95.8–9 (before Marathon).

[8] See, for example, Rhodes (1993) 245–6, citing Wilamowitz, How and Wells, and Ostwald; Nenci (2000) 267.

[9] Plutarch (*Sol.* 12) tells that while descending from the Acropolis, the Kylonians were attached to Athena's temple by a string which broke. This motif parallels that of Herodotus' Aeginetan prisoner who attached himself to the door handles of Demeter's temple but had his hands cut off. These two stories in Herodotus are otherwise similar, although he does not mention the Kylonians' string.

[10] Dreizehnter (1978) 90–92 discusses 700 as a rhetorical number used in dating, mostly by sources *aet. imp.* (he does not mention Herodotus).

similar circumstances eliciting similar formulas as in epic (and for mixing bowls). At 5.72.2, when the Athenians besiege Kleomenes' army 'for two days', then 'on the following day' the Spartans are forced to leave, Herodotus employs another dating formula. Similarly, at 5.42.3 the Spartan Dorieus founds a colony in Libya but 'in the third year he was driven out'. At 4.157.1 the Therans settle a colony off Libya and live there two years, but nothing went well, so they sent to Delphi and moved to the mainland.[11]

Are Herodotus' figures for Croesus in 1.86, '14 years', '14 days' and 'twice seven *paides* of the Lydians', historical or formulaic? These numbers also look densely formulaic. In regard to the 'twice seven *paides*' on Croesus' pyre whom Cyrus decides to spare, at 7.114.2 Herodotus writes, 'burying people alive is a Persian custom, as I learn that in her old age, Xerxes' wife Amestris also had twice seven *paides* of the Persians, men who were distinguished, buried alive on her behalf, to show kindness to the so-called god of the underworld'. In a fine essay entitled '*dis hepta*: allusive numbering and narrative cross-references in Herodotus 1.86.2 and 7.113.5-115.1', Christos Tsagalis (2004) discusses the literary strategies of long-distance echoing (also typical of epic), as Herodotus' audience compares Cyrus' merciful conduct in sparing 'twice seven *paides*' with the dreadful Amestris who (I add) also mutilates Masistes' innocent wife at the end of Herodotus' tale (9.108–13).[12] Following on (and parallel to) the Masistes episode, Herodotus tells that Pericles' father Xanthippos crucified Artayktes the Persian governor of Sestos and stoned his son to death before his eyes (9.120), darkly anticipating for Athens in the Peloponnesian War the fate which Persia suffered, but Cyrus wisely spared Croesus and 14 youths.[13] Crucifying, impaling, sacrificing or stoning children, burying people alive or refusing to do these things, are motifs throughout Herodotus. Those who commit such sins, typically despots, often suffer bad ends.[14] In 1.128–30, Herodotus' story of Cyrus' and Harpagos' capture of Croesus' brother-in-law Astyages, who had impaled Magian dream interpreters (Harpagos then talks with him), echoes his story of Cyrus and Croesus. In 3.34–36 Croesus rebukes Cambyses for killing a boy, just before Cambyses' downfall. It is consistent with current views of Herodotus' representations of the non-Greek as either opposite to or reproducing the Greek, that sacrificing or sparing 'twice seven' youths is a Greek convention,[15] most famously when each year the Athenians offered seven girls and seven boys to the Minotaur.[16] Like Cyrus' 'twice seven', Theseus saves these Athenian youths.[17]

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[11] I owe these last two examples to George Forrest.

[12] Tsagalis notes that Herodotus' twice-seven youths are missing in Bacchyl. *Ode* 3.23–56 of 468, where Croesus puts his wife and daughters on the pyre, and the red-figure vase Louvre G 197 by Myron (*ca*. 490), depicting Croesus alone on the pyre (the scene is reproduced on the dust jacket of Asheri (1999)). Both ode and vase (further discussed in part IV of this essay) precede Herodotus' account, although the vase painter at any rate might have found depicting 14 additional figures artistically challenging.

[13] For Herodotus writing in the light of later fifth-century Athens, see Fornara (1971) 86–91.

[14] 2.119 (Menelaus), 3.11 (Egyptian mercenaries), 3.35 (Cambyses), 3.125–26 (Oroetes), 3.132 (Darius), 4.202 (Pheretime), 5.38 (Mytileneans), 7.114 (Persians), 7.194 (Darius), 9.78–79 (Pausanias). See generally Rollinger (2004).

[15] So Parker (2004) 153; Parker puzzles over the possible religious significance of Amestris' act as Herodotus reports it, not taking into account its formulaic and symbolic qualities.

[16] Sappho 206 L.-P.; Bacchyl. 17.2; Eur. *Heracl.* 1326–27; Plut. *Thes.* 18.1, etc.

[17] After the murder of Medea's children, every year the Corinthians were said to have sent a chorus of seven boys and seven girls to spend a year at Hera's sanctuary at Perachora. They were not killed (schol. *Med.* 264, quoting Parmeniskos, a Hellenistic grammarian = *FGrH* 417 F3; *cf.* Eur. *Med.* 1378–83; Page (1938) xxii–xxv). In Lasos of Hermione in the late sixth century (*ap*. Ael. *VH* 12.36), and then Aeschylus (*dis hepta* in his *Niobe*: *TGF* 167b), Sophocles (*TGF* also L.-J.) 446), Euripides (*Phoen.* 159) and Aristophanes (fr. 294 K.-A.), Apollo and Artemis kill Niobe's seven sons and seven daughters. Homer's Niobe had six sons and six daughters (*Il.* 24.604; followed by Pherekydes *FGrH* 3 F126) and Hesiod's Niobe ten sons and ten daughters (fr. 183 M.-W. = Ps.-Apoll. 3.5.6). All these numbers are formulaic.

