THE LEADERSHIP STYLES OF THE PERSIAN KINGS IN HERODOTUS’ HISTORIES

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Abstract

Herodotus’ portraits of the four Persian kings in the Histories present the reader with four very distinct personalities. This offers an opportunity to compare them with each other as individuals, rather than as linked parts of an overall Herodotean pattern (such as the rise and fall of empires), and to use detailed differences between them at the micro-level as the basis for an analysis of each one’s own unique style of leadership.

My analysis takes as its starting point the classification of three of the kings allegedly made by the Persians themselves (see 3.89.3), focusing on all four kings’ styles as presented within the contexts of Persian imperialism; advice and advisers; and three specific modes of behaviour (violence, uncertainty and fear). Each king is shown consistently to exhibit his own style of leadership – Cyrus as πατήρ, Cambyses as δεσπότης, Darius as κάπηλος, and Xerxes as a consultative leader. My analysis uncovers Herodotus’ awareness of many aspects of the problem of leadership in a monarchical system (such as the tension between offering sound advice and delivering mere flattery), as well as his non-judgmental approach to each individual king’s style.

I go on to deploy a number of modern leadership theories to assess the extent to which they can be fruitfully applied to the Persian kings’ styles of leadership, concluding that the breadth of Herodotus’ accounts of the leadership styles exhibited by the Persian kings draws attention to the shortcomings of such modern leadership theories in the inadequate assessment of the extent to which the majority of leaders perform, or fail to do so; and further that such modern leadership theories underline the exceptional quality of Cyrus’ leadership and his uniqueness among the Persian kings, while at the same time suggesting the immense difficulty of sustaining a monarchical system in the absence of such quality leadership.

Overall the analysis demonstrates how in the Histories Herodotus with subtlety and insight presents the reader, in a detailed and analytical way, with an engaged portrayal of ideas about leadership and its practice.
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INTRODUCTION

0.1 Introductory remarks

In this thesis I examine Herodotus’ presentations of the Persian kings, Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius, and Xerxes, arguing that each is described with a reasonable degree of consistency as exhibiting a particular style of leadership (see section 0.2.5 below). By focusing on the differentiation of the individual Persian kings within the Histories at this micro-level,\(^1\) considering the presentations of the four kings in specific contexts and analysing the differences between them, I assess the extent to which the Persian kings shift between particular styles of leadership.\(^2\)

I am encouraged by two passages in particular. At 3.89.3, Herodotus notes that the Persians themselves devised appellations for their first three kings, thus demonstrating that Herodotus had no difficulty with the idea of the Persian kings as exhibiting (even if only being considered to do so by the Persians themselves) different styles of kingship regardless of their similarities – further legitimising my interest in them as different from each other.\(^3\) In section 0.2.5.1-3 below I explain how I use this classification as my starting point in considering the Persian kings’ styles of leadership.

The second passage is a type of counter-factual account at 9.122.3-4, where the Persians are presented as aiming to capitalise on their initial military success by taking up luxurious living. That Herodotus concludes his work with a tale of a leader influencing his people not to undertake an action that would have turned out very badly for them is, I contend, a strong indicator that, for Herodotus, individual kings and leaders were capable of making a difference and influencing events, an insight that encourages readings that focus on individuals’ actions on their own terms (as opposed to simply identifying how they form part of an overall pattern).

In section 0.2 I explain a number of aspects of leadership, which provide the framework for my micro-level analysis: the elements of modern leadership theory that I will employ in my Conclusion (section 0.2.1), leadership and the Histories (section 0.2.2), Persian kingship within the Histories (section 0.2.3), aspects of Persian leadership in the Histories (section 0.2.4), and the Persian kings’ individual styles of leadership – though I should make it clear at this point that I am not

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\(^1\) Pace scholars such as Grethlein emphasising the importance, at the macro-level, of the ‘rise and fall of empire’ pattern (Grethlein (2010) 172). See section 0.5 below for a fuller explanation of what I mean by the micro-level with examples of how macro readings can fail to show the whole picture.

\(^2\) For reasons of space I am unable to assess fully the Persian kings against Greek individuals (a full analysis of Xerxes in contrast with the primary Greek leaders at Salamis, for instance, would undoubtedly prove very illuminating).

\(^3\) By contrast, Herodotus’ ‘translation’ (see Scott (2005) 349) of three Persian kings’ names into Greek at 6.98.3 could have been fruitfully employed in interpreting assessments of Darius and Xerxes (Artaxerxes has no direct role in the Histories) implicit in them if he had observed in passing that the translations were apt (or not); but as he did not, it is impossible to read anything into them (thus rendering it unnecessary for me to consider any textual issues thrown up by the passage – see Liberman (2016) 194-5).
identifying within the *Histories* a formal typology of leadership, as I explain further below (section 0.2.5).

Of course, a micro-approach to the kings as individuals inevitably focuses on the character of each king; and in section 0.3 I consider characterization in the *Histories* and how individual personality traits may contribute to distinct styles of leadership. I broaden this out by assessing Herodotus’ possible sources for those aspects of his portrayals (section 0.4), before illustrating the value of the micro-approach by identifying a number of shortcomings of the macro-approach, which can lead to a failure to appreciate fully Herodotus’ subtlety and nuance (section 0.5).

Before beginning, however, I need to explain why I have hardly touched on ethnicity (particularly in the context of Greek self-identification as against the “Other”) and gender, both being highly prominent in modern Herodotean studies. The notion of Persian ‘Otherness’ within the *Histories* has been much explored as the framework within which Greeks hammered out their own sense of ethnic and cultural ‘Self’. A significant part of the *Histories* covers descriptions of different peoples and their customs, reflecting his fascination with the fundamental differences that he detected between different ethnic types (that he does not exhibit any ingrained prejudice in relation to non-Greek ethnicities was unusual for the time).

In terms of the individual Persian kings themselves, while on occasion they are clearly presented as “Other” in the sense I have mentioned (see, for example, Xerxes’ ongoing bewilderment at Spartan tactics at Thermopylae, despite Demaratus’ attempts to inform him), there is a risk that focusing on Persian kingship solely as one of the ways used by Herodotus to set down ‘markers’ of ‘Greekness’ will lead to other readings of the Persian kings being overlooked: Herodotus did not undertake his examination of such kings merely to shed light on Greek attitudes to kingship (in opposition to ‘more Greek’ systems of government), but as a fundamental part of his core project – the understanding of why the Persians and the Greeks came into such great conflict when they did. While neither ethnicity nor gender is in itself central to my argument, they have at the micro-level the potential to illustrate differences between the four kings. I set out my approach to each below. For the most part, therefore, I conduct my inquiry without emphasising current thinking on ethnography and identity (with exceptions that I highlight in the appropriate places).

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4 For example, by (among others) Hartog (1988), Hall (1989), Cartledge (1993), Gruen (2011), and, most recently, Provencal (2015). See too Skinner (2012) for a recent critical and persuasive discussion of the relationship between the development of ethnography and of historiography in the Greek world. I restrict my use of the recent work on ‘Otherness’ to very specific cases found in the accounts below – primarily adapting the notion to identify ‘Otherness’ within the Persian kings themselves, though I see it more as difference, which is not the same as ‘Otherness’ (see further below).

5 “Herodotus was no chauvinist” (Winton (2000) 103-4). See too Bichler (2004) for a careful analysis of Herodotus’ open-mindedness towards other cultures. Cf. ‘Herodotus’ attitude to non-Greeks, however, was hugely untypical” (Cartledge (1993) 53).

6 Cf. Gruen, who argues that despotism and ethnicity are not automatically linked in the *Histories* (Gruen (2011) 33).

7 Contrast this with, for example, the title of Waters (1971) – which leaves no room at all for a positive or even neutral view of Persian kingship per se.

8 Cf. Proem. So, while I accept Forsdyke’s view that Herodotus critically examines “Greek cultural categories and norms through his portraits of foreign cultures”, my point is that Herodotus is also (and arguably primarily) portraying such foreign cultures because he himself had an interest in them in *their own right* (Forsdyke (2006) 225-6).

9 Euben offers another perspective (close to my approach) when she says, ‘Herodotus is a traveller as well as a ‘Greek’, and as a result, the *Histories* suggest not only that there are limits to Greek knowledge but also that there are certain commonalities of human experience” (Euben (2006) 62).
So far as gender is concerned, it has been remarked on a number of occasions that Herodotus gave more prominence to female personalities than Thucydides did in his work. There are, however, a number of instances in the Histories where ‘woman’ is a derogatory term among non-Greeks when used of a man. Throughout my analysis, I have regarded gender as a possible signifier of “difference” – and, if it is, what that may tell us about the individual kings in question.

But both ethnicity and gender are specifically addressed within chapter 2, in sections 2.1.3.1 and 2.1.3.2 respectively.

0.2.1 Modern leadership theories

In this thesis I propose, after establishing each king’s style of leadership, to assess those styles within the context of a number of modern leadership theories, to ascertain both their helpfulness in analysing such styles and their shortcomings when doing so.

The most prevalent theories of leadership in Western thought have focused on individual leaders and their characteristics and skills, leading to theories such as the ‘Great Man’ theory (summed up in Carlyle’s observation quoted at note 27 below) and its close relative Traits theory (essentially focused on identifying the ‘common’ traits and characteristics of such great men/leaders). In the last half century or so, such theories have been discredited as little robust evidence for a definitive set of leadership traits had been forthcoming. I propose, however, to utilise in my own analysis the classification of leaders as “eventful” or “event-making” developed by Sidney Hook in 1945, which has clear links with the Great Man/Traits theories, for two reasons: the possibility that a mind-set akin to the Great Man theory (albeit not described as such) was beginning to emerge in

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9 See, for example, Dewald (1981, repr. Munson 2013a) 152 for Herodotus (375 occurrences) as compared with Lateiner’s figure of six for Thucydides (Lateiner (1989) 285). Gould notes “Herodotus’ distinctive awareness that the world of history is not a single-sex world” (Gould (1989) 130).

10 For Croesus’ advice to Cyrus at 1.155.4, see section 1.2.1.1 of chapter 1; and for Xerxes’ remarks at 8.88.3 (after being impressed – mistakenly – by Artemisia’s performance at Salamis), see section 2.1.3.2 of chapter 2. Cf. too Sesostris’ inscription at 2.102.5.

11 My splitting of ethnicity and gender in this section is for convenience only and does not imply that the two cannot be signifiers of difference together.

12 This section, for reasons of space, is restricted to western leadership theory, a brief overview of which may be found at Rhodes and ‘t Hart (2014) 1-21. For a recent attempt to provide a summary of the full range of modern political leadership theories, see Keohane (2014) 25-40. The fact that no single theory of leadership has proved acceptable to scholars as a whole and the fact that there are so many leadership theories together indicate that the subject is too complex and fluid to be circumscribed by a single universal theory.

13 I have selected the Persian kings for a number of reasons: they formed the largest group within Herodotus’ account and their opportunities to demonstrate individual leadership were unparalleled in the Histories.

14 Ferrario (2014) has an interesting take on the Great Man theory as underlying how the Athenian demos evolved from appreciating its own role in Athens’ achievements to crediting those achievements to outstanding leaders, attributing decision-making and historical agency on the Persian side to the kings. Her primary purpose is to contrast this with how the accepted historical agency on the Greek side of the collective declined and was replaced by attribution to a ‘Great Man’, noting how Herodotus obliquely speculates on the role of individuals such as Themistocles (Ferrario (2014) 98-101).

15 Traits theory has been recently revived in modern scholarship through a focus on emotional intelligence (see Antonakis (2003)), but in its broadest manifestation is of little value: both Stogdill (1948) and Mann (1959) produced wide-ranging studies with similar results, that there is scant evidence for the presence of distinct qualities that mark out leaders (though Stogdill (1974) updated his original paper and concluded that his earlier paper had under-emphasised the possibility that certain traits exhibited by leaders might well be quite universal); and the theory suffered from an in-built sexist bias – the traits were always ‘masculine’ traits and successful women leaders were identified as such by the extent to which they exhibited them (see Spberg (2014) 75-9).

16 Hook (1945). The former type of leader had things happen to him, the latter made things happen: in other words, individual leaders could make a difference, provided they were of an “event-making” calibre. I discuss the classification further in section 0.2.1.1 below.
the later part of the fifth century BCE – that is, while the Histories was being composed – and could to some degree at least have been within Herodotus’ own thinking; and the possible relevance of the theory in any event to powerful autocratic kings who (as Herodotus presents them) made calculations and decisions that subsequently influenced events, given that most of the modern discrediting of the theory stems from its lack of relevance to democratic societies and institutions. Hook’s distinction between leaders as “eventful” and “event-making” is therefore applied to the Persian kings’ styles of leadership in section 4.3.1 of the Conclusion.

Leadership studies have recently shifted their attention to the interactions between leaders and followers and the role of relevant institutions. Of course, virtually all this work has focused on concepts familiar from the modern world, such as party politics, electorates and constituencies and in particular on the workings of political ‘machines’ and the specifics of modern constitutional structures; but in sections 4.3.2 and 4.3.3 of the Conclusion I assess the relevance of two of these theories to my analysis of the Persian kings’ styles of leadership: charismatic leadership and transformational leadership, both of which focus on the wider process of leadership (though the former is also characterised by elements of Great Man/Traits theory, as I show in section 0.2.1.2 below).

I remain aware of the limitations of this approach: modern leadership theories are by their very nature seeking to understand the modern world. Accordingly, where I attempt in the Conclusion to apply such theories to Herodotus’ presentations to the Persian kings, I am alert to the gulf between them and modern societies and institutions.

0.2.1.1 Hook’s classification

To illustrate what he means by the distinction between the hero as the “eventful man” in history and the hero as the “event-making man”, Hook offers two examples of eventful men – the little boy whose his finger in the dyke saved a Dutch town, and the emperor Constantine in 313 changing “his status from that of ‘protector’ to that of ‘proselyte’ of the Church”: the eventful man may have been instrumental in some great historical change, but this was by virtue of him simply having been there to carry out what was very simple act, without any need for that man to have special qualities. By contrast, the event-making man “finds a fork in the historical road, but he also helps, so to speak, to create it.” He is likely to make a difference because he is possessed of extraordinary qualities of leadership – which he can bring to bear to “leave the positive imprint of

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17 For a full analysis of this phenomenon, see Ferrario (2014) and note 14 above. I detect a possible Persian/Greek tension grounded in individual/collective within the Histories: see section 0.2.5.5 of the Introduction.
18 I am not suggesting that their acts were the sole explanation for any events, as Herodotus was ever conscious of the way events could turn out irrespective of human actors’ intentions (the fall of Croesus is the locus classicus of this theme within the Histories).
19 For example, Burns (1978) 51-2 and Hendriks and Carsten (2014) 47. The spread of democracies has reduced the emphasis on individual leaders in isolation.
20 Hook (1945).
21 Hook (1945) 108.
22 Hook (1945) 109-10.
23 Hook (1945) 110.
his personality upon history”. As Bell puts it, they are “leaders who create a new route in a social crisis”.

I should stress that Hook did not regard his classification as exhaustive, as it applied only to men who had successful outcomes, that is, to ‘heroes’: leaders who failed were neither eventful nor event-making, so could not in any sense have been heroes. The links between Hook’s theory and the Great Man/traits theories are self-evident from the above summary. The problem with it as an analytical tool is that, while it endeavours to overcome the inherent shortcomings of those theories (essentially the long accepted impossibility of rigorously establishing a discrete and universal set of leadership traits) by incorporating involvement with situational outcomes as the measure, it has, in its focus on ‘heroes’, limited applicability to leaders who are not heroes: and, pace Carlyle, thus limited assistance in gauging the styles and impacts of leaders who were not ‘heroes’.

Nevertheless, as will be seen in section 4.3.1 of the Conclusion, it can be a helpful analytical tool for some elements of leadership by the Persian kings, particularly at the micro-level where my focus lies.

0.2.1.2 Charismatic leadership

Weber classified authority (or, as he phrased it, domination – “the probability that certain specific commands (or all commands) will be obeyed by a given group of persons”) “according to the kind of claim to legitimacy typically made by each”: rational/legal authority, traditional authority, and charismatic authority. The third of these differs from the other two in that it is distinctly personal. It is something embodied in an individual; and that individual must also be extraordinary – in Weber’s terms, “endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities.”

