

Herodotus on Eros and Tyrants
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Eros has enjoyed much attention in recent decades in scholarship on ancient sexuality, vase painting and iconography, myth, Greek poetry and philosophy, and even Athenian democracy (e.g., Bartsch and Bartscherer 2005; Wohl 2002; Calame 1992). Previous scholarship touches on *eros* and its relation to Herodotean figures in discussing desire and tyranny in general (e.g., Wohl 2002, 220-1), but *eros* as a functioning concept in Herodotus' *Histories* as a whole has received less consideration, particularly in terms of the relation between *eros*, expected male gender roles, and the success of specific tyrants. In this paper I propose to extend our understanding of the relationship between tyrants and *eros* by analyzing the shifts in proper male roles or expectations that various male figures undergo throughout the *Histories* as or after they experience *eros*.

Herodotus frames his *Histories* with two *logoi* that define the way in which his audience should understand *eros*' function throughout the work: the tales of Kandaules and his wife and of Xerxes and Masistes' wife. Both tyrants experience *eros* toward a female and are weakened (or destroyed) for experiencing it (1.8.1; 9.113.2).; I suggest that the subsequent disasters that befall these figures are partially predicated on their lust for a woman.

That two *logoi* which help frame Herodotus' work center on tales of tyrannical failure and *eros* underscores the importance of *eros* and its potentially debilitating effect elsewhere in the *Histories*, particularly in accounts of other males in positions of power. I extend this discussion to examples of Mycerinus (2.129.1-134.1), Cambyses (3.31.2-6), and the Spartans Pausanias and Demaratus. I conclude by considering in more detail the story of Deioeces the Mede, a figure who, as others have argued, serves a paradigmatic function in the *Histories* as a founder of monarchy in the east (1.96-101; e.g., Walter 2004); I suggest that Herodotus' explicit reference to Deioeces' *eros* for sovereignty at the beginning of this tale implies an even more negative reading for the whole of Deioeces' accomplishments in the *Histories* and further allows Herodotus' reader to link the message of Deioeces' story to the Constitutional Debate of Book Three.

Bartsch, S., and Bartscherer, T. 2005. *Erotikon: Essays on Eros, Ancient and Modern*. Chicago.

Calame, C. 1992. *I Greci e l'eros: Simboli, pratiche e luoghi*. Rome and Bari.

Wohl, V. 2002. *Love Among the Ruins: The Erotics of Democracy in Classical Athens*. Princeton and Oxford.

Walter, U. 2004. "'Da sah er das Volk ganz in seiner Hand: Deioeces und die Entstehung monarchischer Herrschaft im Geschichtswerk Herodots,'" in Meier, M., Patzek, B., Walter, U., and Weisshöfer, J., *Deioeces, König der Meder: Eine Herodot-Episode in ihren Contexten (Oriens et Occidens 7)*. Wiesbaden, 75-95.