As for the length of Croesus' reign, Fehling (1989) 225 observes that Herodotus often uses 'seven' for intervals of time. At 2.133.1, an oracle prophesies to Egypt's King Mykerinos that he would die in seven years. At 3.26.1 Cambyses' army marches seven days through the Egyptian desert to a place called the Island of the Blessed, where it disappears. In 3.67–68 the False Smerdis rules seven months, and there are seven conspirators and (3.76.3) seven pairs of hawks. At 3.129.3 Darius is sick for seven days and seven nights; at 7.56.1 Xerxes' army takes seven days and seven nights to cross the Hellespont; at 4.14 Aristeas disappears for seven years; at 4.151.1 Thera has no rain for seven years; at 4.158.1, having left their Libyan island in the third year (a formula, see the text at n.11), the Therans live at Aziris for six years but in the seventh year they leave; 'for six years … in the seventh' recurs in 2.133.1 and 6.101.2. Other examples of seven years occur at 6.12.2, 4.14.3 and 4.22.1 (compare 4.24: the Scythians conduct business in seven languages). Zopyros' fictional plan for Darius at 3.155 involves three formulas for time: ten days, then 20 days, then seven days. None of these dates has any claim to historical accuracy. Formulaic sevens for time are common in Near Eastern texts[18] and also, for example, in Homer's *Odyssey*. Odysseus spends seven years with Circe (7.259); for seven days his men feast on the cattle of the Sun (12.397–400); at Ithaca he tells a false story of seven days' feasting with his men in Egypt (14.249–52); Eumaios sails for seven days from Ortygia to Ithaca (15.476–77).

As for seven in the Croesus *logos*, Herodotus divides Croesus' 14-year reign into a prosperous, happy period preceding Solon's visit, followed by a sadder, deluded period when god punished him for thinking himself the happiest man (1.34.1), exemplifying Herodotus' main themes of rise and fall, and that 'human happiness never remains long in the same place' (1.5.4, 9.27.4). After Solon's departure, Croesus loses his son Atys in a hunting accident and then undertakes his lengthy, failed campaign against Cyrus, in both episodes misunderstanding Delphic oracles. Within Croesus' second, deluded period, Herodotus specifies two seemingly fictional intervals, something atypical of his accounts of early kings, as Rhodes (2003) 65 points out. Croesus mourns Atys for two years before (1.46.1) Cyrus overthrew the Median king, Croesus' brother-in-law Astyages, and Croesus began to contemplate attacking Cyrus. When he is defeated and protests to Apollo, the god responds that he delayed Croesus' capture by three years (1.91.3). Why did Herodotus seemingly invent these two delays totalling five years?

Without arguing for it, D. Asheri suggests that Herodotus conceives of Croesus' rule through 'the symbolism of the number seven', as seven years of rising prosperity were followed by seven years of decline.[19] Although Asheri does not challenge the historicity of Croesus' 14-year rule,[20] his suggestion can otherwise be supported. Herodotus' statement (1.46.1) that Croesus mourned Atys for two years but put aside his grief when Cyrus overthrew Astyages (an event dated 550, in historical fact and in Herodotus)[21] anchors Herodotus' date for the start of Croesus' period of decline. The invented interval of two years, followed by Herodotus' accounts of Croesus' lengthy research into Greek oracles, Delphic consultations, massive offerings to Delphi and embassies to Athens and Sparta (1.46.2–1.70), followed in turn by the three years when Apollo delayed Croesus' defeat, all this could well have been calculated to fill seven years and match a seven year, more prosperous period preceding Solon's visit. 'Seven' recurs in the Croesus *logos*, in the seven oracles that Herodotus has Croesus consult (1.46.2) and his claim that the Artemision was seven stades from Ephesos (1.26.2), a figure which Michael Kerschner, excavator at Ephesos, tells me is incorrect, producing much archaeological confusion.

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[18] Thus, for example, *Gilgamesh* XI.12; *Atrahasis* III.iv.24; Genesis 2.1–3.

[19] Asheri (1999) 282, 321; (2007) 142.

[20] (1999) 282; (2007) 99.

[21] See Asheri (2007) 134, 147–48, 165 with references. The Near Eastern scholar who refereed my article for *JHS* concurs: 'I think it almost certain that Cyrus' victory over Astyages is to be dated to 550.'

In Herodotus, Croesus' rule seems once again to be *dis hepta*, and the *dis hepta paides* on his pyre repeat and make explicit the formula. A parallel formula is reprised for Croesus' age: 35 when he becomes king (1.26.1), midway to 70 (also a formula built on seven), 26,250 days if '35 intercalary months' are included (1.32.3), which Solon tells him is the limit of a human life (1.32.2). Seventy for Croesus is twice 35. His brother-in-law Astyages is also said to have ruled for 35 years (1.130). Earlier, Sadyattes and Alyattes each attacked Miletos for six years, Alyattes finishing the war in the 12th year, twice six, during the time of Periander (Hdt. 1.17–22). To counter an oracle's prediction that he would rule for six years and die in the seventh, the Egyptian Mykerinos, also a generous ruler (2.129.2), decides to stay up all night with the aid of lamps, 'so that he had 12 years instead of six, nights becoming days' (2.133). Like Croesus, Mykerinos also protested to the god, who also responded by justifying his fate.