24 Hook (1945) 111. His examples include Thomas Jefferson, for the Louisiana purchase rather than his involvement in the American constitution (Hook (1945) 112), Robespierre (ibid. 115), and Lenin (in a test case that takes up an entire chapter – ibid. 128-56).
25 Bell (2014) 89.
26 Hook (1945) 107-9. I use the term ‘hero’ here as it was used and understood by Carlyle and Hook, rather than in any ancient sense. Cf. “I would prefer to call them fanatics rather than heroes, for they would do anything to attain or hold on to power. In my opinion Alexander…would fit this designation, and Darius as well” (Frye (2010) 17). But there has to be more to it than that: being prepared to do anything for such purposes is not in itself a distinguishing feature of ‘greatness’ in this sense.
27 “As I take it, Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the history of the Great Men who have worked here” (Carlyle (1840) 1).
28 Hook’s work is regarded even in the case of ‘heroes’ as concerned with only a small aspect of ‘leadership’ – “its traditional preoccupation with the drives, character, skills and deeds of the leaders in question…all too often seduces scholars of the genre [biography] into person-centric, reductionist accounts of complex historical processes” (1 Hart (2014) 211).
29 Collins argues that charisma is a double-edged sword: too much of it “can be as much a liability as an asset, as the strength of your leadership personality can deter people from bringing you the brute facts” (Collins (2001) 89). This observation has a clear resonance with Herodotus’ accounts of the supremely autocratic Persian kings.
30 Weber (1978a) 212.
31 Ibid. 213.
32 Weber traced a development from charismatic authority to rational/legal authority – authority exercised in a rational (in the sense of having regard to self-interest) and legal (institutionalised) way – and from there to traditional authority – exercised through custom and tradition.
33 Weber (1978a) 241. The similarity with Hook’s “heroes” is clear. Weber notes in the same passage that, “in primitive circumstances”, it can be thought of as residing in magical powers (of prophets, persons with great healing or legal wisdom, or war heroes).
Charismatic leadership is related to this charismatic authority.\textsuperscript{34} As with most current leadership theories, it has to be binary. So leaders are only such if they have followers: they accept the extraordinariness of the charismatic leader, they accept whatever the leader says simply because he says it, they obey the leader simply because he has given them a command, they fully commit to the strong sense of the mission he has determined and which he pursues with religious zeal, and their response at the emotional level is one of awe and reverence (one consequence, noted by Willner,\textsuperscript{35} being that charismatic leaders frequently provoke an opposite response in non-followers and are regarded as unholy and something beyond normal human experience).\textsuperscript{36} The authority derives from the individual rather than from his position in a hierarchy, which echoes elements of Traits theory; but Weber’s definition of charisma went beyond this by adding the ascription (by followers) of such qualities to the charismatic person too.

This latter aspect has come to dominate modern leadership theory,\textsuperscript{37} allowing the unusualness of the charismatic to be diluted and thus both transcend the difficulties posed by the traits element of the theory, softening the fact that it is not applicable to most leaders.\textsuperscript{38} Weber himself had considered that it could only be attributed to a small number of people imbued with superhuman qualities (anticipating the shortcomings in Hook noted at section 0.2.1.1 above) – and for management theorists this meant that charismatic theory was wildly impractical.

The watering down of the Weberian concept, seeing “charisma [as] the equivalent of a strong, forceful and focused character”,\textsuperscript{39} became important for the development of other theories. My focus in the Conclusion remains the charismatic aspect, addressing charismatic leadership in Weberian terms (section 4.3.2.1) but also considering it (at section 4.3.2.2) in its evolved form, which embraced the notion of a wider social relationship than implied above. This was a relationship of interdependence, give and take, so that if the charismatic leader fails to bring to his followers the benefits advertised, his charisma will rapidly diminish as they abandon him; and an association involving power: the charismatic leader has power given by his followers, but they in turn are empowered by his leadership to feel involved in something greater than their individual selves.\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{34} Willner (1984) 4-5. She also emphasises how special charismatic leadership is, having “unusual qualities not found in leadership in general”. Nevertheless, as Gaffney notes, Weber’s concept “still dominates. Inside academia, it prevails. Outside academia, it is universal” (Gaffney (2014) 392).

\textsuperscript{35} Willner (1984) 7.

\textsuperscript{36} This formulation, adapted from Willner (1984), is modified in the next paragraph to reflect criticisms raised in Bryman (1992).

\textsuperscript{37} “It is in the eye/s of the beholder/s, rather than the qualities held” (Gaffney (2014) 392).

\textsuperscript{38} “[C]ommentators on and users of Weber’s writings on charisma have invariably disagreed wildly over the meaning, content and potential of the subject” (Bryman (1992) 23). Bryman also notes that the now hackneyed notion of a charismatic person in any conceivable context (business or sport, for example) is far removed from the original Weberian concept.

\textsuperscript{39} Grint (2014) 244.

\textsuperscript{40} Bryman (1992) 50-5. For simplicity, in section 4.3.2.2 of the Conclusion I use the terms ‘developed theory of charismatic leadership’ and ‘developed charismatic leadership’ to refer to this modified charismatic leadership.
0.2.1.3 Transformational leadership

The theory of transformational leadership “entails both leaders and followers raising each other’s motivation and sense of higher purpose”. In this dynamic, followers are to be seen as holistically as possible, engaged by the leader who addresses their “higher-order” needs: so “leaders must assess collective motivation – the hierarchies of motivations in both leaders and followers – as studiously as they analyse the power bases of potential followers and rival leaders”.

Building on Burns’ work, Bass emphasised the differences between transformational leadership and transactional leadership: for him, the four cornerstones of transformational leadership were charisma (which “provides vision and sense of mission, instills pride, gains respect and trust”); inspiration (which “communicates high expectations, uses symbols to focus efforts, expresses important purposes in simple ways”); individualised consideration, that is, perceiving and treating, with attention and encouragement, followers as individuals; and intellectual stimulation, such as new ideas pouring forth from the transformational leader, that challenge the followers into rethinking old ways of doing things. Charisma is significant for transformational leadership, but does not provide the complete picture, for it is incapable on its own of triggering change and fostering the necessary mood changes in followers that cause them willingly to make the necessary efforts to achieve success.

0.2.1.4 A cautionary note

The various modern theories I apply – the Great Man/Traits theory and Hook’s classification, charismatic leadership, and transformational leadership – are all based on the ‘specialness’ of a leader: they are relevant and insightful when analysing a ‘great’ leader, but not particularly so when assessing a leader who is not within that category (whether because he has never tried to be a ‘great’ leader or because he has failed despite his efforts to be one). This highlights a potential deficiency in such theories when looking at a range of leaders not all of whom are ‘great’. I develop this thought in section 4.3 of the Conclusion.

0.2.2 Leadership and the Histories

The Persian kings, as total autocrats, were responsible for all aspects of Persian life. Cyrus, as a natural leader, had shown how a king could successfully perform such a role, but his successors faced the challenge of being leaders too. Modern classical scholarship has come relatively recently

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41 The first coinage of “transforming leadership” was by Burns (Burns (1978).
42 Bryman (1992) 95.
43 Burns (1978) 435.
44 Transactional leadership was based on the notion of an exchange between leader and followers (see Bryman (1992) 95).
45 Bass (1990) 22.
46 Ibid.
47 See section 0.2.5.1 below.
to the idea of Herodotus contributing to political theory;\textsuperscript{48} and when it has done so, it has tended to focus on Herodotus’ contribution at the constitutional level, exploiting in particular the constitutional debate at 3.80-2, rather than Herodotus’ ideas about leadership (in stark contrast to leadership in Xenophon).\textsuperscript{49} My detailed analysis of the presentations of the four Persian kings shows how each exhibited a distinct style of leadership, including the ways in which such styles could influence kingly behaviour; and I argue that the styles of Cambyses, Darius and Xerxes are presented by Herodotus as a response to the challenge each faced as a leader lacking the particular qualities of Cyrus.

In the Conclusion I draw together the results of the analysis before going on to examine the applicability of the modern leadership theories referred to in the preceding section to Cyrus’ style of leadership in particular.

0.2.3 Persian kingship within the Histories

The most obvious starting-point for any discussion of kingship in the Histories is the constitutional debate,\textsuperscript{50} where the most famous statements in the Histories regarding monarchy are made by Otanes and Darius at 3.80-3.82 respectively.\textsuperscript{51} I do not propose to conduct a detailed analysis of the debate,\textsuperscript{52} but rather to distil the elements in it that are relevant to my argument.\textsuperscript{53} Otanes has, before the debate, been presented as cautious and risk-averse;\textsuperscript{54} Darius, on the other, as impetuous, inclined to action, and wholly self-interested.\textsuperscript{55} The historicity of the debate does not concern me:\textsuperscript{56} for my purposes the key point is that both Otanes and Darius focused on one-man rule.\textsuperscript{57} It is as if Herodotus had no choice but to present Persians thinking in this way, given the reality of their monarchical system; and, despite the presence of Megabazus speaking for

\textsuperscript{49}One exception so far as Herodotus is concerned is Mantzouranis (2014), whose views I consider in sections 3.2.1 and 3.3 of chapter 3. On Xenophon, see Gray (“Xenophon’s views on leadership are his major contribution to political thought”) (Gray (2010b) 5); and see too Wood (1964), Carlier (2010 [1978]), Nadon (2001), Tatum (1989), and Gray (2011).
\textsuperscript{50}The context of the debate within the narrative should not be overlooked: we are being presented not with an ivory-tower, theoretical discussion, but a genuine argument between three individuals each having their own agenda. The debate is not a united intellectual effort to seek out ‘truth’, but one with very practical consequences for the participants. This consideration partially accounts Herodotus’ insistence on the debate actually having occurred (3.80.1). The later reiteration that Otanes really did recommend democracy, at 6.43.3, also indicates that the Persian kings, while sometimes favouring tyranny, did so on pragmatic rather than idealistic grounds, contra Hartog (1988) 328 – a Persian king may act as guarantor of tyrants, but did not invariably do so.
\textsuperscript{53}So at 7.10v 2, when Artabanus says to Xerxes (referring to the incident at the end of Darius’ campaign against the Scythians when the Ionians might have cut off his retreat over the river Ister but for Histiaeus) καίτοι καὶ λόγῳ ἀκοῦσαι δεῖ, the reader may immediately reflect, ‘But is that not what monarchy itself is?’
\textsuperscript{54}See Pelling (2002) 130 and 138.
\textsuperscript{55}Darius’ statement at 3.71.4 ἐξοίσει γάρ τις πρὸς τὸν μάγον, ἰδίῃ περιβαλλόμενος ἑωυτῷ κέρδεα resonates in his threat that follows at 3.71.5 ὡς οὐκ ἄλλος φθὰς ἐμε κατήγορος ἐσται, ἀλλὰ σφεα αὐτὸς ἐγὼ κατερέω πρὸς τὸν μάγον – the implication being that he will profit from such disclosure.
\textsuperscript{56}“The very act of theorising about political institutions is recognised [by many critics] as a characteristically Greek enterprise, not a Persian one” (Thompson (1996) 55-6). Pelling notes how, as the debate develops, the argumentation “becomes ‘Persian-specific’” (Pelling (2002) 146), and see also 148 note 79 citing Erbse (1961) for the view of the debate as highlighting the Persian attachment to the system of monarchy.
oligarchy, the debate is effectively polarised between democracy and monarchy. Otanes reminded his fellow conspirators, τὴν Καμβύσεω ὕβριν and τῆς τοῦ μάγου ὕβριος (3.80.2), while Darius concluded with a clear reference to Cyrus: Darius had previously been noted (at 3.38.4) as conducting an experiment which confirmed that custom is king, but this must have taken place after he became king and so after the debate; yet in the debate he is being presented as already sufficiently aware of the advisability of appealing to custom if he wished to win the day. Otanes shifted from the idea of μουναρχίη/μούναρχος to τύραννος, before returning to μουναρχίη/μούναρχος at the end of his speech – underlining his obsession with the man who rules (as opposed to the idea of monarchy). It is noteworthy that τύραννος occurs only once in the speech, as if in that single usage Otanes has revealed his true agenda; his experience of Cambyses had scarred him, monarchy was simply too great a risk. It is instructive to contrast the way Otanes cited Cambyses and Smerdis to illustrate his case with Darius’ use by implication of Cyrus for the same purpose – the latter a highly effective model of Persian kingship, both for his successor kings and also for the other four conspirators who were ultimately persuaded by Darius’ arguments.

These considerations add weight to my conclusion that Herodotus was not using Otanes as a mouthpiece for ‘the’ Herodotean model of monarchy/tyranny. Scholars have been swift to see the debate as a theoretical discussion, but the factual basis of the debate (as opposed to any theoretical underpinnings) is expressly grounded in Persian experiences and it would be rash to read in 3.80.1 a template for tyranny across different cultures. So Gammie, though referring to “the stereotypical model” which he finds represented by both Greek and non-Greek tyrants and despots (unsurprisingly, as he draws his model from Otanes’ speech at 3.80.2-6), has to acknowledge that not all tyrants fit this model in every way.

Darius’ focus was on a king being able to provide the most effective administration (3.82.2), which would indeed be a feature of his own rule, being best placed to conceal any action he planned to take against his enemies (3.82.2); and his observation that the Persians’ ἐλευθερίη came from a

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58 Otanes equated as monarchs Cambyses and the imposter Smerdis and, in his enthusiasm, went beyond the Herodotean accounts in doing so – “Herodotus’ small indications of the Magus’ rule have not suggested any great hubris” (Pelling (2002) 134).

59 “Darius believes that the monarchy should be preserved because it is the πάτριος πολιτεία of the Persians; whereas Otanes believes that the monarchy-tyranny subverts the νόμαια πάτρια (80.3)”: Asheri (2007) 476. The Persian conspirators gave their answer by accepting Darius’ argument. It should be noted that it is monarchy that was regarded as Persian custom: there is no mention in this context of Persian imperialism (see section 1.3 of chapter 1 below).

60 Asheri says, in relation to ἕνα μὲν ἡμέων μούναρχον at 3.80.2, “the criticism of monarchy, or rather of tyranny, begins here”: (Asheri (2007) 473) (my emphasis) and see too Pelling (2002) 135-6. I suggest that the single usage of τύραννος bears more significance than any interchangeability between terms here. Note too that Megabazus did not hesitate to agree with Otanes’ points about τυραννίδα (3.81.1) – he at least knew what Otanes had really been getting at.

61 The same example is cited by Xerxes – to Darius – when he argues at 7.2.3 for his own right of succession. Thus I find entirely sensible Pelling’s comment that “it is too simple a question to ask whether the debate sets patterns for Persian or for Greek experience or for both; or at least it is too simple if we take ‘pattern’ to mean a template on to which the subsequent narrative will fit in a straightforward, one-to-one way” (Pelling (2002) 154).

62 Others consider Otanes’ model as more Greek than Persian, e.g. “Die persische Monarchie oder genauer: die Herrschaft des Kambyses und des falschen Bardija erscheint in der Rede eines persischen Adligen als eine griechische Tyrannis” (Bringmann (1976) 270). I consider Gammie’s argument further in section 0.5.2 below.

63 For example, Amasis and Darius at Gammie (1986) 182-3 (where Darius is damned as a stereotype even in his qualities, which I find unconvincing in view of the micro-differences between all four Persian kings that I draw out) and also Deioces (ibid. 185).

64 As will be seen in section 2.2.3 of chapter 2, however, Darius is in practice shown (far more than any of the other Persian kings) relying on good advice from others, as opposed to always having the correct approach himself.
single man led to his apparently compelling conclusion at 3.82.5. The limitations of this account in terms of establishing the benefits of a monarchy to counter Otanes’ position have been noted before, but these features are presented by Herodotus to suggest the style of leadership that Darius would assume – and its shortcomings: they are linked to his character (the emphasis on being alert to plots anticipated his insecurity in relation to a number of leading Persians – see section 3.3.3.1 of chapter 3), thus underlining that individual leadership style was a topic of interest to Herodotus.

That Otanes’ attempt to prejudice the case for monarchy by linking it with tyranny has been generally successful is clear from the ubiquity in the modern scholarship of the despotism template referred to in section 0.5.2 below. While there is no consensus as to a definition of tyranny, its autocratic nature is regularly identified as a typical feature of it. Dewald argues that autocracy in rule is a more important signifier of a tyranny than any question over its acquisition, though she goes on to acknowledge that none of the Persian regimes are called ‘tyannies’ within the narrative – except by Xerxes at 7.52.2.

It is striking that, despite the convention of referring to the episode as the ‘constitutional’ debate, there is little in the discussion that suggests how authority would be derived for whichever constitution were selected. Indeed, it is implicit in the scene that only those who conspired to overthrow Smerdis would be entitled to have a say, and this is how the matter turned out, with three speeches made as to the exercise of power under three different types of regime, before six of the conspirators (Otanes having disqualified himself) took a vote. The speeches focused more on how different types of regime perform in practice than on any possible theoretical underpinnings of an acceptable constitution (linked to concepts such as authority and law) – and, pace Benardete and Lateiner as referred to in note 71, any universalisation involved is unsubtle in the extreme – and not borne out by the various accounts in the Histories. That Herodotus intended the debate to have some theoretical relevance is apparent not only from its content but also from its place in the

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67 So Meier (2004). Dewald regards the debate as “the second version of the despotic template, and its most classic formulation” (Dewald (2003) 28), while Provencal asserts (on the basis of Otanes’ description in 3.80.4 of a monarch as tyrant and on the ground that the account of Deioces was an account of the Persian monarchy’s origins) that Herodotus regarded the Persian monarchy as a form of tyranny (Provencal (2015) 202). Provencal’s overall argument that Herodotus consciously presented the Persian kings as sophist kings as a form of Greek self-definition in a constitutional context is overly rigid, making little allowance for the nuances in the individual kings emerging from my analysis.
68 Cf. “It is true that Herodotus occasionally used tyrannos to refer to oriental kings, but, when he did (only about 20 times in his entire work), the word did not have the simple meaning of “ruler”. It meant despotic and arbitrary ruler”: Ferrill (1978) 391.
69 Ferrill’s explanation of Xerxes’ use of τυραννίδα τὴν ἐμήν at 7.52.2 as him “speaking in intimate and Machiavellian terms to [his] closest associates in power” is not particularly persuasive. I read the use of τυραννίδα τὴν ἐμήν in his direct address to Artabanus here as irony on the king’s part – indeed, bitterly so as Xerxes views himself as much a subject of his rule (and the expectations on a Persian king) as any of his fellow Persians (see section 1.3.2.4 of chapter 1) in that he has proved incapable of generating a genuinely consultative atmosphere around his leadership – as if he were some sort of tyrant.
70 The Persians as a whole joined in the overthrow by killing every Magus they could find – 3.79.2 – but this involvement apparently earned them no place in the subsequent debate. Of course, the Persians might have rejected the rule of the many, just as the Medes at 1.97.3-98.1 had begged Deioces to become king.
71 Benardete regards the three speeches as “the most theoretical speeches in Herodotus” (Benardete (1999) 85), while Lateiner sees a “calm and rational discussion” (Lateiner (1989) 165). I disagree to a significant extent, for reasons I set out below.
72 Cf. “The speeches that he depicts should not be considered as theories, for there is no sustained reference by Herodotus in his own name to abstract political regimes” (Thompson (1996) 68).
narrative, as well as his insistence that it had actually occurred. Some scholars have read the debate as a series of theoretical statements that are reflected elsewhere in specifics of the historical narrative, but these tend to be seen as part of the ‘patterning’ approach they identify in the Histories.