Herodotus' '14-day' siege of Sardis is not in Xenophon (*Cyr*. 7.2.1–7.3), who used other sources in addition to Herodotus, or in Polyainos (*Strat.* 7.6.2). That number repeats and validates his '14' years for Croesus' reign. It seems likely, and is at any rate entirely consistent with Herodotus' use of numbers, that in the Croesus *logos* '14', 'twice seven', other 'sevens' and '70' are together densely formulaic. They are therefore of uncertain historical value, and hence unreliable.

II.

Setting aside for the moment Herodotus' numbers, could a reign for Croesus starting *ca*. 560 be more or less accurate? In fact, that start date is inconsistent with virtually every other chronological indication that Herodotus and other sources provide for him.[22] Much of this material has Croesus on the throne in the 580s.

First, Herodotus frequently links Croesus with men prominent in the early decades of the sixth century. Most famously, he explains that Croesus met Solon when Solon left Athens for ten years after passing his legislation, to prevent the Athenians from changing his laws (1.29.1–2). Solon was appointed lawgiver and archon in 594/3.[23] Herodotus also reports (1.27) that Croesus accepted advice about attacking the Greek islands from either Bias of Priene or Pittakos of Mytilene – his sources (he says) disagreed. Bias and Pittakos were among the original 'seven sages'. So were Solon and Thales, who gives Croesus advice on bridging the Halys (1.75.3–4). The seven sages are all dated between 600 and 580.[24]

To be sure, these stories are fictions, bringing together famous *sophoi* and a ruler of fabulous riches who was well known to the Greeks. Furthermore, at 1.30.1 Herodotus makes a chronological slip, mentioning in passing that on his post-legislation trip Solon also visited Amasis, another phil-hellene (2.178.1), whose rule is thought to begin *ca*. 569. On the other hand, except in the case of Amasis (to which we shall return), the fictional quality of these encounters need not automatically discredit the chronologies on which they are based. Book 1 is a masterpiece of Herodotus' *Histories* and the story of Solon and Croesus is its brightest gem. Would our historian have risked public

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[22] Herodotus' Croesus rules during Peisistratos' tyranny (1.59.1–65.1) and the reigns of Spartans Anaxandridas II and Ariston (1.67.1), *ca*. 550, but these reports do not fix the termini of his reign. While not important to my argument, there is no need to assume that Croesus actually learned of Peisistratos' return to power in 546, as Herodotus recounts (1.61–64). It seems more likely that Herodotus simply wanted to finish his story.

[23] On Solon's chronology, see Wallace (1983).

[24] Thales was linked with the eclipse of 585 (Hdt. 1.84); Periander the son of Kypselos (who became tyrant *ca*. 655) died *ca*. 587–585 on the standard dating (see below); Anacharsis is said to have visited Athens in 592–

588 (Diog. Laert. 1.101); Pittakos was *aisymnētēs* of Mytilene for ten years from 597/6 (Diog. Laert. 1.75; Plut. *Sol.* 14.7). According to Clement of Alexandria (*Strom*. 1.129), 'those enrolled with Thales as *sophoi* were synchronous with him, as Andron says in *The Tripod*' (a fourth-century text presumably recounting the story of the golden tripod which passed among the seven, also implying synchronicity). Plato (*Prt*. 343a) says that the seven met at Delphi to dedicate the first fruits of their wisdom. According to Diogenes Laertius (1.22), in Damasias' archonship (582/1) 'the epithet [*sophos*] was applied to all the seven, as Demetrios of Phaleron says in his list of archons'.

embarrassment by committing so basic an error as specifying that these two famous statesmen met not less than ten but some 40 years after Solon's legislation, right at the opening of his text? As Rhodes has shown,[25] Herodotus is attentive to Athenian chronology at least from the start of Peisistratos' tyranny in 560 (when, according to 1.86, Croesus also began to rule). In addition, he was a native of western Asia Minor, his grandfather will have been alive during Croesus' kingship, both Herodotus and Croesus had Carian mothers (1.92), Herodotus is generally concerned with chronology, and his many public audiences could be critical of his stories.

Other passages confirm that, except in the formulaic 1.86, Herodotus had Croesus on the throne in the early sixth century. At 6.125.2 he tells a charming story of how the Alkmaionid *genos* became rich as a result of Croesus' generosity to Alkmaion son of Megakles (I). Megakles (I) was archon during the Kylonian crisis *ca*. 632 (*Ath. pol*. epit. 2; Plut. *Sol*. 12) and Alkmaion commanded Athens' forces in the First Sacred War *ca*. 595–586 (Plut. *Sol*. 11.2). John Davies writes, 'Herodotos implies that his meeting with "Kroisos" (for which we must understand "Alyattes") preceded and caused his victory at the Olympic Games in 592 (Hdt. vi. 125. 5 …); both sequence and causality may be wrong', but his visit to Sardis may have been 'connected diplomatically with the Sacred War'. Alkmaion's son Megakles (II) appears 'in the 560s and 550s as *chef de famille* and leader of the Paralia faction (Hdt. i. 59. 3 …)'.[26] In Herodotus' story of Croesus and Alkmaion, Croesus is ruling Lydia in the early sixth century. I note that this story derives from local Athenian traditions alien to reports about the early sages.

A mid 580s date for the start of Croesus' rule also helps to resolve two chronological cruces in Herodotus' third book. Just before Cambyses' attack on Egypt *ca*. 525 (Hdt. 3.39, 44), the Samian tyrant Polykrates expelled a large number of Samians whose loyalty he suspected. They reached the Spartans, who after hearing their too long and then much shorter speeches ('This bag needs grain') agreed to help them because at some unspecified time in the past the Samians had stolen a large bronze bowl that Sparta was sending to Croesus. One year before the theft of the bowl (3.47.2), they also had stolen a breastplate that Amasis was sending to Sparta. Meanwhile, the Corinthians also wanted to attack Samos, because, 'a generation previously, at the same time as the theft of the bowl' (3.48.1), the Samians had freed 300 Corcyrean boys whom, toward the end of his rule (3.53.1, 3.49; see n.24), the Corinthian ruler Periander was sending to Alyattes. They were to be castrated, the Corinthians wanting to punish the Corcyreans. These passages date both Alyattes (the intended recipient of the boys) and Croesus (the intended recipient of the bowl) to the time of Periander's final years. If Croesus succeeded Alyattes in the 580s, that is consistent.

Two chronological difficulties remain. First, at 3.48.1 Herodotus dates the theft of the bowl 'a generation' before the Corinthians aided the Samians in attacking Samos *ca*. 525 and Periander sent off 300 boys to Alyattes (the main basis of the 'low' date for Periander: see Asheri (2007) 445–46 and references). Already Plutarch (*De Hdt. mal.* 860a) spotted the difficulty of Herodotus' date and changed it to 'two generations' (τρεῖς γενεάς, reckoned inclusively), in order to accommodate Periander. In 1.70.3, Herodotus dates the bowl episode to just before Croesus' fall, the Spartans wanting to send him a gift after they became allies. In 3.48.1 Herodotus repeats that date (one generation before *ca*. 525) and mistakenly synchronizes Periander and the 300 boys with the theft of the bowl, not noticing that 'a generation' did not fit the dates of Periander and Alyattes whom he had synchronized along with Thrasyboulos tyrant of Miletos and Alyattes' siege of that city in the later seventh century (1.20–23).

Second, as I have mentioned, Amasis ruled not at the time of Periander (on the standard dating) but from *ca*. 569: Herodotus' second slip in regard to Amasis' dates (the first, we recall, was Solon's

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[25] Rhodes (1976); (1993) 191–99.

[26] Davies (1971) 371–72. For a different strategy, Rhodes ((2003) 64) wants Megakles not Alkmaion enriched by Croesus.

visit to him after 594/3). Herodotus makes two other, similar slips on Amasis' chronology. In 2.177 he mentions that Solon adopted one of Amasis' laws for his own legislation, apparently forgetting that in 1.30 he had said that Solon's visit to Amasis followed his legislation. Finally, in 2.134–35 he calls Amasis a contemporary of Sappho, who is otherwise dated *ca*. 620–560. That report has thrown the chronology of Sappho into confusion, with some scholars advocating a 'low' date for her also.[27] These problems may be resolved by Herodotus' report that Amasis had influenced Solon's laws. Accordingly, in all four passages he puts him on the Egyptian throne in the early sixth century, earlier than is historically correct.

Finally, Herodotus' account of Croesus' many accomplishments suggests that he thought of his reign as lengthy. Croesus first attacked Ephesos 'and afterwards he attacked all the Ionian and Aeolian cities in turn' (ἐν μέρεϊ: LSJ *s.v.* II 2, citing this passage), bringing greater or lesser charges against them (1.26).

> As time went on [χρόνου ἐπιγινομένου], Croesus subdued almost all the people living west of the Halys river. Except for the Cilicians and the Lycians, he overpowered and made all the rest his subjects: the Lydians, Phrygians, Mysians, Mariandynians, Chalybes, Paphlagonians, the Thynian and Bithynian Thracians, the Carians, Ionians, Dorians, Aeolians, and Pamphylians. (1.28)

Could Herodotus have thought that Croesus accomplished all this between 560 and Solon's visit (1.29.1)? Asheri comments, 'Il vero conquistatore di questi popoli fu Aliatte, non Creso',[28] flatly contradicting Herodotus' statement that 'Croesus was the first foreigner of whom we know who subdued some of the Greeks for the payment of tribute, and made friends of others. He subdued the Ionians, Aeolians, and Asiatic Dorians … Before the rule of Croesus, all the Greeks were free' (1.6.2–3).

By contrast, Herodotus' Alyattes, supposedly ruling for 'seven and fifty' years (1.25.1), accomplishes far less than Croesus. 'He made war on the Medes …, expelled the Cimmerians from Asia, captured Smyrna … and attacked Klazomenai, where he did not succeed as he hoped, but met with disaster' (1.16.2). He also failed to conquer Miletos (1.17–22). Once again there appears to be a disjunct between Herodotus' regnal numbers for the Mermnads and what he tells of them. I shall return to the question of the Mermnads' dates.

When Herodotus did not know a date or other number but wanted to, he relied on patterns or formulas – 700 prisoners, 600 ships, 'twice seven' – reinforcing his deepest vision that history was not random but patterned and hence bore meaning. From Gyges to Croesus to Xerxes to Xanthippos (whence on to Pericles and the war between Athens and Sparta), historical patterns were at the centre of his thought.[29] Croesus himself becomes a motif, mentioned repeatedly in later books often as a warner (for example 3.36). The same applies to Sandanis' unheeded warning to Croesus not to attack a poor land (1.71); compare 1.89 where Croesus has learned this lesson, 9.82 where the Persians have not, and 9.122 (a flashback in Herodotus' final paragraph) where the Persians have not until Cyrus enlightens them. At 2.176, Apries' life story parallels Croesus'. At 3.14–15, the story of Croesus and Cyrus parallels that of Cambyses and Psammenitos, and Herodotus puts Croesus at Cambyses' side. At 1.86, Herodotus was so drawn to the power of formulaic numbers for reinforcing the patterns running through his history, that he forgot to notice that all of his other information for Croesus implies an earlier start for his reign.