From my perspective, however, the fact that Darius convinced a majority of his fellow conspirators to choose monarchy constitutes a reaffirmation of Persian kingship – the Persian kingship instigated by Cyrus rather than the version employed by Cambyses: in other words, the pact between king and subjects that transcended the purely personal interests of the individual Persian king (see section 0.2.5.5 below). This relationship between Persian king and Persian subjects is presented by Herodotus as particularly significant.

There is no suggestion of this arrangement being resented by the subjects – indeed, these aspects of kingship were not disputed within the boys’ game of kingship: Astyages’ initial reaction when learning of Artembares’ anger had been to punish the herdsman’s son, τιμῆς τῆς Ἀρτεμβάρεος εἵνεκα (1.115.1), but after hearing what the boy Cyrus had to say that was all forgotten. But the king, for all his power, could not ignore Artembares’ honour and offered reassuring if dismissive words at 1.115.2.

Herodotus makes it clear that, for the Persians, the king was placed at the heart of every level of society: a Persian had to pray for the welfare of the king and the entire Persian population – he could not simply pray for himself and his family (1.132.2); and the king would send gifts throughout the whole year to the man who in that year could show off the most sons (1.136.1). Herodotus at 1.137.1 expresses admiration for the rule prohibiting the king from having anyone killed for a single offence, which is immediately followed by reference to a similar constraint on Persians generally – they could not ἀνήκεστον πάθος ἔρδειν on any of their household slaves for a single offence.

73 “Brannan (1969) points out that if the debate were to be removed, the narrative progresses without notable interruption” (Roy (2012) 300, who goes on to argue that Herodotus “brings specifically historical thinking to bear in the analysis of the debate”). But see too “The debate…is firmly embedded in its context, both in the story of the overthrow of the ‘Magus’ and in the wider, subtly interlaced context of Book 3” (Pelling (2002) 126). Cf. Waters: “By and large this debate must be thought a digression, or rather the insertion at an appropriate moment of an argument of topical interest about 440 BC” (Waters (1985) 131 note 50).


75 So Evans (1981) 84, referring to “Periander, whom the Corinthians hold up as a typical tyrant (5.92), is Otanes’ monarch-type”; while Lateiner (1989) 167 sees the debate as “a neglected opportunity to inspect a master-pattern, an analysis of the effects of different regimes on political communities.” Contra, Mitchell notes the existence of positive images of even oriental monarchy, citing the Persian kings (Mitchell (2013) 155).

76 The first reference to the rights of the king over his subjects (at 1.114.2-115.3) actually occurred in the context of boys playing at Median kingship: the game included a number of features of court life and as part of this Cyrus insisted on a king’s right to demand unquestioning obedience from his subjects (see Cyrus’ words at 1.115.2 and at 1.115.3 where he stated simply that the disobedient boy/subject ἔλαβὲ τὴν δίκην), coupled with the right physically to punish those who refuse it. Violent behaviour by the Persian kings is analysed in detail in section 3.3 of chapter 3. Of course, Artembares too, by referring the matter to the king, had shown his respect for the idea that only the king could inflict physical punishment on his subjects.

77 While we are not informed how Artembares reacted to the outcome, the anecdote with which the Histories is concluded involves a man named Artembares. He is perhaps more likely to have been a Persian than a Mede, though “The irony of the situation [at 9.122.1] would, of course, be greatly increased if he were a Mede” (Flower and Marincola (2002) 312). Such irony would be even greater if it were this particular Mede, and such a reading would also emphasise the way in which Cyrus had united Medes and Persians under his kingship.

78 Harrison also notes the close bond between king and subjects (Harrison (2015) 15).

79 The proximity of these two rules suggests that they may have been linked. I consider in section 3.3 of chapter 3 how this rule operated – Immerwahr (at Immerwahr (1966) 173 note 74) and Lateiner (at Lateiner (1989) 153-4) note a number of instances of it being ignored in practice.
Thus for the Persians the idea of a strong king guaranteeing their freedom from external control was the key feature of their monarchy.\textsuperscript{81} How each king is portrayed coming to terms with such a strong expectation, and in particular the link between it and imperial expansion, is considered in detail in chapter 1.

Another way of analysing the presentations is to contrast Herodotus’ views on Persian kingship with those on non-Persian kingship. On occasion the \textit{Histories} appears to imply that certain behaviour is ‘kingly’, but it would be incorrect to think that Herodotus is postulating universal attributes of kingship \textit{per se}. As examples I consider two passages which can be read as commenting directly or indirectly on the sort of behaviour that is appropriate for or expected of a non-Persian king, 2.173.2 and 5.111.4. In the former, Amasis’ rebuttal of his friends’ criticism of his ‘unkingly’ behaviour (οὐκ ὀρθῶς σεωυτοῦ προέστηκας) challenges the presumption that a king must behave in a certain way and that his people need to know that he is doing so: that such an attitude was the norm is implied by the uniqueness of Amasis’ behaviour.\textsuperscript{82} The second episode (5.111.4) contains a statement about how a king should behave in the military sphere: a king should command in battle \textit{in person}, according to Onesilus’ squire.\textsuperscript{83}

But when we consider the Persian kings in the context of these passages, it is apparent that they are presented as without parallel in terms of their majesty and aloofness from their subjects; and it is also clear that (in Herodotus’ portrayals) both Darius and Xerxes did not fight in the fray – in the latter case, indeed, this was a significant point of contrast between Leonidas and Xerxes at Thermopylae.\textsuperscript{84} Thus in one sense Persian kings were typically kingly, but in another they were not. Even at this stage of the analysis it seems likely that there will be distinctively Persian features about their kingship; and, as the accounts of the Persian kings in the \textit{Histories} are lengthier than those of the Greek leaders as a result of Herodotus’ decision to provide an historical context for the actual Persian-Greek wars (but also reflecting his fascination with Persian kingship in particular), they provide a rich seam for my purpose.\textsuperscript{85}

\textbf{0.2.4 Aspects of Persian leadership within Herodotus’ accounts of the Persian kings}

I analyse how Herodotus depicts the behaviour of the individual Persian kings at the micro-level in specific situations, by selecting what may be characterized as specifically \textit{kingly} concerns reflecting some of the principal aspects within the \textit{Histories} of Persian monarchical rule and the Persian drive

\textsuperscript{81} Herodotus’ references to the superiority of democracy to tyranny at 5.78.1 have no relevance to Persian kingship – the phrases Αθηναῖοι τυραννευόμενοι μὲν and ἐλευθερωθέντων δὲ are suggestive not of Persian monarchy but of Median tyranny (see section 0.2.5.5 below for this distinction).

\textsuperscript{82} Amasis’ response at 2.173.3-4 is also probably the first recorded statement of the importance of maintaining a proper work/life balance.

\textsuperscript{83} The language is unequivocal: βασιλέα μὲν καὶ στρατηγὸν χρεὸν εἶναι βασιλεῖ τε καὶ στρατηγῷ προσφέρεσθαι.

\textsuperscript{84} I expand on this in section 3.3.4.1 of chapter 3.

\textsuperscript{85} I referred in section 0.1 above to the notion of ‘Other’ including Hartog’s articulation of the Scythian logos in Book 4 as ‘mirroring’ the clash between Persians and Greeks (Hartog (1988)). There is clearly a Herodotean schema of conflict between Persian and non-Persian in the \textit{Histories}, so that resemblances and echoes within different accounts are inevitable; but it is also clear that the Scythians are presented within their logos as a people affected by this Persian drive in \textit{their own right} (see Pelling (1997) 52-4).
for imperialism, using the differences between them as the basis for identifying the different style of leadership each exhibited in performing his kingly function.

Within each chapter I assess each king’s performance in the context of the two themes of strategic concerns/risk (see section 0.2.4.1 below) and succession planning (see section 0.2.4.2 below), both significant for the light they throw on the expectations and burdens on the king of a great empire – and the outcome in those spheres of each’s own style of leadership. My examination of these themes in chapter 1 precedes my assessment of styles of leadership within the context of that chapter. In chapters 2 and 3, however, my analysis of styles of leadership comes first, as the subject matter of each of those chapters is much more specific than that of chapter 1: in those latter chapters how a king is presented in relation to strategic concerns/risk and succession planning flows from his individual style in a more obviously causal way.

0.2.4.1. Strategic concerns/risk

There is little in the Histories showing the Persian kings acting or planning in the strategic interests of the Persian empire,\(^{86}\) apart from Cyrus (at 9.122.2, for example).\(^{87}\) But one overriding strategic consideration is attributed by Herodotus to the Persian monarchy – imperialist expansionism. This topic forms the subject of chapter 1.

The management of risk is a fundamental aspect of any ruler’s function. No consistent notion of risk in the ancient world can be clearly articulated and defined, but the concept is addressed directly and indirectly throughout the Histories (and, in particular, the presentations of the Persian kings). The kings are never shown weighing probabilities in modern fashion or using a structured risk assessment to decide on a particular course of action, or even having any sort of idea of risk as it is conceptualised in the modern world; but that risk at some level was a familiar concept to them in their Herodotean forms is evident from my analysis.\(^{88}\)

It is also possible to draw a reasonable inference as to a king’s attitude to risk from his words and actions in a particular setting: so Darius upbraided the other six conspirators on learning of their plot against the Magus (3.71.5) and the urgency of his words underlined the strength of his desire for action – for, as he had just said, ἐξοίσει γὰρ τὶς πρὸς τὸν μάγον, ἰδίῃ περιβαλλόμενος ἑωυτῷ κέρδεσα (3.71.4). This foreshadows his notorious remarks at 3.72.4: Darius had no scruples about anything, if it led to profit.\(^{89}\) It was profit that drove Darius to take risks: an interesting insight into

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\(^{86}\) This contrasts with the actions of, for example, Themistocles at 7.144.1.

\(^{87}\) Another illustration of how only Cyrus was fully capable of delivering the king’s full part of the bargain made with the Persians as a whole at 1.126.6.

\(^{88}\) I do not consider religious/ritualistic elements of dealing with risk, but rather the ‘secular’ aspects of doing so (acknowledging that such a distinction in relation to the Histories is something of a blunt instrument). There are clear instances of the kings having regard to possible outcomes and endeavouring to minimise ‘danger’ to themselves, by consulting oracles, etc. – indeed, this is the primary focus of Eidinow (2007). Both approaches indicate that Beard’s argument (that ancient society functioned on the basis of an aleatory attitude to risk – i.e. it was a question of luck, rather than anything we moderns would recognise as risk awareness and management) is something of an over-simplification (Beard (2011)).

\(^{89}\) Note the use in 3.72.4 of κερδήσει, followed shortly after by κέρδος.
the sort of king he was to become. Darius took risks where he saw the prospect of financial return, while his fellow Persian kings regarded expansion, though bringing riches, as an end in itself.

In tackling ‘risk’ I have generally adopted Eidinow’s view of risk as a social construct employed by a society (and different groups within a society) to “perceive, explain, and tackle uncertainty about the future – specifically, future dangers or risks – quite differently”. Thus examining each king’s approach – and his responses – to risk potentially offers clear differentiators between the four kings reflective of their styles of leadership.

So far as the language of risk is concerned, it cannot be concluded from his deployment of relevant vocabulary that Herodotus had a developed theory of risk applicable to the Persian kings (or otherwise); and many of the episodes considered under this topic do not employ ‘risk’ vocabulary as such. But, in his presentations of the Persian kings and their strategic concerns, Herodotus shows an awareness of the relevance of that aspect of contingency, particularly when he shows the kings’ efforts to minimise risk by taking advice (see chapter 2) or by carrying out detailed military preparations or reconnaissance before launching major campaigns.

Grethlein has argued that patterns in the Histories “aim at reducing the force of contingency of chance”, though perhaps “anticipating” would be a more accurate term than “reducing” – it is a question of risk-management rather than risk reduction. This may seem hair-splitting, but Grethlein himself suggests that Croesus’ advice to Cyrus failed to take account of life’s inconsistency, as Croesus made the mistake of assuming that the acknowledged pattern would be accompanied by regularity, before going on to argue that the patterns in and anachronic structure of the Histories result in the narrative itself “master[ing] contingency of chance”. But this macro-level analysis typically fails to pay adequate attention to the elements that can be differentiated in the accounts of each Persian king. As will be seen in the detailed analysis of individual kings’ responses to risk in chapters 1, 2, and 3, micro-level analysis can offer additional insights to complement or even supplant such patterns. In the case of Cambyses, for example, risk is presented as something not susceptible to rational treatment. While he is shown initially as sensible enough to take on board Phanes’ advice to cover his supply lines by entering into a treaty with the Arabian king before launching his assault on Egypt (and his invasion of Ethiopia is similarly preceded by a sensible scouting mission undertaken by the Fish-eaters, demonstrating that Cambyses was a king who understood the need for prudent planning to minimise risk), the irrationality of his response to the challenge (implicit in the Ethiopian king’s advice) to Cambyses’ very right to seek conquest completely undermined the Persian king’s capacity to manage risk.

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91 Cyrus’ all round excellence as king is apparent until the end of his rule, but at the micro-level we find another illustration of it: at 1.153.1 he referred to the possibility of his health failing (fyũ ooyū uyroyu) and what should be done in that eventuality – risk management at the micro-level, the only king to do so (cf. the state of abandonment Persia found herself in on Cambyses’ death – his awareness at 3.64.5 of his own madness came too late).  
93 Ibid. 192.  
95 The notion of forward planning is abandoned at 3.25.1, as a result of Cambyses’ ὀργή, which Herodotus makes clear at 3.25.2 is itself a manifestation of his madness. Risk assessment, of course, is not confined to the Persian kings – see, for
0.2.4.2 Succession planning

A key strategic consideration for any leader is the planning and execution of a proper succession strategy, thereby ensuring a seamless continuation of the ruling line and the future stability and ongoing security and prosperity of the people as a whole (to put it in terms of the nation). This is a significant theme throughout the narrative of the Persian empire in the *Histories*. The empire had its origins (according to the Herodotean narrative) in the ultimate failure of the Medes to maintain their own empire through Astyages, as Cyrus took the opportunity to overthrow him. Cyrus was to show an acute awareness of the need for stable succession to the end of his life, as I show in section 2.3.2 of chapter 2, but this approach was not adopted by his successors. Some have implied that succession to the Persian throne (as opposed to ‘winning’ it for oneself) may have resulted in a weaker king, but the issue is more nuanced than that; the accounts of all the kings will be considered from these perspectives to highlight any differentiating elements between them.

0.2.5 Styles of leadership

By style of leadership I mean the way a Persian king’s behaviour in leadership contexts differentiates him from the other kings’ corresponding behaviour (and how, in the interactions Herodotus presents, each king’s behaviour is perceived by those around him – that is, the king’s subjects/followers). This idea of ‘styles of leadership’ is not akin to a ‘typology’ of leadership: the concept is far less rigid than that (although that is not to suggest that Herodotus presents the kings as wholly mutable – in reality the portraits generally remain consistent so far as fundamentals are concerned, though within that there may be shifts in emphasis).

Throughout chapters 1, 2, and 3, I will be alert to such styles of leadership and in the Conclusion will assemble the evidence from these chapters to analyse the kings’ individual repertoires of styles of leadership and to understand the nature of each king’s performance as a leader.

The Persians’ names for three of their kings at 3.89.3 not only demonstrate Herodotus’ acceptance of the idea that Persian kings could be considered as different sorts of king regardless of their example, how Herodotus presents at 8.100.1 Mardonius’ consideration of his own position in the aftermath of the Persian defeat at Salamis.