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[27] Beloch, famously eccentric on chronology ((1913) 355–56, 363–64), Mazzarino ((1943) 73–78) and Fehling ((1985) for example 107) too boldly down-date Alkaios, Pittakos and Sappho after 560, because of their reported links with Croesus and Amasis. Contrast Liberman (1999) 1.xv–xvi n.23.

[28] (1999) 280–81; also (2007) 97.

[29] The *Pentekontaetia* and anticipation of the Peloponnesian War explain why, ostensibly in response to Croesus' inquiries, he presents potted histories of sixth-century Sparta and Athens (1.59–70).

Other independent evidence also has Croesus on the throne several decades before 560. According to a fragmentary Oxyrhynchos commentary on Alkaios (*P.Oxy.* 2506), one of his poems mentioned 'the king of the Lydians … Antimenidas the brother of Alkaios … with him … war … danger … hatred … Pittakos … Croesus' (Alkaios 9d Campbell = 306Af Liberman; tr. Campbell). Although his precise dates are unknown, Alkaios was a poet of the late seventh and early sixth centuries. His extant verse is rich in autobiographical detail, but mentions nothing after Pittakos' election as *aisymnētēs* in 597/6. Herodotus (5.95) mentions Alkaios' fighting against the Athenians at Sigeion in the time of Periander, *ca*. 607. According to Himerios (*Or.* 28.2, p.128 Colonna = Alk. fr. 448), Alkaios praised Thales. According to tradition, Pittakos governed Mytilene from 597/6 to 587/6, living ten more years in retirement (Diog. Laert. 1.75; Plut. *Sol.* 14.7).[30] According to Diodorus Siculus (9.12.2; and see Diog. Laert. 1.75), Croesus offered Pittakos as much money as he could take from his treasury, but Pittakos declined. Parallel to Herodotus' Alkmaion story but stressing Pittakos' lack of avarice, this anecdote again synchronizes Croesus and Pittakos. According to Diogenes Laertius (1.25), Thales advises the Milesians not to ally with Croesus. As we have seen, Herodotus' sources associated Croesus with Bias, Thales and Pittakos.

Meyer rejects all these tales as 'chronologisch unmöglich … Solon, Thales, Pittakos waren weit älter als Krösos'. Asheri comments: 'Pittaco … appartiene all'età di Aliatte, non di Creso'. Denys Page points out that Croesus is said to have governed Adramyttion in the Troad opposite Lesbos before he became king (Nic. Dam. *FGrH* 90 F65).[31] Yet except for the Alkaios fragment which is silent on this point, the sources for Pittakos and Thales cited in the preceding paragraph synchronize Pittakos, Thales and Croesus as king.

According to the *Souda s.v.* 'Ibykos' (I 80 = ii 607 Adler), Ibykos of Rhegion moved to Samos 'when it was ruled by the father of the tyrant Polykrates. This was in the time of Croesus, in the 54th Olympiad' (564/560). As regards Lydia's subjection of western Anatolia, which (we have seen) scholars including Asheri attribute to Alyattes, Strabo (12.4.3) notes that the Bithynian city of Prusa 'was founded by the Prusias who made war against Croesus'. Editors (see ed. Radt ad loc.) consider this an error for Cyrus. They might reconsider. Finally, the *Tabula Capitolina* of AD 15 (*IG* XIV 1297, II 10–15), arguably based on the fourth-century Athenian historian Ephoros, lists the beginning of Croesus' rule sometime between Solon's archonship and 582.[32]

Thus, a diverse range of testimonia places Croesus on the Lydian throne in the early sixth century and is inconsistent with a start date for his reign *ca*. 560. Accepting Herodotus' 14-year rule for Croesus, in a formulaic passage full of sevens, twice sevens and 14, means rejecting virtually every other chronological indication for him, including in Herodotus.

Finally, if Croesus began to rule Lydia in the 580s, Alyattes' rule will have ended then. What are Alyattes' dates? Beginning with the archaeological data, at Ephesos Kerschner reports the discovery of a KUKALIM lion-head coin (ART 94/K277) in stratigraphic layers dated *ca*. 630 to *ca*. 600,[33] although in new work yet unpublished he may raise the *terminus ante* to *ca*. 615 (see n.37). Several coins of this not extensive series are reverse punch-linked with WALWEL coins. If WALWEL designates Alyattes, as scholars now accept (see below), this KUKALIM coin may supply the earliest evidence for his rule. As we have seen, Hdt. 1.16 reports that Alyattes captured Smyrna. According to J.M. Cook (1985), 'Archaeological evidence confirms a date around 600 B.C.' (or 'hardly appreciably earlier than 600') for that sack. Hdt. 1.19 records that Alyattes burned the Temple of Athena at Assesos, outside Miletos. G. Kalaitzoglou ((2008) 41) reports that the 'rich archaic material' from that fire dates 'from the turn of the seventh to the sixth century', although U. Schlotzhauer ((2006) 134) and others question whether this material derives from a sanctuary. Kalaitzoglou's date for the destruction, 608, rests on Herodotus, who dates it to the

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[30] See Liberman (1999) 2.198–99 n.10.
[31] Meyer (1975) 168; Asheri (1999) 280; (2007) 96; Page (1955) 230.