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96 For example, Lateiner (1985) 97.
97 Blok’s view of the relevance of “feminine power” in this context, contrasting with the ‘male power’ that, she argues, is in monarchical societies “only legitimate and lasting if it includes the female and is transferred through it” (Blok (2002) 232), is potentially applicable to Xerxes alone of the Persian kings, with Herodotus’ assertion at 7.3.4 that Demaratus’ suggestion to Xerxes was irrelevant: ἡ γὰρ Ἁτοσσα εἶχε τὸ πᾶν κράτος. Even here, however, Atossa never again features in the narrative. Blok’s suggestion that such a female instrument would have been critical in securing the kingship for Xerxes and in him keeping it seems, at best, a conjecture weakly grounded in the account – particularly as Xerxes is never shown actually interacting with his mother, before or after his accession to the throne (this absence of such an interaction, particularly striking in view of his commitment to consultative leadership, further illustrates Xerxes’ over-emphasis on the collective Persian interest at the expense of the king/family interest).
98 This relative stability of characterization illustrates another difference compared with the ‘patterners’, for whom mutability is a significant principle underlying events at the macro-level: see Immerwahr (1966) 150, note 3. This is conceptually different from specific inconsistency – see the next note.
99 Pitcher has argued that consistency in characterization exists as a notion in ancient historiography (Pitcher (2007) 103-4). While generally, as I say above, this is right, there are episodes where Herodotus presents the Persian kings at times acting out of character, one of the most blatant examples of this being Cyrus’ attack on the Massagetae: the idealised leader as presented until then by Herodotus disappears, to be replaced by a rash king without regard to strategic reality.
similarities, but also suggest the name attributed to each king may fruitfully be used as a baseline within the narrative for each such king's style of leadership. So while the Achaemenid inscriptions suggest that a Persian king – any Persian king – is the shepherd of his people, the names at 3.89.3 imply more personal and less conventional (in Achaemenid terms) styles of leadership. The description of Darius as κάπηλος, for example, is a potentially relevant and helpful differentiator between his style of leadership and that of Cyrus, and it will be seen that there are numerous examples of Darius living up to this tag, though it would be rash to assume that Herodotus intended it to be derogatory of him as a king. It can also be indicating how, for the Persian empire, there could be (and were) different ways of being an effective (or ineffective) king. In showing that Persian kings were considered by their own people as different stylistically, the passage encourages an assessment of them at the micro-level regardless of any ‘despotic template’.

I analyse these kingly descriptions in the remainder of this section 0.2.5 (and offer a style for Xerxes).

0.2.5.1 Cyrus as πατήρ

The explanation for this description of Cyrus is ὁ δὲ ὅτι ἢπιός τε καὶ ἀγαθά σφι πάντα ἐμηχανήσατο (3.89.3). Attributing fatherly qualities to a leader is not uncommon, but before considering Cyrus from that perspective I contrast how he established Persian kingship with the manner in which Deioces had done the same for the Medes. The Medes, as Astyages himself noted at 1.129.4, must have been desperate to hand matters over to Cyrus, a Persian – which emphasises that Herodotus is with Cyrus presenting a special case. Astyages’ rule was harsh and oppressive, but by then the Medes were unable to free themselves (as they had freed themselves from the Assyrians at 1.95.2) and were compelled to seek a new king to offer them the stability and security they craved: they were in crisis. The situation when the Medes had originally entrusted their state to Deioces was very different, as he had planned for many years his route to the crown, calculating how to present himself to ensure that it was offered to him, and then taking immediate steps to establish a mystique about his person.

Herodotus admires the cleverness, but there is no evidence in his presentation of admiration for Deioces as a ruler/leader: he gave his people stability at the price of freedom – Herodotus makes clear at 1.96.2 that the Medes considered themselves, as Deioces’ subjects, to be subject to a τυραννίς – the ultimate contrast with Cyrus, who would give the Persians their freedom (I develop this thought in section 0.2.5.5 below).
Thus in my analysis of Cyrus’ style of leadership, I use the πατήρ concept as the benchmark. Cyrus’ style of leadership was subsequently unquestioned by all (except Cambyses, who implicitly believed himself superior as evidenced by the episode at 3.34.4-5, though Herodotus makes it clear that Cambyses was mad at the time)\(^{103}\) and came to be seen by his successors as not something they were incapable of emulating, leaving them with the challenge of deciding how to lead in their own styles.

0.2.5.2 Cambyses as δεσπότης\(^{104}\)

The explanation at 3.89.3 for Cambyses’ designation as δεσπότης is ὁ δὲ ὅτι χαλεπός τε ἦν καὶ ὀλίγωρος. Surprisingly, there is no suggestion of madness: this underlines that Herodotus’ own view of the kings involved a degree of scepticism so far as the Persian designations were concerned, as not giving the whole picture (which his own account, of course, was to provide: initially Cambyses was a capable king, before degenerating into madness).\(^{105}\) When we examine Cambyses’ presentation, the nature of his δεσπότης style becomes clearer – he was, as may be expected of a δεσπότης, wholly absorbed in his own personal interests and oblivious to the interests of the Persians as a whole and as individuals: on the first of two occasions when Cambyses is shown as concerned enough about the Persians’ view of him to enquire about it (3.34.1-5), the conversation with Prexaspes indicates that his real concern was whether the Persians thought him mad (Cambyses interpreted Prexaspes’ reply as the Persians considering him οἴνῳ προσκείμενον παραφρονέειν καὶ οὐκ εἶναι νοήμονα (3.34.3) – illustrating again how Cambyses saw his kingship strictly in his own terms).\(^{106}\) His way of refuting that view at 3.35.1-4 displayed utter indifference to Prexaspes as a father.

0.2.5.3 Darius as κάπηλος

The use of κάπηλος here is interesting: LSJ defines it as “retail-dealer, huckster”, so its use here could be setting up notions of a slightly tricky shopkeeper (not entirely trustworthy or reliable but narrowly focused on getting the best of every bargain) rather than the king of a great empire.\(^{107}\) But

\(^{103}\) Mardonius in his flattery of Xerxes at 7.9.1 implied Xerxes’ superiority to even Cyrus, but this idea was never seriously accepted or developed.

\(^{104}\) Dicke notes of this term used as a vocative (in contrast with vocative βασιλεῦ), “[I]t is used only by the addressee’s own subjects or slaves. The lexical meaning of the term gives at least the implication that the person using it in address might be a slave, and this implication seems to colour the vocative meaning. [I]t appears to denote not the nature of the addressee, but the direct power he has over the speaker, and to emphasise the helplessness and insignificance of the speaker as compared to the addressee, rather than the magnificence of the addressee as compared to the speaker” (Dickey (1996) 97. The word is used in the Histories of other Persian kings (e.g. to Darius by his groom at 3.85.2 and to Xerxes by Mardonius at 7.5.2); and see section 1.2.2 of chapter 1.

\(^{105}\) A succinct account of Cambyses’ degeneration can be found at de Bakker (2015) 56.

\(^{106}\) The second occasion (though earlier chronologically) recounted at 3.34.4 Croesus’ remark about Cambyses not having produced a son as such as Cambyses – again putting the issue in purely personal and familial terms, anticipating how, unlike his own father, Cambyses was to leave the empire in turmoil through having failed to plan for the succession.

\(^{107}\) It is striking that a ‘grander’ term such as ἔμπορος (which Herodotus uses twice, at 2.39.2 referring to Greeks working as merchants in Egypt, and at 4.154.3 of the merchant Themision of Thera, with whom Etearchos, king of Axos in Crete, pledged guest-friendship in order to trick Themision into killing Etearchos’ daughter) is not employed here. Cf. 2.141.4 (ἕπεσθαι δέ οἱ τῶν μαχίμων μὲν οὐδένα ἀνδρῶν, καπήλους δὲ καὶ χειρώνακτας καὶ ἀγοραίους ἀνθρώπους), where the καπήλοι are contrasted with the warriors (a distinction underlined by the classification at 2.164.1). While these usages occur in an Egyptian context, they nevertheless suggest connotations of general application in the case of a κάπηλος – reinforcing the idea of it being somewhat derogatory (in terms of social status) when applied to a king. I suggest in note 110 below one possible explanation for the use of κάπηλος in the context of Darius.
such a man would surely have needed no guidance from his groom to come up with the trick that helped him acquire the kingship, as Darius did at 3.85.1-2: a κάπηλος who had to rely on the wiles of a slave was hardly a typical κάπηλος in that mould, though it may be that, when he used the term, Herodotus implied a social stigma but not hucksterism (none of the other usages of the term in the Histories require that implication).

As will be seen, however, Darius' κάπηλος-style of leadership suggests not so much the williness of a shopkeeper as the ability to objectively assess and instinctively make calculations about situations. Indeed, the leadership that Darius is consistently presented as displaying is more akin to a finance director, to use a modern management analogy, than a shopkeeper, and it is in the portrayal of a hard-headed, calculating executive that Darius' κάπηλος-style of leadership is seen to emerge (some examples are referred to in note 108).

The reasoning for Darius' description is ὃ μὲν ὅτι ἐκαπηλεύε πάντα τὰ πρήγματα (3.89.3). Powell gives two other instances of the verb καπηλεύω: at 2.35.2 Herodotus says of the Egyptians αἱ μὲν γυναῖκες ἀγοράζουσι καπηλεύουσι, as part of his demonstration that among the Egyptians τὰ πολλὰ πάντα ἔμπαλιν τοῖσι ἄλλοισι ἅμα ἔστησαν ἤθεα τε καὶ νόμους, while the other usage, at 1.155.4, involves Croesus advising Cyrus how to deal with the Lydians – πρόειπε δ᾽ αὐτοῖσι κιθαρίζειν τε καὶ ψάλλειν καπηλεύειν παιδεύειν τοὺς παῖδας. In both cases the verb is being used in the context of something representing the opposite of what should be taking place; and the resonance is particularly strong in the second usage, as Croesus – indelibly associated with Cyrus' succession – betrayed (albeit in order to save) his own people in a manner that one of Cyrus' descendents would come willingly to embrace.

It is difficult to pin down the precise meaning of ἐκαπηλεύε πάντα τὰ πρήγματα, but the phraseology cannot help but recall Cyrus' scornful comments about the Spartans at 1.153.1-2, thus setting up a fundamental contrast between Darius and Cyrus which will be plainly illustrated in my analysis of their behaviour in chapters 1, 2, and 3.

108 Examples of this emphasis within the portrayal of Darius are analysed in section 2.2.3.3 of chapter 2 and sections 3.3.3.1 and 3.3.3.2 of chapter 3 below, an emphasis entirely consistent with his words at 3.72.4-4 (that truth can be disregarded for the sake of profit).
109 Although, as will be seen in my detailed analysis of the account of Darius, a finance director over-promoted to CEO (if one may stretch the analogy even further): a leader comfortable in finance and administration, but generally inept and reliant on guidance from others in strategic matters and fundamental leadership skills.
110 Subsequent references to Darius' κάπηλος-style of leadership are to the notion of a leadership style as would be exhibited by such an over-promoted finance director rather than by an ordinary shopkeeper. It is also possible that, if any 'trickster' element of the word was intended, it implied an attitude on the part of the Persians (rather than actually being part of Darius' style): that Darius was a bit of a chancer, always up to his little schemes. Such characters can be held in affectionate regard by their people, even though this quality may lie more in the eye of the beholder than be evident from the actions of the person in question.
111 Herodotus' explanation at 1.153.2 for Cyrus' words has no linguistic echo at 3.89.3, though the account there and ἀλλήλους ἀμνόντες ἐξαπατᾶντα at 1.153.1 accord strongly with the character of Darius. The clear implication of the narrative here is that Cyrus would have disapproved of this aspect of Darius, though the mention of oath-breakers is puzzling: perhaps Cyrus' words obliquely anticipate Darius' future disregard of the truth when it is not in his interest, as enunciated at 3.72.4 (on which see section 0.2.4.1 above).
112 Baragwanath notes how Darius' profit-motivated approach is specific to him, though subsequently adopted to a degree by Xerxes at times (Baragwanath (2008) 267, 268).
0.2.5.4 Xerxes

Xerxes is conspicuously absent from the nomenclature attributed to the Persians by Herodotus. It would be fruitless to consider why this might be so: either he simply lacked any clearly defining characteristic, or he was relatively forgotten, or something entirely different. Of course, within the narrative at this point Xerxes has not been presented as a king; but Herodotus has chosen to present the three (and not four) kings in this way.

One passage suggests a possible approach. At 7.187.2 Herodotus states ἀνδρῶν δὲ ἐουσέων τοσουτέων μυριάδων, κάλλεός τε εἵνεκα καὶ μεγάθεος οὐδεὶς αὐτῶν ἀξιονικότερος ἦν αὐτοῦ Ξέρξεω ἔχειν τοῦτο τὸ κράτος. This is a very ‘Greek’ view of what constituted appropriate qualities for leadership, but the portrayal of Xerxes focuses almost exclusively on his internal thoughts and external actions rather than his physical appearance (even when he is present as an all-seeing spectator of battles, his forces respond to him as ‘king’ rather than ‘king of god-like beauty’).

I offer my own baseline for the presentation of Xerxes, grounded in the manner of his presentation by Herodotus: I read Xerxes in the Histories as a consultative king – a king who has the final say, of course, but also a king who hoped to foster debate and discussion before a decision was arrived at. This is not a style of leadership that appears in any other sources, but I will show how Herodotus consistently presents it as the defining attribute of Xerxes’ leadership.

One of the clearest illustrations of this is the way in which the decision to invade Greece was taken in the early part of Book 7. The troubled genesis of the final decision to launch the invasion shows a kingly figure far removed from the clear-eyed certainty and seeming omniscience of a πατήρ, a δεσπότης, or even a κάπηλος. Another indicator is the huge role played by advisers throughout the account of Xerxes. I show in section 2.2.4 of chapter 2 how often Xerxes received conflicting advice (virtually unheard of in the cases of the other three kings), an inevitable consequence of the adoption of his consultative approach. As will become apparent, the fundamental difficulty with a consultative style of leadership is that it ran the risk of not being leadership at all – an outcome presented by Herodotus in very clear terms in his portrayal of Xerxes.

In the chapters that follow I will apply this consultative model as the prime signifier of Xerxes’ style of leadership (while noting that such a style of leadership would have presented a rejection of both styles of monarchy espoused in the constitutional debate, by Otanes at 3.80.1-6 and by Darius at 3.82.1.5 – the despotic tyrant and the single best man performing the role in the best way). In some ways this will prove to be a most un-Persian style of leadership; and Xerxes’ ultimate inability to lead in this way will be contrasted with the Greek way.

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113 The episode at 7.56.2, where Xerxes was allegedly confronted by a Greek with words likening him to Zeus, is the only incident possibly reflecting Herodotus’ words at 7.187.2.
Both Deioces and Cyrus are shown as the founders of powerful royal dynasties; but the way in which each assumed the position of king was very different. Deioces was chosen to be king in a climate of anxiety and fear he had himself engendered, while Cyrus had had no intention of becoming king until Harpagus suggested it; and at 1.126.6, he offered the Persians a pact: νῦν ὦν ἐμέο πειθόμενοι γίνεσθε ἐλεύθεροι, immediately explaining the apparent paradox – αὐτός τε γὰρ δοκέω θείῃ τύχῃ ἐπειργεγονὼ τάδε ἐς χεῖρας ἄγεσθαι.\footnote{Herodotus (2007) 159, but more interesting for my purposes is that it is a self-proclaimed ‘divine mission’ by Cyrus. Immerwahr notes how Cyrus, in regarding his position as god-given, was echoing a suggestion put to him at 1.124.1-2 by Harpagus (Immerwahr (1966) 165).}

The unhesitating Persian response at 1.127.1, with its use of προστάτεω, suggests that this acceptance was by the Persians en masse rather than simply by the elite (such mass acceptance being implicit in the story itself, of course: it is highly unlikely that the Persian elite alone would have performed the task set by Cyrus at 1.126.1)\footnote{This word is used to mean ‘leader’ on only one other occasion in the Histories, in the same expression (προστάτεω ἐπιλαβόμενοι) at 5.23.2, when Megabazus incredulously upbraided Darius for having allowed Histiaeus to build a stronghold in Thrace (I consider this fully in section 2.2.3.3 of chapter 2). Cf. προστάς τις τοῦ δήμου, used by Darius in the constitutional debate when arguing that the people’s leader would emerge and himself become sole ruler (3.82.4).} and Herodotus (while no doubt savouring the paradox of Cyrus’ words at 1.126.6) presents the Persians in accepting Cyrus as thereby seeking to free themselves. Cyrus’ authority derived from his subjects’ consent, just as Deioces’ had, but without any clever manipulation of the people.\footnote{If we refer to the account of the as yet undiscovered Cyrus playing with the other boys, Cyrus claimed at 1.115.2 that the other boys chose the ἐπιτηδεότατος among them – that is, a consensus that of them all Cyrus was the best-suited for kingship. There is no suggestion of Cyrus even in his boyhood having run a Deioces-like campaign to secure the kingship: perhaps the answer is to be found at 1.123.1 when Herodotus notes Κύρῳ δὲ ἀνδρευμένῳ καὶ ἐόντι τῶν ἡλίκων ἀνδρηιοτάτῳ καὶ προσφιλεστάτῳ, a passage often noted as presaging Cyrus’ innate ‘royal-ness’ (for example, Evans (1991) 53).}

A successor in a line established by a legendarily great king produced pressures of its own, however; and the differences in each subsequent king’s attitude to Cyrus are useful indicators of each’s style of leadership.\footnote{So when Cambyses required the leading Persians to compare him with his father he was duly told by all except Croesus (who offered a witty back-handed compliment instead) that he had surpassed him (3.160.1) that Cyrus had surpassed all Persians in ἀγαθοεργίη (and Herodotus adds τούτῳ γὰρ οὐδεὶς Περσέων ἠξίωσέ κω to show that this was the Persian consensus) seems simply to have accepted that as a fact and is never shown as troubled by any comparison with Cyrus. As I show in section 1.3.2.4 of chapter 1, however, Xerxes felt weighed down by his illustrious predecessor: the use of θὴτομεν at 7.8α 1 underlines both Xerxes’ relationship with Cyrus and (as the word is being employed in a speech of Xerxes) his awareness of it.} But while Cyrus could never be matched, subsequent kings may nevertheless perform the leadership role within a broader framework in a way that would be reflective of their own self, their own style of leadership.

In reality all the Persian kings needed the help of the Persian elite to oversee their vast empire. Most of the satraps named by Herodotus were aristocratic Persians; and both Cyrus and Darius are shown delegating military command to members of the Persian (or Median) elite (though Xerxes is shown doing so only after the defeat at Salamis and Cambyses not at all).\footnote{Cyrus at 1.153.4, while Darius and Xerxes are regularly shown as remote from military action – see note 480 below.} Ultimately the Persian elite, like the rest of his subjects, accepted the king’s word as their sole law, as illustrated by Begas’ fear of being thought a coward by the king (7.107.1) and Hydarnes’ advice at
7.135.2 to the Spartans, Sperthias and Boulis – οὕτω δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς εἰ δοίητε ὑμέας αὐτοὺς βασιλέας will reap the rewards. Such advice, to Hydarnes self-evidently good, can arise only, as the Spartans scornfully responded, τὸ μὲν δοῦλος εἶναι ἐξεπίστεαι, ἐλευθερίης δὲ οὔκω ἐπειρήθης (7.135.3). But this was the point of Persian monarchy: it was embraced by all Persians and, on closer examination, the reference to Spartan freedom was itself illusory (see section 1.2.2 of chapter 1 below).

Hystaspes’ words to Cyrus at 1.210.2 after the king’s dream-inspired fear that Hystaspes’ son Darius was plotting to overthrow him demonstrate the reverent attitude of the Persians to their king; and they in return submitted to his will (if Darius had been disloyal, Hystaspes said, ἐγὼ τοῖς παραδίδωμι χρᾶσθαι αὐτῷ τὸ τοῦτο ὅ τι σὺ βούλεις, 1.210.3). In other words, the king’s autocracy was the price the Persians willingly paid for their freedom. The paradox of being free to live under an autocrat has been noted already, but this is not so strange: on a number of occasions Herodotus suggests that the Persians had special benefits compared with non-Persian subjects (not being taxed, for example – see 3.97.1); and the Persian king’s autocracy had to be leavened on occasion even in relation to non-Persian subjects. Thus Cambyses, at 3.19.2, had to accept that he could not compel the reluctant Phoenicians to sail against Carthage.

Hystaspes’ words anticipate those of Darius himself in the constitutional debate, when he observed that the Persians’ ἐλευθερίη came from a single man – leading to his conclusion, ἐφ’ ὑμῖν γνώμην ἡμέας ἐλευθερωθέντας διὰ ἕνα ἄνδρα τὸ τοιοῦτο περιστέλειν (3.82.5). The recollection of why Hystaspes uttered his words gives added resonance to Darius’ conclusion – χωρίς τε τούτου πατρίους νόμους μὴ λύειν ἔχοντα εὖ· οὐ γὰρ ἄμεινο (3.82.5). This not only reinforced Darius’ argument within the debate, but also legitimised him as continuing the tradition of Persian kingship begun by Cyrus (and initially continued by Cambyses before his lapse into madness and the temporary aberration of Smerdis’ rule). This tradition saw Persian freedom as a gift from Cyrus (3.82.5). This aspect of Persian kingship, coupled with the idea of imperialist expansion as a duty of a Persian king, is considered in more detail in chapter 1.

119 There is, I think, a risk that scholars may unthinkingly accept that Herodotus shares the Spartans’ smug regard for Spartan freedom in this episode (see, for instance, Raaflaub (2011) 25-6). As I show, however, Herodotus’ attitude seems more nuanced than any instinctive ‘Persians bad, Greeks good’ reaction.
120 ὃς ἀντὶ μὲν δούλων ἐποίησας ἐλευθεροῦν ἐκεῖνοι εἶναι, ἀντὶ δὲ ἄρχεσθαι ἀδίκως ἁπάντων: the references back to 1.126.6 are readily apparent.
121 It is noteworthy that there is no mention at this point of Persian expansionism: see section 1.3.2 of chapter 1.
122 I am not as troubled by this notion as Pelling is (Pelling (2002) 148). For a later take on this issue, see Gray’s discussion of the Socratic notion of ‘willing obedience’ (Gray (2011) 15-18).
123 I should make clear that, so far as the speech of the unnamed Persian at 9.16.4-5 is concerned, I prefer the reading of Flower and Marincola (2002) 131 to that of Zali (2015) 114-5: the words do not imply a conflict between king and Persians, but an acceptance that all Persians (including the commander Mardonius in this case) would proceed even when they believed that the outcome was likely to end badly – for ὅ τι δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀμήχανον ἀποτρέψαι ἀπειπέμεν (9.16.4).
124 Cf. “The end or good towards which monarchy aims, according to Darius, is freedom from foreign domination and the pursuit of empire” (Ward (2008) 95). See too Romm’s comment on pragmatism winning the day “because, by and large, it had worked,” (Romm (1998) 178). I refer to this pragmatic outcome above – indeed, I read the debate as being couched in much less theoretical terms than it is usually regarded.
125 That Herodotus considered imperial expansion a specifically Persian attribute may be inferred from Harpagus’ invitation to Cyrus at 1.124.2 to rise up against Astyages – σύ νυν, ἢν βούλῃ ἐμοὶ πείθεσθαι, τῆς περ Ἀστυάγης ἄρχει χώρης: there is no indication of further territorial acquisition, simply obtaining what Astyages rules over. See section 1.3.2 of chapter 1 for how the idea of Persian expansionism developed.
But it will be seen that the pact between king and people proved challenging for Cyrus’ successors, not least from a tension between the position of the king at an individual and personal level (seen sometimes in terms of ‘the king’s house’) and the interests of the Persians as a whole, a tension which had the potential to threaten the pact between king and subjects. Where appropriate I address this tension in terms of both the king’s individual and the Persians’ collective interests.\footnote{This distinction between individual king and the Persians collectively could be contrasted with the way Herodotus presents the Persians on the one hand and the Greeks on the other: the Greek leaders could not simply issue orders, they had to ensure that other factions/poleis were prepared to support their proposals, reflecting at some level a wider distinction between monarchy and democracy (and see too note 14 above).}

\subsection*{0.3 Characterization in the \textit{Histories} and the Persian kings}

While the number of individuals referred to in the \textit{Histories} is huge,\footnote{Approximately 1,000 (Waters (1985) 140). Dewald finds 375 women (Dewald (1981, repr. Munson 2013a)) 152).} the strongest impression left by Herodotus’ portrayals of the Persian kings is the distinctiveness of each as a personality,\footnote{His “characters must be taken as his own artistic creations” (Evans (1991) 41). Gould notes how important personal relationships are as structuring elements in the \textit{Histories} (Gould (1989) 42). Cf. the noting that “ancient literary critics [plural, though only Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Pomp. 3, is cited] considered H. the historian of character (ἦθος)” (Flower and Marincola (2002) 9).} achieved by a number of techniques, in particular the accounts of kings’ interactions with others and their own actions, though my focus remains the kings’ differing individual responses to similar situations. Marincola has identified the danger for a historian so focused on personalities and yet seeking to present them within macro-patterns (each individual might be reduced to a mere stereotype),\footnote{Marincola (2001) 43-4.} and, while I reject both Immerwahr’s observation (considered at section 0.5.1 below) and Gammie’s reading (considered at 0.5.2 below) of the “conventional characterising” of the kings, I do accept that there would have been “long-established templates” available to Herodotus (such as patterns of characterization or types of heroic individuals that can be seen, for instance, in epic).\footnote{The phrase is Romm’s (Romm (1998) 157). For an example of direct Herodotean reference to Homer in his presentation of character interaction (Priam and Achilles at \textit{Iliad} 24.480-4 with Cyrus and Croesus at 1.86-88), see Pelling (2006b) 85-6.} But Marincola is correct in concluding that few Herodotean characters are stereotypical, even in the case of the Persian kings. What is significant for my purposes – indeed, it underpins my entire approach – is that character as portrayed in this way can also be interpreted as depicting different styles of leadership. Romm notes that Herodotus had to work with the character type of the Asian despot, but “what is finally remarkable about [the Persian kings] are the differences in the ways they wield power or subdue their enemies.”\footnote{Cf. the difference between ethical patterns such as of the tyrant and the way Herodotus “refrains from making explicit generalizations about the character of human beings” noted by Baragwanath (Baragwanath (2015) 20).}

This is the basis of my approach,\footnote{Romm (1998) 158 and 159.} without accepting Romm’s broad references to wielding power and subduing enemies (more indicative of a macro-level approach): I focus on the detailed differences at the micro-level, in the kingly contexts selected as relevant to the Persian kings.

More specifically, I analyse how Herodotus uses these to illustrate the kings’ styles of leadership within those aspects of leadership I explained (with my reasons for choosing them) in section 0.2.4.

\footnote{This distinction between individual king and the Persians collectively could be contrasted with the way Herodotus presents the Persians on the one hand and the Greeks on the other: the Greek leaders could not simply issue orders, they had to ensure that other factions/poleis were prepared to support their proposals, reflecting at some level a wider distinction between monarchy and democracy (and see too note 14 above).}
above, as they indicate each particular king’s personal understanding of how a Persian was required or expected to behave as a Persian king. To an extent these fall within characterization, but whereas character illustrates the type of man we are presented with at the individual level, style of leadership reflects consistent behaviour and responses to situations in which that king was performing and being perceived as a leader. Of course, Herodotus never provides wholesale portraits of characters however significant within the narrative; but style of leadership is one way of filling in those gaps identified by Baragwanath and de Bakker so far as the Persian kings are concerned.

I can explain my approach by contrasting how Herodotus presents the Persian kings with the way he presents Deioces, whose initial legitimacy as king of the Medes was not nullified by his subsequent conversion into a tyrant. Herodotus shows a man becoming king through his own calculated behaviour in a legitimate way, though he later took on the autocratic persona of the tyrant – his subsequent behaviour being consistent with his earlier behaviour and character, but leading him into this particular style of leadership. From the outset of Herodotus’ account it is made clear that Deioces acted as he did ἐρασθεὶς τυραννίδος (1.96.2) – a man, then, who wanted to be a tyrant and by his own clever efforts became one, by convincing the Medes to decide freely that they needed a king and that Deioces was the right man for the role. What is unclear, however, is the manner in which ‘the Medes’ both decided on kingship and selected Deioces to be king. Herodotus was insufficiently interested in the notion of legitimacy deriving from some form of authority or consent to provide such details; or perhaps he was ignoring what could be assumed to be the reality (the Median elite reached the decisions between themselves).

While this episode is seen (rightly) as embodying a number of features that reflect Persian kingship, it is clear that Deioces was different from the Persian kings, not least in the way Herodotus associates him at the outset with τύραννος vocabulary – the Medes αὖτις ἐς τυραννίδα περιῆλθον (1.96.1), as a result of Deioces ἐρασθεὶς τυραννίδος (1.96.2); and the Persian kings are presented by Herodotus in an entirely different way, without the negative ‘script’ provided for Deioces.

But Deioces demonstrates that leadership was not an easy thing to accomplish: I show in section 0.2.5.5 above how Herodotus contrasts the leadership styles of Cyrus and Deioces, whereby the


134 Deioces was a legitimate king in the sense that he derived his authority not as a result of duress but from consent; and the way he had achieved the throne demonstrated the importance of kingly justice as the basis for such legitimacy (see Thomas (2012) 249).

135 Though at the macro-level the narrative, as Thomas notes, reflects “the Greek discourse on tyranny…rather than any Persian ideals about kingship” (Thomas (2012) 248). Cf. Asheri’s remarks quoted in note 141 below.

136 Herodotus shows the cleverness of Deioces (referred to at 1.96.1) in the deployment of the word βασιλεύς in 1.97.3 and thrice in 1.98.1 as well as once in each of 1.98.3 and 5 (there are no further usages at all of τύραννος vocabulary): in other words, the language of βασιλεύς induced the Medes to accept first the principle of a monarchy and then that Deioces was the right person for the position, thereby legitimising him – Thomas fails to appreciate the linguistic subtlety here, as she assumes that Herodotus uses “basileus and turannos…indiscriminately” (Thomas (2012) 248).

137 Deioces is said to have displayed the features of an autocratic ruler (1.98.3-100.2), and imposed an elaborate ceremonial etiquette (Herodotus explaining why at 1.99.2 – note the emphasis on seeing/not seeing – conversely, καὶ οἱ κατάσκοποί τε καὶ κατήκοοι ἦσαν ἀνὰ πᾶσαν τὴν χώρην τῆς ἦρχε (1.100.2). “He personifies the fair judge, the promoter of building works, and the unifier of the nation: all are ἔργα worthy of mention” (Asheri (2007) 149).
Persians received freedom but the Medes suffered tyranny. The challenge for Cyrus’ successors, then, was to retain Persian freedom without allowing a tyranny to develop by adopting the withdrawn and remote leadership style of Deioces – they had to forge their own style. Herodotus presents this challenge in his account of each king by providing signposts for the reader in the case of the Persian kings (as we have seen, Herodotus uses terms he attributes to the Persians themselves – implicitly after the relevant ruler had established himself as king – to suggest directions in which in the context of leadership the reader’s thoughts may turn), but the individual presentations are richer and far more nuanced than that of Deioces, leaving the reader to infer and understand each king’s style of leadership.\footnote{Zali rightly suggests that Herodotus employs the speeches he puts into the kings’ mouths to characterize them, though her example involving Darius’ speeches to Histiaeus fails to put the episode in its wider context, particularly the way in which Darius had to be helped by Megabazus (I analyse this in section 2.2.3.3 of chapter 2). This does not undermine Zali’s positive conclusion about Darius, but fails to appreciate the more nuanced way he is presented here (Zali (2015) 94-5).}

\section*{0.4 Composing the \textit{Histories} – Herodotus’ sources}

A fundamental premise of my thesis is that Herodotus fashioned the \textit{Histories} in a conscious and deliberate way to encourage his readers to look not just for patterns but also meditations, as it were, on topics such as leadership. Of course, it can be extremely difficult to achieve an understanding of authorial intent where it is not expressly stated within the text. I draw inferences and conclusions from the way the narrative is shaped, from the emphasis given to particular features of the various accounts, and in particular the contrasts I note at the micro-level. In this section I assess the likely influences at source level on Herodotus’ approach to his composition.

\subsection*{0.4.1 Oral traditions}

The question of sources is complex and has been much debated,\footnote{A select bibliography would include Jacoby (1913), Murray (1987), Fehling (1989), Momigliano (1990); and Fowler (1996), in addition to such broader studies as Immerwahr (1966), Lang (1984), Lateiner (1989), and Gould (1989).} though there is now general scholarly acceptance that most of the information presented by Herodotus derived from oral traditions.\footnote{For a general discussion, see Luraghi (2001b).} Of course, this statement barely skims the surface of the difficulties surrounding the issue of orality and the consequences for our view of Herodotus the historiographer. How and from whom did Herodotus obtain his information? How did he assess and decide between competing accounts? These and other questions raise problems even in the context of purely Greek events; the challenges intensify when our focus is on Persian events, which are remote from the historian spatially as well as in time.\footnote{A succinct overview is provided by Asheri (2007) 15-23, though his emphasis on the non-unitarian nature of the \textit{Histories} is out of step with much modern scholarship. He states at 16, “Herodotus’ work is historiography based mainly on oral traditions”. See also Thomas (1989) 3-4: “For the Greek historians, particularly Herodotus and Thucydides, it is increasingly agreed that they used primarily oral sources and oral tradition”. The classic English work on this issue is Murray (1987) – see too his subsequent thoughts (Murray (2001)).}
The need for me to form a view on these questions is not directly related to the issue of Herodotus from a historiographical perspective, however, as it derives rather from the nature of my endeavour, which requires me to interpret the portrayals of the Persian kings at the micro-level within the *Histories*: in short, if there is no evidence at all of Herodotus himself shaping his source material, it will be impossible to suggest with any plausibility that Herodotus may, through the manner in which he did shape and present his material, have been inviting his reader to contemplate particular issues at all critically.

Herodotus tells us that he travelled and that he asked questions—and he is, above all, conscious of the whole ‘sources question’ himself. He addresses the issue explicitly at 2.99.1, drawing a distinction between what he has witnessed, what he has reasoned out, and what he has been told. Fowler identifies Herodotus’ process of giving alternative versions of events and differentiating between what he has seen for himself and what he knows only from hearsay as the unique ‘marker’ of Herodotus’ style and approach, his unique ‘voiceprint’.