[32] Balcer (1972) 102, 104–08.
[33] Kerschner (1997) 100 with n.40, 104, 181, 225–26; see also Cahill (2010a) catalogue 21.

sixth year of Alyattes' rule (1.18). Most recently, C. Ratté ((2011) 3–4, 69-73) has supported Herodotus' identification of the largest tumulus at Sardis' Bin Tepe ('A Thousand Mounds') as Alyattes' tomb (1.93.2). From the looted tomb chamber, the masonry and fragments of pottery and alabastra are dated no more precisely than '610–560 (the years of Alyattes's reign)' (Ratté (2011) 4–5, see also 73–74). Both Ratté and N. Cahill confirm to me that nothing here precludes a terminus *ca*. 585 for Alyattes' rule. Although Herodotus does not mention it, presumably we must add to Alyattes' accomplishments the massive late seventh-century fortifications of Sardis.

As for other data, Herodotus reports (1.16, 73–74) that Alyattes' war against the Mede Cyaxares was ended by an eclipse (of May 585: Kaletsch (1958) 15) which Thales predicted. While scholars concur that Thales could not have predicted this eclipse, he and Alyattes' Median War were nonetheless associated with it. Alyattes now marries his daughter (Croesus' sister) to Cyaxares' son Astyages, who governed Media (according to Herodotus for 35 years: 1.130.1) down to 550 when Cyrus defeated him. Thus, Alyattes fought Cyaxares in and before 585. According to Hdt. 3.48 (we have seen), toward the end of his life Periander sent 300 Corcyrean boys to Alyattes. Hdt. 3.47–48 has Croesus on the throne shortly thereafter. Croesus may have built the one great thing expressly linked with Alyattes: his enormous tomb.

No activities are recorded for Alyattes after 585, and none of his recorded activities need predate *ca*. 610, except perhaps minting WALWET coins. As we have noted, a not very long reign is consistent with the fairly minimal accomplishments that Herodotus attributes to him (1.16) – and Herodotus dates the start of his reign to 617. At 1.25.1 he writes that 'after waging war against the Milesians' (in the late seventh century), 'afterwards [Alyattes] dies, having been king for seven and 50 years'. On Herodotus' chronology, his 'afterwards' elides nearly 50 years of any activities.

If Herodotus had evidence that Alyattes was active in the later seventh century, might he have lengthened Alyattes' reign to 'seven and 50' years (both formulaic numbers) in part to reflect the 14 years that he gave Croesus in 1.86? However he determined the lengths of the other Mermnads' reigns (Gyges, 38 years: 14.4; Ardys, 49 years: 16.1; Sadyattes, 12 years: 16.1), his five Mermnad reigns total 170 years, five Herodotean generations of 33+⅓ years at 2.142.2 plus the three years that Apollo extended Croesus' reign.[34] From Assyrian and Egyptian sources, scholars agree that Gyges died *ca*. 645,[35] leaving far shorter reigns for Ardys or Sadyattes than Herodotus indicates. Nicholas of Damascus calls Ardys 'Alyattes', probably from the fifth-century historian Xanthos of Lydia.[36] If we eliminate Ardys/Alyattes as a doublet, that might help.

III.

Backdating the start of Croesus' reign has consequences for the chronologies of early electrum and Croesus' bimetallic coinages, and Croesus' Artemision.

First, just as I argue here for Croesus, so the dates of early electrum coins continue to be pushed back, from the late sixth into the seventh century. D. Williams (1993) dates the manufacture and burial of the Artemision 'pot hoard' pot to the third quarter of the seventh century. (None of its 19 electrum coins look Lydian, and all look pretty early.) Kerschner reports that a KUKALIM lion-head third, a LATE boars'-head third and a lion's-paw 24th were found at the Artemision in archaeological contexts dated *ca*. 630 to *ca*. 600 (or possibly earlier).[37] As I have mentioned, punch links between several KUKALIM and WALWET coins indicate that these series were more or less

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[34] Ball (1979) 277–78; Asheri (2007) 79–80.

[35] See conveniently A.K. Grayson (p.146) and M. Mellink (pp. 643, 652) in Boardman et al. (1991). I have found no dissenting voices.

[36] *FGrH* 90 F62–63; Asheri (2007) 86–87.

[37] ART 94/K257, ART 86/K345, ART 94/K277: see Kerschner (1997) 100; Kerschner and Cahill in Cahill

(2010a) 422–24. Koray Konuk has kindly sent me some provisional sentences from an article that he and Kerschner are writing for the 'White Gold' conference publication, in which Kerschner writes, 'According to the pottery finds from the same context, [the KUKALIM coin's] deposition can be dated between *ca*. 630 and 615 BCE'.

contemporary. If Alyattes issued the WALWET series,[38] the revised chronologies for Croesus and Alyattes proposed here confirm that electrum coinage was prolific well before the 580s and allow plenty of time for KUKALIM and WALWET issues from the 620s or later.