Fehling has argued that Herodotus essentially invented most if not all of his oral sources. What Herodotus wrote, according to Fehling’s thesis, was, in Fowler’s words, “a new art form, which is not history, but a kind of narrative based loosely on historical fact”. While Fowler attempts to rebut this charge, the outcome is not clearly refutative of Fehling. Luraghi deals more successfully with the real challenge presented by Fehling, arguing that the apparent inventions of Herodotus are actually an integral part of his methodology, of being open about the nature of the evidence he relies on for each aspect of his work: for Luraghi, the impossibility of lending authority to his narrative by referring to the written works of a predecessor means that “the Herodotean narrator can only step aside, letting the human groups whose past he relates take the stage and tell the story, in a way that is most likely intended to mirror the audience’s perception of its own knowledge of its past.” Though an attractive suggestion, reconciling the storytelling aspect of Herodotus’ presentation with a genuine historiographical contribution of a sort, it presupposes that all information that is opsis-derived is totally reliable (which may not always be the case).

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142 Thus the question of Herodotus’ reliability as a historian is not part of my investigation.
143 That is, after all, ἱστορίη – the *Histories* comprises ἱστορίης ἀπόδεξις by Herodotus (Book 1 Proem); and the notion of ἱστορίη is also used in illuminating ways at 2.99.1 and (in the verb form) at 2.44.5.
144 See also 2.147.1 and 2.154.4.
145 Fowler (1996) 68
147 Fowler (1996) 73.
148 Fowler’s argument (at Fowler (1996) 75) is a bit woolly – and heavily reliant on the assumption that the patternings he mentions are to be taken as the deliberate core of what Herodotus was trying to achieve in the *Histories*.
149 Asheri accepts Fehling’s scepticism about artefacts that Herodotus claims to have personally seen to a limited extent only (Asheri (2007) 15). Luraghi, focusing on inaccuracies or inventions from the oral aspect, regards Herodotus’ methodology (which he terms “meta-historiē”) as having three cornerstones – oral information (akoē), his personal eyewitness testimony (opsis), and Herodotus’ own reasoning (gnome) (Luraghi (2006) 77). See too Hornblower (2002) 378.
151 An illustration of this is the “Upper Egypt” problem (Asheri (2007) 15-16).
Herodotus makes a number of references to logioi, who have provided him with information in various contexts.\(^{152}\) The nature and indeed existence of such has also come within the purview of the history/fiction debate discussed above.\(^{153}\) He will also have encountered and heard from men who were not even in the lowly positions postulated by Asheri – guides, people who engaged him in conversation, etc.\(^{154}\) Such sources would fall within the ambit of Luraghi’s suggested theoretical framework above – that is, Herodotus when presenting what they say is not (unless he expressly says so) endorsing its accuracy but is leaving it for the reader to determine its truth-value for herself. In the light of this we will need to be alert to the way in which Herodotus presents his kingly accounts – in terms not only of narrative structure and techniques but also the ‘voice’ of the narrator (as it pertains to an express or implied source) in relation to any given aspect.\(^{155}\)

When we consider the practicalities of evidence-assembling (particularly where Herodotus was on his travels), we have the speculations of those like Asheri who still appear at some level to want to rescue Herodotus from the vagaries of the oral traditions they accept as the main source of his evidence;\(^{156}\) though we need to bear in mind not only the difficulties of far-flung travel in Herodotus’ day but also the logistics of both gathering information from any source, be it oral, written or physical in some other way, and recording it (and bringing it back to wherever Herodotus would actually have woven the Histories together). Did men such as Herodotus rely on what to us would be prodigious feats of memory? Or did he have a vast library of scrolls containing all his notes that he had managed to bring home with him?\(^{157}\) We can never know, of course; but we should not underestimate the real challenges inherent in our view of Herodotus and his whole approach.\(^{158}\)

For my purposes I assume that Herodotus composed his work with a degree of creativity and invention but also in good faith: he entertained, but also inspired his readers to reflection (as suggested by Luraghi and noted above). He consciously chose, whether his source was an oral tradition or an eyewitness account or something else, both the content and the form of his narrative, which can therefore be judged in that context – the view of Herodotus as a rambling raconteur has long since been vanquished (macro-analysis by such as Lang and Immerwahr has been instrumental in this).\(^{159}\) The difficulties of acquiring, storing, marshalling and presenting his material cannot be underestimated, but in the oral world on the cusp of becoming the literary world

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\(^{152}\) Asheri translates as ‘experts of logoi, learned’ (Asheri (2007) 74), while Fowler describes them as “expert, informed, meaningful talkers” (Fowler (2006) 37) and Griffiths simply “chroniclers” (Griffiths (2006) 136). Cf. Provencal, who argues that, in the specific context of 1.4.1, the word means “masters of argument”, in support of his overall thesis that the Persian kings are presented as sophistic kings (Provencal (2015) 77-8), but this attaches too specialised a meaning to the word.

\(^{153}\) They “are either purely fictional figures or informants of this [i.e. locally low officials in some civic or religious capacity] kind”: Asheri (2007) 17.

\(^{154}\) See Asheri (2007) 17.

\(^{155}\) Cf.: “We are often forced into surmising what the possible route for information may have been – guessing for example that the Herodotean version of Cambyses as a mad tyrant is the product of hostile Egyptian (or Persian) sources” (Harrison (2011) 20). This observation, of course, implies a Herodotus who either accepted unquestioningly such an account; or one who weighed it and incorporated it to the extent and in the way chosen by him in his narrative

\(^{156}\) Asheri suggests that Herodotus may have had access to some written records, even in the East, albeit not necessarily very accurate, reflected in the details he sometimes provides of Persian forces, tribute, and the ‘Royal Road’ (Asheri (2007) 17-18).

\(^{157}\) Hornblower makes similar observations (Hornblower (2002) 373).

\(^{158}\) Such difficulties disappear if Fehling’s thesis is accepted regarding Herodotus’ fabrication, particularly when he names his source. There are certain accounts elsewhere (e.g. Egyptian records) which to some degree correspond with Herodotus’ account; this cannot be mere coincidence and still leaves open the possibility that Herodotus did travel and view such physical evidence. To argue that, even then, Herodotus did so only to disregard what he was told and replace it with his own invention seems wilfully perverse.

such difficulties were not insuperable. Herodotus’ approach and the macro-elements now established and accepted by Herodotean scholars themselves lend weight to this view of him selecting his material and deciding how at the micro-level to present it. While it cannot be conclusive – as the majority of his oral sources are unknown to us – the evidence of Herodotus’ creativity (in those aspects which we can compare with Achaemenid sources and how they are presented in Aeschylus’ *Persae*) is at the very least entirely consistent with this idea of a creative Herodotus fashioning his material with artistic intent, manipulating his accounts as a way of putting into the reader’s consciousness issues in which he was interested.\(^{160}\)

This assumption underpins my approach to Herodotus’ accounts of the Persian kings within the *Histories*, as will become apparent in succeeding chapters. Herodotus consciously chose the content of his narrative and how he would present it, thereby allowing the reader to read it actively and critically rather than as a passive recipient of data.\(^{161}\)

### 0.4.2 Achaemenid sources

Oral traditions were not the only sources available to Herodotus. In this section I consider possible Achaemenid sources of which he may have been aware (such as inscriptions) in an effort to assess whether the Herodotean presentations of the Persian kings indicate any influence from them (though I do not pretend that this will be a straightforward task).\(^{162}\) I focus on those Achaemenid sources that give the clearest insight into aspects of Achaemenid monarchy (and imperialism) in particular (though I have not considered it relevant to assess potential sources for any Achaemenid royal conventions which are not evident in the *Histories*).\(^{163}\)

#### 0.4.2.1 Some Features of Achaemenid Kingship

Throughout the inscriptions, particularly those relating to Darius, there are references to the king owing his position to the favour of Ahuramazda.\(^{164}\) Particularly striking is the statement of mutual commitment between Darius and Ahuramazda at DSk: “Ahuramazda is mine and I am Ahuramazda’s. I worshipped Ahuramazda. May Ahuramazda help me!” An Achaemenid king thus considered himself to have – or at least wanted to project the impression that he had – a special

\(^{160}\) Cf. Evans, who also notes the slight similarities but more significant differences between the *Histories* and the *Persae* in terms of Darius (Evans (1991) 41).

\(^{161}\) Cf. “reference to such narratives left unelaborated displays the historian’s control over his account – his discernment in selecting and shaping the version he does – and points to the breadth of his knowledge” (Baragwanath (2013) 26-7).

\(^{162}\) “What the Persian sources give us...is not (for the most part) a secure check against the Greeks’ representations of Persia, but potent images, representations of their own” (Harrison (2011) 25) and “to a large extent our knowledge [of Achaemenid Persia] depends on classical, and chiefly Greek, sources. Archaeological evidence from the Achaemenid empire sheds light on the material Achaemenid court and kingship. But no Achaemenid literature survives which would allow us to study the problem from a Persian perspective” (Brosius (2007) 17-18).

\(^{163}\) On these, see Brosius (2007) 19-25, Llewellyn-Jones (2013) 8-9, and Root (2013) 23-7. I have disregarded the administrative texts excavated from the Persepolis, as they shed no light on Achaemenid kingship (they deal with the detailed workings of the management of the Persian empire within the province of Fars – evidence for local activity rather than the empire as a whole). A good selection can be found in Kuhrt 2007, 16, Sections A and B (she considers the difficulties in using the tablets) (Kuhrt (2007) 763-5).

\(^{164}\) Such as DPh, DH, DPg, DPe, DNA and DB.
relationship with Ahuramazda (though there is no clear indication from the inscriptional evidence that kings were regarded as gods themselves, which accords with the current scholarly consensus that the king was not a god, though neither was he the same as other men). This may have been the basis for the authority of the king as king; and certainly the way in which Darius’ inscriptions regularly refer to it underlines the association between king and god (DNA in particular suggests that Darius was made king to bring equilibrium back to Ahuramazda’s creation).

The king protected the Persians (see DPe); he hated wickedness, including the Lie (DB section 63, DNA section 6, DNb/XPl sections 2a and 2b); and he stresses how he has acquired by conquest lands beyond Persia (DPh/DH, DPg, DPe, DB, and DNA). These are generic kingly qualities with an element of Achaemenid adaptation (such as the reference to the Lie) and we find strong allusions to all of them in the Histories. Indeed, the topos of imperial expansion permeates the entire Histories at many levels and is considered in detail in section 0.4.3.1 below and in chapter 1 (though it will become apparent that Darius, the great conqueror seen in the inscriptions, is not presented in such an unqualified way in the Histories).

DB and DNb/XPl contain more specific information about a king’s ‘personal’ qualities, the latter including notions of self-control (2b), having a guiding intelligence (2f), being a fair administrator of justice (2c and d), being physically strong and a good fighter (2g), being suitably appreciative of loyalty (2e), acting with fury in seeking revenge (2h), and a good horseman (also 2h). These characteristics of Achaemenid kings can be tested in very broad terms against the detailed narratives of the individual kings in Herodotus, but it would be rash to make any historical claims for them: they are not rounded portraits of Achaemenid kings but idealised representations.

Herodotus shows awareness of a number of these aspects of Achaemenid kings in his own accounts, but it is impossible to determine if this arose from personal familiarity with some of the inscriptions (though it has to be considered more likely that the oral sources he relied on may themselves have simply been reflecting the inscriptional idealisations). In any event, this issue is immaterial for my purposes.

One further aspect of the Darius inscriptions is particularly interesting. At DB 13b and 14 Darius emphasises how he “with a few [unnamed] men” overcame Gaumata, the Magus imposter who

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165 So Kuhrt (2007) 477 and see the inscriptions cited at note 164 above. Cf. Root’s reading of the imagery surrounding the king – she argues that it strongly suggests a dual aspect to the royal presence underlining the intermediateness of the king’s position as both man (in a sense) and god (in a sense) (Root (2013). For the way in which Aeschylus perceived the Persian kings, see below.

166 See too the so-called Daiva inscription (XPhe (4a and b). Kuhrt 2007, 305 – Xerxes restored order to countries where there was turmoil; and destroyed places where daivas ["a demonic being or false god": Kuhrt (2007) 306] had been worshipped and established the worship of Ahuramazda instead.

167 This is the translation of the Old Persian word drauga. Its opposite, truth, was arta, though the inscriptions we have pay more attention to dispelling the Lie than upholding the Truth.

168 In a very pointed way: for instance, the contrast between Darius’ pronouncements in DB 10, 55-7, and 68-9 as to his stand against the Lie and the assertions attributed to him by Herodotus at 3.72.4-5. Asheri summarises the contrast between this inscription and Herodotus’ account well: “Herodotus’ reshaping of the material is the result of his narrative creativity; whereas the Bisitun inscription is a product of ideology and of uncompromising political propaganda” (Asheri (2007) 393).

169 The fact that the same inscription was repeated for Xerxes supports this – both kings wished to be perceived in this way, though we cannot say to what extent either may have actually fitted such a picture (though Xerxes’ physical appearance, according to Herodotus, was impressive: see section 0.2.5.4 above).

170 “It is probable that Herodotus could not read or speak any language other than Greek” (Harrison (1998) 3).
falsely claimed to be Cambyses’s brother Bardiya. The same episode in the Histories, of course, is preceded by the conspiracy with six others who also assist with the killing of the Magus, but only later in the DB account (at 68) are these ‘few’ men named (and there is no mention of conspiracy or any subsequent constitutional debate). Thus some of the ‘bare bones’ of Herodotus’ account do accord with the account provided by DB, suggesting that (unsurprisingly) Darius’ propaganda had successfully influenced the subsequent oral traditions that Herodotus was to tap into. It is extremely difficult, however, to work out to what extent other elements of Herodotus’ account – the presentation of kings and advisers, for instance: a number of those Persians named at DB 68 feature prominently as advisers to Darius in the Histories – are also elements taken from such oral traditions (or conceived by Herodotus himself).

The power of DB as propaganda for the newly-installed king Darius stems as much from the surrounding imagery (the only understandable medium, of course, for the large number of subjects who were probably unable to read) as the text itself. I will not replicate various scholars’ descriptions or offer actual illustrations, but simply note the broad consensus of Achaemenid scholars: the king, larger by far than any other figure in the scene, is shown triumphant in his subjection of Bardiya/Smerdis, as captives are paraded before him. Ahuramazda benignly watches over proceedings. The relief is an effective illustration of the inscribed text, a potent mixture of royal triumphalism and out and out propaganda, adding nothing to our understanding of Achaemenid kingship as gleaned from the text itself – but not conflicting with it.

It will already be evident that the inscriptions envisage Achaemenid kings glorying in expansion and conquest, with many inscriptions proudly proclaiming the names of the lands and peoples ruled by the Persian king, thanks to Ahuramazda. While it has been argued that the evidence does not support the Herodotean picture of an empire constantly seeking to expand, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion, when reading the likes of DPh, DPg, DPe, and DNA, that the kings gloried in their conquests; and success in this respect is expressly linked with Ahuramazda’s favour – DNA in particular records Ahuramazda, seeing the whole earth in motion, giving it to Darius. No limit to Persian expansion and the taking of other lands is implied, this being regularly presented as attributable to the favour of Ahuramazda. I will argue that, pace Wiesehöfer’s view set out in note 175, the Achaemenid inscriptions demonstrate a more uniform attitude to expansionism than the kings exhibit in the Histories. The emphasis in the surviving inscriptions is on the king’s qualities as a man (see sections 0.2.3 and 0.2.5.5 above for the contrast between the personal interests of

171 While not relevant to my discussion, it should be noted that the historical veracity of Darius’ claims here is extremely suspect: see Kuhrt (2007) 136-9.
172 Herodotus’ six share names with five of the six mentioned at DB 68: Gobryas, Intaphernes, Hydarnes, Otanes and Megabazus.
173 For kings and their advisers, see section 0.4.2.2 below.
175 Wiesehöfer considers that none of the inscriptions “imply any claim to world domination”, arguing that the inscriptions’ tenor and content indicate kings who are content with what they already possess (Wiesehöfer (2004) 215-6). This is not particularly persuasive – the kings would hardly inscribe future proposed conquests, while the self-satisfaction of the lengthy lists and the coupling of them with the statements of divine favour are not inconsistent with further expansion, though the truth is that neither position can be demonstrated beyond doubt.
176 So “the Persian royal inscriptions give ample evidence of royal satisfaction at conquest for conquest’s sake” (Harrison (2011) 46).
177 See section 1.3 of chapter 1.
an individual king as opposed to the broader interests of the Persian people), as illustrated by the inscription on Darius’ tomb (DNb 2g-I) which was later repeated by Xerxes on his tomb (XNb): individual qualities (albeit that these hardly vary between the different kings) and also the personal nature of any confrontation, with the references to an individual rebelling. Similarly, the individual king lists his conquests – these are not, in the epigraphy, Achaemenid conquests.\textsuperscript{178}

Such Achaemenid sculptures as survive at Persepolis have been noted as suggesting “a sense of placidity, of refinement, of ordered control.”\textsuperscript{179} As Harrison puts it, the sheer uniformity of the human representations “means that only the slightest differences can be discerned between kings.”\textsuperscript{180} Such an absence of any concern with kings as individuals is very far from the approach Herodotus takes in the Histories, as will be evident from my analysis.

\subsection*{0.4.2.2 Advisers}

The surviving Achaemenid sources offer little evidence of the role of advisers: those close to the king were required to do his bidding, yet there are no inscriptions referring to the king being ‘helped’ or ‘counselling’ as to what his bidding would be.\textsuperscript{181}

One does occasionally come across possible indicators of advisers – for instance, a short statement inscribed on Darius’ tomb at Naqsh-i Rustam, \textit{inter alia}, “Let not that seem good to you which is spoken in your ear; listen, too, to what is also said”, could be taken as a warning to guard against advisers; but it could just as easily be taken as one to guard against any words heard in any context, or against any words whispered secretly as opposed to being spoken aloud.\textsuperscript{182} Kuhrt has suggested that the Magi’s “learning made them valued royal advisers... occupying a position comparable to that of the scholars surrounding the Assyrian king” (though the position of such scholars is itself barely capable of being established in the sources).\textsuperscript{183} Of course, it is not unlikely that the Achaemenid kings would have sought advice from among the leading Persians. So when we find men featuring prominently in the archaeological record, such as Gobryas, named on the façade of Darius’ tomb at Nashq-I Rustam and depicted standing behind the king, we may infer that acting as counsellor to the king could have been part of the reason for being so singled out; but there are no clear indications that this was in fact the case.

\textsuperscript{178} For example, DB1 section 6, DH, DPg. CF. XPa section 3, where Xerxes refers to works of construction carried out by him and his father – the emphasis is on the dynasty rather than the nation.

\textsuperscript{179} Root (1979) 311

\textsuperscript{180} Harrison (2011) 22.

\textsuperscript{181} Wiesehöfer states, “The \textit{handarzbed} (‘adviser’) is known to have operated both at court and in a provincial context and must have been associated with pedagogic and advisory functions” (Wiesehöfer (1996) 187), but the only evidence he cites for this is the inscription of Shapur I at Naqsh-i Rustam in Fars, which mentions “one Yazbad counsellor of queens” (Brosius cites the same inscription to draw a similar conclusion (Brosius (2007) 27). I am unable to attach much weight to this single inscription (which, after all, dates from the mid-3\textsuperscript{rd} century CE) in respect of advisers to the Persian kings presented in the Histories.

\textsuperscript{182} DBN 3a. Or, indeed, as a warning (there is no clear agreement as to the specific translation here, though the possibility of a reference being made to advisers is not out of the question (Kuhrt (2007) 505)).

\textsuperscript{183} Her evidence as to the Magi is exclusively derived from Greek literary sources (particularly Herodotus). Interestingly, neither the Achaemenid sources nor the Histories give much attention to the possibility of eunuchs acting as royal advisers.
Both Brosius and Llewellyn-Jones assert that members of the elite acted as important advisers to the king both in governance and policy-making, while Kuhrt notes that individuals from subject peoples were rewarded for advisory service. But Brosius cites only a single authority (Lewis (1977) 22); Llewellyn-Jones stretches the (literary only) evidence he cites to far beyond what it can sensibly support; and Kuhrt’s sources are either Greek literary sources, or a Phoenician funerary inscription which acknowledges a reward for service without actually stating that the service in question was giving advice.

Such tenuous snippets of adviser activity teased out from weak evidence contrast sharply with Herodotus’ extensive adviser interactions involving the Persian kings. We are unable to confirm or deny adviser activity as part of Achaemenid historical reality (whether actual or as formally presented for – putting it in simplistic terms – propaganda purposes); but the evidence that we do have – and Achaemenid scholars’ readings of it – gives virtually no indication that this was so. Of course, Achaemenid sources (and the Persae – see section 0.4.3 below) were not the only sources available to Herodotus; and, judging the matter from an anecdotal and narrative perspective, his oral sources may well have placed more emphasis on adviser interactions (though this is something we are unable to determine). Within the Herodotean narrative framework, however, it is clear that such interactions are significant in drawing out both sequences of events and their motivations. They thus play an important part in the narrative structure of the Histories, one it is reasonable to associate with Herodotus’ own conception of his work. In that light, it is also legitimate to consider whether the historian employs those interactions to (inter alia) explore differences between each Persian king. This is the subject of chapter 2.

0.4.2.3 Violence, uncertainty, and fear

The notion of violence being inflicted by kings permeates the Achaemenid inscriptions and is usually presented as a form of deserved punishment. It is presented in the Achaemenid sources in a consistent manner. Herodotus, by contrast, puts forward the various kings’ violent acts in a far

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184 Brosius (2007) 30. Lewis himself concludes, in relation to his own single cited authority (the Old Testament, Book of Ezra, VII 1), that Frye had been correct in doubting the formal establishment of a council of seven as a regular institution (Lewis (1977) 23).

185 "The court was a locus of practical political decision-making and imperial power, and the hereditary nobility of Persia made an important contribution to policy-making and the governance of the realm” (Llewellyn-Jones (2013) 33). His sources for these assertions are literary only: Hebrew Bible, Esther 1:13-22, and Herodotus 3.80-4.

186 Kuhrt (2007) 623. The sources are, in addition to Herodotus, Thucydides Hist. 1.138.1-2, 5-6 (Themistocles); and Plutarch Themistocles 29.8 (Demaratus)

187 Indeed, Kuhrt herself subsequently says of the inscription, "But the grant of such important cities, together with agricultural land (a valuable resource for Sidon with its restricted cultivable area), must have been in response to some signal service that we can, unfortunately, only guess at” (my emphasis) (Kuhrt (2007) 665).

188 It is noteworthy that the index to Briant (1996) contains no entries for ‘advisers’ or ‘counsellors’ at all. It may be that some Achaemenid scholars have been subconsciously influenced by the prevalence of advisers in the Histories to seek out ‘evidence’ for them in Achaemenid sources.

189 Tuplin, in a recent examination of Herodotus’ account from the perspective of Achaemenid imperial organisation, focused on the management elements of the Achaemenid empire, such as satraps and tax collection, arguing that “Herodotus’ consciousness of the management of empire is modest because his concern is with telling stories about politics and warfare” (Tuplin (2011) 47). He says nothing about the extensive Persian king/adviser interactions recounted in the Histories.

190 The Bisitun inscription alone refers to impaling (DB 20, 32, 33, 43, and 50), cutting off ears, tongue or nose or gouging out eyes (DB 32 and 33), and decapitation (DB 32).
more nuanced way than they appear in the inscriptions – again as part of his portrayal of each king as an individual with a particular leadership style.

There are no indications in the Achaemenid inscriptions of kingly uncertainty/perplexity and fear/anxiety, presumably because the kings’ images as presented in the inscriptions were intended to be those of supremely confident and commanding monarchs not susceptible to human failings or weaknesses.

0.4.3 Aeschylus’ Persae

Aeschylus’ Persae was presented at the Dionysia in Athens in 472 BC, just seven years after the final defeat of the invading Persian army. The play focuses on the Persian court’s anxiety about and despondent response to Xerxes’ invasion of Greece in 480-79 BC and its repulsion by the Greeks. While the play’s tone might be expected to be celebratory of the Athenians, even triumphalist, and hostile or scornful so far as the Persians were concerned, the drama proceeds in a more nuanced way. I focus on the stark contrast the play sets up between Darius and his son Xerxes.

0.4.3.1 Kingship and imperialism

That Darius was a Persian king par excellence is suggested by μεγάλας ἀγαθᾶς τε πο-/λισσονόμου βιοτᾶς ἐπεκύρσαμεν at 852-4: while the text here is corrupt, the sense of rule of cities (whether within Persia or within the wider empire) is clear; and the following verses, celebrating Darius’ conquests, reinforce this notion of Darius as a successful and effective Persian king, in spite of being prudent in the way he did so (οὐ διαβάς Ἅλυος ποταμοῖο, 865).

Aeschylus emphasised in his drama those aspects of Persian life that to the Athenians seemed exotic. Xerxes is said at line 75 to drive his ποιμανόριον θείον. Hall stresses that this is not meant to suggest that Xerxes is a god, but to contrast the Persian king with the Homeric kings (who were said to be ποιμένα λαῶν and θείος): “in accordance with their generally extravagant depiction of the army...[the Chorus] make Xerxes’ flock, rather than himself, slightly superhuman”; but at line 157 the Chorus greets the Queen as θεοῦ μὲν εὐνάτειρα Περςῶν, θεοῦ δὲ καὶ μήτηρ, implying that Persian kings do become venerated as gods when they die, if not before.

Lines 211-14 spell out the reality of despotism: if Xerxes succeeds in his campaign, he will be θαυμαστός, and if he fails, being οὐχ ὑπευθυνος πόλει, he will still τῆσδε κοιρανεῖ χθονός – if he is saved (this is subsequently contradicted at 584-94, where the Chorus laments that the Persian

191 See Hall (1996) 166-7 on the textual issue. Modern scholars have fallen over themselves to heap praise on Aeschylus’ Darius (e.g. Broadhead (1960) xxviii and Rosenbloom (2006) 147), though others are a little more sceptical (such as Harrison (2000) 89-90). The Chorus is in no doubt, openly longing for the old days of Darius’ rule (for example, at 648-56) and emphasising his good governance and his outstanding qualities as a king (see 854-6) – he did not kill Persians by waging wars and was θεομήστωρ (‘godlike’ in counsel) and led the army well.

people will no longer accept the rule of the King). Xerxes is depicted by the Messenger as ignorant of reality at lines 361-3; and his response later to the defeat at Salamis is deliberately exotic (to Athenian eyes) and not how a Greek man would be expected to behave. His weakness of character is even alluded to by his own mother (754-9, blaming wicked men for leading Xerxes astray). This contrast between the two kings, father and son, is echoed in the Histories; but the contrast is far more nuanced than the Aeschylean portrayals (indeed, the portraits of the two kings as a whole are more subtly presented and much more fully realised than the figures in the Persae).

The portrayal of Persian imperialism and expansion in the Persae is also different in emphasis from that in the Histories. The Chorus states the effects of Xerxes' defeat on the remainder of the Persian empire at lines 584-94 (part of the exaggerated response throughout the play to what was a relatively minor issue for the Persian empire in reality), but the implicit undermining of Xerxes' royal position is expressly stated later, when Darius sets out the Persian view of its kingly rule and empire in lines 759-86 ("Zeus" bestowed the honour of monarchy on Persia, giving it rule over all of Asia, 763-4), listing all Xerxes' illustrious predecessors, including himself, before concluding at 782-3 Ξέρξης δ᾽ ἐμὸς παῖς ὢν νέος νέα φρονεῖ κοὐ μνημονεύει τὰς ἐμὰς ἐπιστολάς, the implication being that Xerxes disregarded his father's advice to be prudent and not target Greece (though Darius fails to state what Xerxes should have done – as is clear from Darius' own words, Xerxes as a Persian king could not simply choose not to add to the empire). The play therefore presents imperialist expansion as an integral feature of Persian kingship; and the Persian kings were differentiated both as to the manner of their expansion and its outcome – they either succeeded or failed. Again, the Histories will present a much more nuanced account of each king's relationship with imperialist expansion (see section 1.3.2 of chapter 1).

0.4.3.2 Advisers

Although the structure of the Persae necessarily reflects the benefit of hindsight, there are a few suggestions of advice being taken (for example, by Atossa at 170-2, encouraging the Chorus of Elders to advise her, πάντα γὰρ τὰ κέδν᾽ ἐν ὑμῖν ἐστί μοι βουλεύματα). Nor is there any hint of Xerxes having received but ignored any advice before his ill-fated expedition against the Greeks: so, when Darius is told of the disaster, he remarks φεῦ, μέγας τις ἦλθε δαίμων, ὥστε τε μὴ φρονεῖν ῥήξας δὲ πέπλους κἀνακωκύσας λιγύ,/πεζῷ παραγγείλας ἄφαρ στρατεύματι,/ἵησ᾽ ἀκόσμῳ ξὺν φυγῇ (468-70). But note how, at 832-8, Darius simply assumes that Xerxes' clothes will have been rent. Lέγουσι δ᾽ ώς σὺ μὲν μέγαν τέκνων/πλοῦτον ἐκτήσω ξὺν αἰχμῇ, τὸν δ᾽ ἀνανδρίας ὕπο/ἔνδον αἰχμάζειν, πατρῷον δ᾽ ὀλβὸν οὐδὲν αὐξάνειν./τοιὰδ᾽ ἐξ ἀνδρῶν ὀνείδη πολλάκις κλύων κακῶν/τήνδ᾽ ἐβούλευσεν κέλευθον καὶ στράτευμ᾽ ἐφ᾽ Ἑλλάδα. Hall notes that Herodotus mentions not only Mardonius and the Thessalian royal family but also the Peisistratids – hence the reference to κακοῖς ἀνδράσιν that "very likely…would have had a particular significance for Aeschylus' audience" (Hall (1996) 161). Cf. Artabanus' words to Xerxes at 7.16a 1. If Herodotus too never names Ahuramazda.

Which to a large extent, of course, reflects the fact that two very different genres are being compared. Cf. Herodotus' words to Xerxes at 7.16a 1. Rosenbloom notes how an empire can be both benefit and burden when accompanied by such expectations (Rosenbloom (2006) 95). But after so much rather ponderous talk of wise counsel, the Elders' performance is noticeably ineffectual" (Harrison (2000) 82).
The emphasis in Darius’ recriminations is on Xerxes’ νέῳ θράσει (744) and hubris (749-50), which are regarded as causing the disaster – and consistent with this assessment is the way in which Darius, at 760-86, offers a potted history of Persian kings in which each was also personally and solely responsible for his own rule. In short, the adviser aspect of the Histories cannot be said to have any of its direct origins in Aeschylus’ presentation – advisers as a group were simply not as significant within the Aeschylean Persian king context as they were to be in the Histories.

0.4.3.3 Fear, uncertainty, and violence

References in the Persae to kingly violence towards Persians or non-Persian subjects are rare – indeed, the only one occurs at 369-71, when Xerxes is reported to have said that his admirals would be beheaded if the Greek ships escaped (echoed in the Histories by the fate of the Phoenician generals at 8.90.1-3). Herodotus, as will be seen, makes more of the Persian kings’ prerogative to inflict violence on Persians and non-Persians.

In the Persae, fear is regularly referred to, particularly by the Chorus in the opening lines of the play (8-10, cf. also 115): this fear sets the tone for the entire Persian court, emphasised by the Queen’s opening speech and the recounting of her dreams. This mood of foreboding is reinforced by the Queen’s words at lines 600 and 606; and at line 684 Darius himself is shown as fearful in a way then echoed by the Chorus at 694-6. There are no express references to Xerxes being fearful, however (though his mother the Queen remarks on his ἀνανδρία at line 757): the disastrous outcome of his campaign is attributed to over-confidence, recklessness and divine anger, but never to fear; and the kingly fear felt by Darius at line 684 anticipates his kingly horror at the disaster that has befallen the Persians rather than timidity on his part.

The same is even clearer in the case of perplexity and uncertainty: Xerxes is shown not as bewildered but as unwitting in his folly (line 744) and there are no other passages that imply uncertainty (as opposed to incompetence) on his part.

0.4.4 Conclusion

From this preliminary overview of Achaemenid sources and the Persae, neither can be said to have had a significant impact on how Herodotus chose to present and depict the Persian kings in the Histories. The ways in which Herodotus presents each king at the micro-level rarely capture the elevated tone and lofty sanctimony of the Achaemenid inscriptions: it is likely that the oral sources were more influential for Herodotus’ depictions. But even there a number of decisions would have

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199 Anticipating Xerxes himself at 911-2 and 942-3 – a δαιμών was responsible.
201 καί με καρδίαν αμύσσει φροντίς (161) and ταῦτ' ἔμοιγε δείματ' ἔστ' ἰδεῖν (210).
202 Hall notes how the emotional centre of the scene is fear – Persian fear of the Greeks but also Persian subjects’ fear of their king (Hall (1996) 158).
had to be made: so, to take a single example, the Persian wars, particularly the final defeat of Xerxes and his army, formed a significant cultural memory in fifth-century Athens. Xerxes was a prominent figure in literary terms and in the Histories it is he who is shown destroying the city. In the Herodotean account of Egypt he is, unlike Cambyses, barely mentioned at all, though at 7.7.1 Herodotus notes that Xerxes suppressed a revolt by the Egyptians and Ἀἴγυπτον πᾶσαν πολλὸν δουλοτέρην ποιήσας ἢ ἐπὶ Δαρείου ἦν. It is not unreasonable to assume that the Egyptians Herodotus encountered on his travels made him aware of Egyptian traditions about Xerxes just as they had briefed him on the extensive stories about Cambyses; the obvious inference is that Herodotus consciously selected the evidence he acquired for each king when it came to his presentations of them in the Histories – and that the ‘Xerxes’ as remembered by the Egyptians was not required for those purposes, because that Xerxes was either wholly the same as the ‘Athenian Xerxes’, or so different that the task of reconciling the two Xerxes was too complicated.