A further consensus now assigns many different early electrum issues to a fairly short period of time, not least because so many different issues in excellent condition have been found in and around the Artemision's Central Basis deposit, as well as in other hoards.[39] The Central Basis deposit and its environs have so far yielded some 115 electrum coins, including six WALWET coins and 32 'lion-paw' fractions, often reverse-punch linked. S. Karwiese ((1995) 133–42) reports that a significant number of these 'lion-paw' fractions are reverse-punch linked with three WALWET coins (Weidauer (1975) nos 99, 103, 105) and one series 'a' non-WALWET coin (Weidauer (1975) no. 78). Although we may doubt Karwiese's hypothesis that these coins were struck near Ephesos with four reverse punches transported from Sardis, an alternative possibility is that they came from the treasury at Sardis at one time[40] as a dedication by Alyattes or more probably Croesus (see below on the Artemision), as perhaps the king himself scooped up handfuls of often die-linked coins from the mint at a time when Alyattes' coins were plentiful. Lydian kings were of course famous for making dedications at Greek shrines. Gyges sent fabulous gold and silver treasures to Delphi (Hdt. 1.14). Alyattes built two temples to Athena at Assesos (Hdt. 1.22). Herodotus describes Croesus' many gold offerings at shrines (1.50–55, 69), including 'the golden cows and most of the columns at Ephesos' (1.92) and a treasury at Branchidai near Miletos (5.36, 1.92). Bacchylides (*Ode* 3.35–48, 61–62) and Pindar (i.e. *Pyth.* 1.94) mention his rich dedications at Delphi.

A second consequence of redating Croesus' reign is that his bimetallic gold and silver coinages can now predate 560.[41] From materials recovered from the late seventh to mid sixth century, A. Ramage dates the 'main period of the refining activity' in the cementation and cupellation areas at Sardis (where electrum was separated into gold and silver) to 'the second quarter of the sixth century. This corresponds closely to the reign of Croesus' (Ramage and Craddock (2000) 196). *Per litteras*, Ramage confirms that these materials, some dating from the late seventh century, can permit a start date for gold and silver production and hence bimetallic coinage some years before 560, continuing down to mid century.

Furthermore, a 'heavy' (i.e., early) gold Croeseid lion-and-bull 12th published in Cahill and Kroll (2005) was found beneath a cobble floor later sealed by brick fall from Cyrus' sack. Whether that cobble floor was constructed before or after 560 could not be determined ((2005) 608–09). However, 'no material has been found in or under' the brick fall 'that must be dated after ca. 550 B.C.' ((2005) 601–02). 'The coin looks as if it had experienced a considerable amount of wear' ((2005) 611), which in 2005 (J.H. Kroll now writes to me) he could not readily explain on a coin of the 550s, Croesus' conventional dates. 'The abrasion or rubbing away on all points of raised detail', he writes, 'is consistent with an issue date in the 560s or 570s, validating the revised chronology for Croesus proposed here'. What in 2005 seemed possible alternative explanations for the worn condition of this coin (such as weak striking), Kroll now rejects as 'highly improbable'.

Third, at Ephesos Croesus constructed a massive Artemision, its columns inscribed KR BA AN = Κροῖσος βασιλεὺς ἀνέθηκε, 'King Croesus dedicated', as Herodotus notes (1.92). According to Nicolaus of Damascus, Croesus vowed to build this temple before he became king.[42] On

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[38] See Wallace (2006) 37–48 with references.

[39] See Karwiese (1991) 5–6 with references; Spier (1998) 327–34 citing similar views of Martin Price; Le Rider (2001) 59–67. For the later seventh-century dating, see J.H. Kroll's references in Cahill and Kroll (2005) 613–14.

[40] Previous Austrian excavators have argued that the coins in the Central Basis deposit derive from a more or

less coherent period: see Bammer (1983–1984) 91–108; (1984) 165–83; (1991) 63–64.

[41] See Cahill and Kroll (2005) 589–618, establishing from excavation finds that Lydia's bimetallic 'Croeseids' were struck before Cyrus' sack of Sardis.

[42] *FrGH* 90 F65.3; also Ael. *VH* 3.26; the *Souda s.v.* Alyattes.

Croesus' conventional chronology, a number of archaeologists assign significant work on this building to the time of Alyattes, as early as 575.[43] Backdating the start of Croesus' rule resolves these inconsistencies between the literary and archaeological traditions.

When did Cyrus overthrow Croesus and sack Sardis? The most recent collation of the Nabonidus Chronicle (n.1 above) supports 547 or 546, and the author of this text probably had access to early sources (van der Spek (2015) 453–60). Graeco-Roman written sources *aet. imp.* also want 547/6 or 546/5.[44] In 2005, before recent readings of the Nabonidus Chronicle, Cahill ((2005) 608) continued to prefer 547/6 or *ca*. 545 or 544. He also notes that the archaeological remains of the sack include nothing later than *ca*. 550 ((2005) 599–602). Although Cahill would not go beyond the termini of 550–539 (in (2010b) 344), both archaeological and textual evidence support a date for Croesus' fall earlier in the 540s, most probably in 547 or 546.

I therefore propose that, in historical fact and for Herodotus also (when not inspired by formulaic numbers), Croesus ruled Lydia from the 580s (*ca*. 587–583?) to the earlier 540s, probably 547 or 546. My arguments also support: Alyattes on the throne by 610 although quite possibly earlier, striking WALWET coins; the Artemision begun by Croesus in the 570s; electrum coinages pretty widespread in Lydia and central Ionia from the third quarter of the seventh century; and the first issues of Croesus' bimetallic coinage before 560.

IV.

Finally, what happened to Croesus when Sardis fell? Relying especially on the Nabonidus Chronicle, B. van der Spek thinks it likely that Cyrus killed him: 'The verb GAZ = *dāku* … can either mean "to kill" or "to defeat", but in the context of an individual the translation "to kill" is to be preferred. So it appears that Croesus was killed, as can be derived from Bacchylides.'[45]

Eusebius also records that Cyrus killed Croesus,[46] possibly from Berossos, a Hellenistic historian of Babylonia with access to ancient Babylonian records (West (2003) 418 n.12). On the other hand, as van der Spek and others cited by Asheri ((2007) 142) indicate, the meaning of GAZ = *dāku* in the Nabonidus Chronicle remains uncertain. Its accuracy is also uncertain (Zawadzki (2010) 144, and *passim*, observes that the Chronicle always portrays Cyrus 'as a leader who conquers his enemies'), and any Babylonian records used by Berossos could have represented an official version, not necessarily the truth. As for Bacchylides, we shall see that he appears to combine two alternative stories, in neither of which does Cyrus kill Croesus.

Of the two Greek versions of Croesus' fate earlier than Herodotus (see n.12), in Myron's vase painting *ca*. 490 Croesus apparently self-immolates, showing no signs of personal distress. He calmly pours a libation, while a slave named Euthumos, wearing Greek dress, lights the fire. Whether he was consumed by the flames is not indicated. In 468, Bacchylides (*Ode* 3.55–62) sang that after Cyrus defeated Croesus and destroyed Sardis, Croesus protested to Zeus and Apollo their lack of gratitude (evidently for his many offerings, the lines are lacunose) and then, to avoid enslavement, sought to immolate himself along with his wife and daughters, bidding 'his soft-stepping attendant' to light the pyre which he had prepared before his courtyard.

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[43] See Kerschner and Prochaska (2011) 107–08; Kerschner (1997) 85–88; Weissl (2002) 342–43 with nn. 179–80 (*ca*. 575 BC); Ohnesorg (2007) 127–29, 132 (575–570 BC); Muss (2008) 48 (Alyattes' involvement in the Artemision is 'in höchstem Maße wahrscheinlich').

[44] Kaletsch (1958); Cahill in Cahill and Kroll (2005) 605–06.

[45] Van der Spek (2014) 256 n.184. See also van der Spek (2014) 256: 'Although Herodotus reports otherwise, it is likely that Cyrus executed' him; and (2014) 234 n.1: the Nabonidus Chronicle 'suggests' that Cyrus killed him.

[46] Preserved in an Armenian translation, Eusebius' *Chronicle* ends its Lydian king list, 'Krisos (sic) wurde getötet durch Kyros, der die Lyderherrschaft beseitigte' (Karst (1911) 11).

> But when the bright strength of the grim fire was darting through the pyre, Zeus set the black cover of a cloud overhead and quenched the yellow flame. Nothing that the care of the gods brings about is past belief; then Delos-born Apollo carried the old man to the Hyperboreans and settled him there with his slim-ankled daughters by reason of his piety, since he had sent up to holy Pytho greater gifts than any other mortal. (tr. Campbell, slightly modified)

About these verses Stephanie West writes, 'For us the conclusion should be clear, that after Croesus mounted the funeral pyre, no one saw him again' ((2003) 419–20). Possibly so, but Bacchylides seems to link alternative accounts of Croesus' self-immolation: that he was rescued and that he died but was granted a happy afterlife. West is inclined to accept that Croesus did in fact immolate himself on a funeral pyre, citing Near Eastern and Graeco-Roman parallels for that type of suicide following defeat. On the other hand, such traditions may have been the basis for inventing a similar version of Croesus' death.

Herodotus seems to have adapted a tale like Bacchylides' first version (Croesus was rescued by god because of his piety) for his different purposes, as he transitions into his Cyrus *logos*. He begins the second half of book 1 by recounting how, aided by Apollo's rainclouds because Croesus was a good man, Cyrus changed his mind for commendable reasons and spared him (1.86.6–87). However, Cyrus then descends into brutal violence, which ends with a barbarian queen shoving his severed head into a wineskin of human blood (1.214). 'Of the many things that are told of Cyrus' death, this account seems to me to be the most trustworthy' (1.214.5). Rather, of the many stories about Cyrus' death (Asheri (2007) 216) Herodotus tells one that best suits his themes, here the cruelty of despots who are punished accordingly (see n.14), and more generally the mutability of human destiny, with Croesus the wise warner by Cyrus' side until just before his bloody end (1.208). Despite Herodotus' claim to scholarly deliberation and careful use of sources (as we have seen, sometimes a sign that he is inventing), he wove many of his themes into his Cyrus *logos*.

Did Herodotus invent the idea that Croesus lived on for some 20 years after the fall of Sardis? West thinks not, comparing false beliefs about the survival of other 'beloved or admired' figures(?) including Nero, Hitler and Elvis Presley ((2003) 420). Asheri concludes that the many variant tales of Croesus' fate are 'either legends or conjectures that originated after 546 in Lydia, Delphi, and elsewhere about an event about which nothing certain was known' ((2007) 141–42). In 1.87.1 Herodotus calls the account of Cyrus sparing Croesus 'what is said by the Lydians'. It may well be that the Lydians might have promoted a flattering version of the fate of their last ruler, defeated but spared by the great Persian king. On the other hand, at the start of the Cyrus *logos* Herodotus needs a good Cyrus, and might therefore have embroidered an earlier Greek version in which the gods spared Croesus because of his generosity to Greek shrines. Croesus' belated Solonian wisdom certainly comes from Herodotus, as does Herodotus' later use of Croesus almost exclusively as a 'wise warner' to Cyrus and Cambyses. To make that fiction work, Herodotus claims that he followed 'what the Lydians say', and kept Croesus alive. Neither he nor they knew what actually happened to him.

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