Herodotus does occasionally acknowledge his own role in selecting an account that he finds πιθανώτατος (such as at 1.214.4-5). While he does not explain how he judges a particular account to be πιθανώτατος, it probably reflects his historical judgment as what was more likely to have happened rather than him selecting the account that best fits the way he was shaping his overall narrative. Herodotus, as a Carian Greek from a city that had for long periods been under Persian sway, would have been exposed to an array of oral traditions about the Greeks’ defeat of the Persian invaders, both Greek and non-Greek, as well as the Persian kings. This would have widened as he travelled through foreign lands; and at some point in his creative process he took the decision to present each Persian king as a distinct personality.

0.5 Macro-readings of the Histories

The scholarship on the Persian kings is extensive, much of it focused on ‘patterning’ within the Histories – a very significant topic in modern Herodotean scholarship; but my approach to these Persian kings downplays the significance of such patterning in order to emphasise the significance of the individual portrayals of the Persian kings at the micro-level. The macro-approaches of a number of scholars have resulted in a range of rich readings, but such approaches can lead to the

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203 See section 0.5.3 below for Athens.
204 We have differing accounts from other authors which are not self-evidently any more reliable – though there are some problems with Herodotus’ πιθανώτατος account here (see Asheri (2007) 216).
205 At 3.3.1 and 3.9.2 he does provide less πιθανός alternative explanations.
206 For a brief overview of the evidence we have for the life of Herodotus, see Asheri (2007) 1-7.
207 We may infer that there was no single Greek ‘collective memory’ about it from his remarks at 7.139.2-6; otherwise his statement at 7.139.1 (ἐνθαῦτα ἀναγκαίῃ ἐξέργομαι γνώμην ἀποδέξασθαι ἐπίφθονον μὲν πρὸς τῶν πλεόνων ἀνθρώπων) would be meaningless.
208 By ‘macro-readings I mean readings which have led to the identifications of particular ‘patterns’, ‘schemata’, and ‘templates’ structuring the Herodotean narrative. While Immerwahr was not the first to offer such readings of the Histories, he has been among the most influential.
209 I am not suggesting that looking beyond patterns and structures has not been considered before: see, for example, Gray (1996) 364-5 and 387, acknowledging that patterns can vary from tyrant to tyrant and that focusing on them serves Herodotus’ various contexts rather than the tyranny stereotype per se; and Dewald floats the possibility that the differences reflect “memories of genuine data” (Dewald (2003) 58 note 70), though it is, of course, impossible to verify this. Cf. Tritle, who, disagreeing with Immerwahr’s notion of battle logoi as following a particular pattern, contends that the battles of Books 7-9 “are described very individually rather than as ‘set pieces’” (Tritle (2006) 213). Kiesling offers a spirited defence of Herodotus as an early ‘combat’ military historian (Kiesling (2003)).
neglect of readings at the micro-level, which can be even more productive than the macro-readings (I offer some examples later in this section). I focus on the differentiation of the individual Persian kings at this micro-level, considering the presentations of the four kings in specific contexts and analysing the differences between them to determine the extent to which, in practice, Herodotus presents the Persian kings shifting between particular types and styles of kingship and leadership. In that context, it is natural to wonder whether kings generally are in the Histories seen as different from their own subjects, or simply tend to be the people who are to the fore when historical events are recounted, whose actions and motivations, accordingly, are broadly the same as non-rulers – that is, men who are undoubtedly ‘human’. Do the kings exhibit different styles of leadership? Did Herodotus consider Persian kingship to be different from other people’s kingship? My approach to these questions is set out in sections 0.2.4-0.2.5 above.

I turn now to three widely-discussed macro-readings of the Histories. In each case I analyse a modern reading of the Persian kings at the macro-level (showing how the relevant episodes fall within the identified pattern or template) to demonstrate, I submit, how a reading at the micro-level (comparing and contrasting the ways in which the individual Persian kings are presented in similar situations) can prove to be at least as fruitful and persuasive as the macro-reading – an outcome evident in a number of other situations throughout chapters 1, 2, and 3. My approach, recognising the force of Munson’s observation, is much closer to that of Gray (albeit that her primary focus is on Greek tyrants), and will involve the examination of the presentations of the individual kings without emphasising such macro- or schematic preconceptions, to determine what those individual portraits can tell us about Persian kingship within the Histories.

0.5.1 ‘The rise and fall of rulers’

Immerwahr is one of the most notable exponents of the macro approach, reading the Histories as a single whole – as de Jong puts it, he “lays bare various ‘narrative patterns and thought patterns’ that function as structuring elements, for example ‘the rise and fall of rulers’”. This is indeed one of the most established narrative patterns, accepted by a wide range of scholars. Immerwahr regards the pattern as “basic for the logoi in dealing with Croesus, Cyrus, and Darius”, adding that

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210 One example: the linking of the Oebazus and Pythius episodes (see section 3.3.4.1 of chapter 3).
211 See note 1 above.
212 Cf. Baragwanath (2008) 3, on how Herodotus “displays an overwhelming interest in the reasons behind actions”.
213 See section 0.2.5 above for “styles of leadership”.
214 I am not challenging the existence of these patterns as identified by the macro-approaches; rather, I am championing the benefit of a different approach focusing on the specific differences (rather than the general similarities) between various episodes. For example, as Immerwahr and Hartog note (Immerwahr (1956) 262-3 and Hartog (1988) 36-8 respectively) in relation to Darius’ invasion of Scythia and Xerxes’ invasion of Greece, undoubted patterns in the narrative can be identified in each; but within them there are also differences between the kings as individuals and their behaviour as kings, which I examine in section 1.3.2 of chapter 1.
215 Herodotus’ portrayals of Cyrus’ successors, Cambyses, Darius, and Xerxes, are also individualised to an extent unparalleled in other sources” (Munson (2009), rev. 2013b) 322).
216 See note 209 above.
217 De Jong (2013 [1999]) 268. Cf. Breebaart’s observation that Immerwahr’s “masterly book Form and Thought in Herodotus is a conspicuous example of an attempt to envisage Herodotus’ Histories as a kind of Brucknerian symphony”, (Breebaart (1973) 98). I have focused on Immerwahr’s work in view of its continuing prominence in Herodotean studies, but he was by no means the first ‘patterner’: see Waters (1971) 7 note 16 for details of some of his predecessors.
“Reversal of fortune is the climax of the elaborate pattern of the rise and fall of a ruler”. Thus Immerwahr can describe the “two Babylonian conquests” as “symbolic of mastery over Asia”, although he believes that at the thematic level the only link between the two episodes is that they are noted as “first” and “second”. In the same way, while he argues that Croesus and the four Persian kings “are individual creations that are at the same time typical manifestations of royal power as such”, his notion of the kings’ individuality is based simply on each being framed by “a particular aspect of the overall cycle of rise and fall”: for him, this overriding pattern is the key to Herodotus’ presentations of the Persian kings.

But the shortcomings of this approach can be illustrated by Immerwahr’s lack of appreciation of the connection between the two Babylon accounts. That Herodotus draws attention to it plainly has some significance, but, in the absence of any structural connection, the link must be that Herodotus is inviting the reader to examine them together, not at the macro-level but at the micro-level – and to reflect on the differences between them and how, in these similar situations, each king behaved and what that tells us about each king as a king. This approach differs from Immerwahr’s ‘pattern’ approach – and it also provides a more persuasive reading of the two episodes than he has offered (or, rather, failed to offer).

0.5.2 The despotism template

Another widely accepted macro-approach is closely linked to ‘the rise and fall of empires’: the identification of a ‘despotism template’. Lateiner has argued that the account of the generic monarch in the constitutional debate in Book 3 is applied, albeit with appropriate modifications, to the presentations of the various individual rulers described in the Histories. This approach has had a powerful influence on the way in which the Persian kings in the Histories have been read and, I suggest, has led in its turn to readings that accord with the implicit preconceptions and prejudices of such approaches. The approach has a strong grip: Dewald notes how the five kings’ larger narratives “reinforce some aspects of the despotic template”; while Gammie, expressly utilising Otanes’ speech in the constitutional debate (3.80.1-6) as the basis of ‘a schematization of the characteristic defect of the tyrant’, sees a distinction between objective...

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218 Immerwahr (1966) 76.
219 Ibid. 78.
220 Ibid. 106.
221 Ibid. 184.
222 Ibid. 307. Cf. his suggestion that, in the case of Croesus and the Persian kings, “individual character is thus not the result of any accidental traits of human nature, but is strictly connected with typical situations” (Ibid. 184).
223 But not identical: Immerwahr himself notes “The campaign logos itself is constructed like a true logos of conquest, rather than as the suppression of a revolt” (Immerwahr (1966) 105).
224 I consider the two episodes fully in section 3.3 of chapter 3.
226 Freedom, for Herodotus, promotes good counsel and effective government (as Otanes argued at 3.80.6 [a citation which Lateiner asterisks as oratio recta]): despotisms may prosper but they carry the seed of self-destruction” (Lateiner (1989) 184).
228 Dewald (2003) 33 – though, as will be seen, she develops her approach to ‘templates’ in a more nuanced and more persuasive way than most.
historiography and the conventional characterising of tyrants (in response to an argument put forward by Waters). Gammie argues that, while Waters can demonstrate positive aspects of kings and tyrants as presented, the presentation, reflecting conventional portraiture, was included simply to add plausibility to the picture of each king or tyrant. Gammie satisfies himself that this offers a full explanation of Herodotus’ accounts and, indeed, that it fits the template of a despotic ruler in Otanes’ speech at 3.80.2.

But there is a degree of circularity in the argument, as he had adopted as his analytic tool a schema based on 3.80.2 in the first place; and even then his attempts to read the Persian king portrayals exclusively in that light have to be tempered on occasion. So he has to accept that the portrait of Darius “is the …least conventional….For whatever reason, the portrait of Darius is bland, especially in comparison to Cambyses and Xerxes”. He offers three possible explanations as to why Darius was “nearly” exempted (to adopt Gammie’s terminology) “from the stereotype”. That “nearly” is deft, but did Herodotus “exempt” Darius or not? It is surely a clear-cut issue: and if he did (which I think even Gammie, albeit he is unwilling to say so without that slippery qualification, accepts), the whole “stereotype” argument become less compelling.

Gammie similarly fits Xerxes into his despot template by stretching Herodotus’ account of Xerxes to present him as a king who used force on women, by simply judging Xerxes “and his family” together (despite acknowledging Xerxes’ strong disapproval elsewhere towards rape) – not the only aspect of Xerxes as presented that does not accord with Gammie’s template.

These examples illustrate the shortcomings of a macro-approach: such a conclusion, at best a distortion of the picture Herodotus presents, undermines the value of the template if such nuances have to be disregarded for an episode to fit it. Of course, I do not deny the existence of such a pattern linking the various accounts, but these important differences in each account, I suggest, must serve a purpose within the Herodotean construct.

0.5.3 A warning to fifth-century Athens

The idea of the Histories constituting a warning to the Athenian contemporaries of Herodotus by obliquely commenting (whenever he presented Persian imperialism) on Athenian imperialism and how it too would ultimately have to confront the inevitability of imperial decline is a commonplace of

229 Gammie (1986) 174; and Waters (1971). Waters was not impressed by the idea of patterns, though his belief that the various kings and tyrants within the Histories are portrayed with objectivity and historiographical accuracy is highly optimistic.
232 That Xerxes’ family (in the shape of his wife Amestris) was guilty of horrible violence to the wife of Masistes is not in doubt (see 9.112.1); but Xerxes himself was trapped by Persian law (ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου ἐξεργόμενος, 9.111.1) in the face of Amestris’ request for Masistes’ wife to be handed over to her; and Herodotus makes it clear that Xerxes consented κάρτα δὴ ἀέκων (9.111.1).
233 Gammie notes of Xerxes that “whereas the typical despotic ruler in Otanes’ speech is a breaker of laws, Xerxes is a lawkeeper as well. Xerxes’ respect for law, in some regards, appears to be held out by Herodotus as a feature of the leader of the great expedition against Greece” (Gammie (1986) 184).
234 Cf. Sancisi-Weerdenburg’s observation that Herodotus’ depiction of Xerxes is “far-removed from [Gammie’s] simplistic depiction of a tyrant” (Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1989) 555).
Herodotean scholarship; and I fully accept the various fruitful suggestions of scholars such as Strasburger, Fornara, Raaflaub, Moles, Fowler, Forsdyke, Munson, and Irwin (which in some cases can also be linked with the increasing scholarly focus on how Herodotus presents “the Other” in terms of Greek self-definition).\footnote{235}{Strasburger (1955) 14, Fornara (1971), Raaflaub (1987), Moles (1996), Fowler (2003), Forsdyke (2006), Munson (2007), and Irwin (2015) as to Athens. As to “the Other”, see section 0.1 above and also Hartog (1988), Hall (1989), Cartledge (1993), Skinner (2012), and Provencal (2015).}

But I should emphasise at the outset that the linking of Herodotus’ narrative of the Persian empire with contemporary concerns is not my primary objective when focusing on what the presentations of Persian kings can tell us about Herodotus’ attitude to leadership. I regard such concerns as not directly relevant to my investigations (though on occasion I refer to them and have some pertinent observations in section 1.2.3 of chapter 1 and section 4.4 of the Conclusion).

The converse possibility – that Herodotus’ view of Athenian imperialism may have retrospectively influenced how he chose to present Persian imperialism – I will also not pursue in this thesis, not least because of the near impossibility of establishing not only Herodotus’ view but also the extent to which it may have played any part in his presentation of Persian imperialism.\footnote{236}{I note in passing that the presentation of Greek, and particularly Athenian, leaders in Books 7 and 8 is sufficiently far-removed from the accounts of the Persian kings to imply the possibility that Herodotus may have considered imperialism as practised by monarchs differed from it as practised by democracies.} I proceed on the premise that Herodotus’ account was not intended solely to offer an oblique analysis or critique of Athenian imperialism: it was also intended to portray his view of historic Persian imperialism in its own right – and to raise issues directly relevant to or arising from it.

0.6 Summary of the thesis

In chapter 1 I examine the implicit contract between Persian king and the Persians whereby their independence from external forces was guaranteed by accepting a king (see section 0.2.5.5 above) and how this developed into a ceaseless expansion of the Persian empire – the latter a fundamental feature of Persian kingship as presented within the Histories, but sought by each king in his own way (strongly indicative of their individual styles of leadership).

In chapter 2 I argue that, since the focus on advisers throughout the Histories not only serves as a significant structuring device within the narrative, but also forms a large part of the overall presentations of the Persian kings, each king’s relationship and interactions with his advisers provide the potential to discern significant differences between them in allowing for the introduction within the narrative of plans, intentions, aspirations, and the floating of possibilities. The Persian monarchs as presented in the Histories were autocratic kings with absolute power to rule as they wished; as this advisory aspect is largely invisible as a phenomenon in both the Achaemenid inscriptions and the Persae, it offers a particularly Herodotean context within which his particular concerns may have been shaped.
In chapter 3 I extend my investigation to other modes of behaviour, selected because they either constituted a challenge for a king (uncertainty and perplexity), or had the potential to undermine the king's positions as such (fear and anxiety), or provide a particular insight into how kings exercised a specific privilege (the use of violence).

In the Conclusion, I summarise each king's style of leadership as established by my analysis: Cyrus consistently exhibits a strong, visionary but caring leadership, yet driven by his hunger for expansion to overreach himself, and Cambyses a self-absorbed style of leadership. Darius is presented delivering a quality leadership in terms of administration and logistics, while having to rely on those around him for more high-level aspects of kingship. Xerxes is shown attempting to offer a cautious approach to kingship by adopting a consultative style of leadership.

I then go on in section 4.3 of the Conclusion to set the identified styles of leadership against certain modern theories of leadership, to discover the extent to which such modern theories may assist in Herodotean readings; or, indeed, whether Herodotus' presentations themselves highlight shortcomings in such theories.

Finally, in section 4.4 of the Conclusion, I address the general issue of leadership in Herodotus in the light of my findings.
CHAPTER 1 – PERSIAN KINGS AND IMPERIAL EXPANSIONISM

1.1 Introduction

It has long been recognised that the pattern of “the excesses and failures of Persian imperialism” is one of the most significant structural elements of the Histories as a whole. Persian imperialism is not the only form of imperialism found in the Histories, however, and I begin in section 1.2 by analysing some of these other examples of imperialism (and the corresponding form of kingship) before contrasting them with Persian kingship and imperialism, to establish whether there is any distinctively Persian element as to imperialism in the Histories.

I then analyse in section 1.3 the sense of (and responses to) Persian imperial expansion (what Evans has termed “the imperialist impulse”) exhibited by each king, in particular on the alleged Persian νόμος of expansionism, allowing me, in section 1.4, to pull these strands together from the perspective of each king’s style of leadership. My analysis demonstrates that the individual styles of the different Persian kings are strongly displayed in this most fundamental aspect of Persian kingship. I summarise my findings in section 1.5.

1.2. Kingship and imperialism in the Histories

It is not surprising, given Herodotus’ regular recognition of differences between cultures, to find him presenting kingship not as a consistent state across different societies but as a fluid condition reflective of the society in which it functions. In section 1.2.1 below I explore these differences in respect of imperialism in non-Persian contexts, before going on in section 1.2.2 to assess Persian kingship and imperialism as presented in the Histories.

1.2.1 Non-Persian kingship and imperialism

As mentioned above, empire in the Histories is not an exclusively Persian preserve. Two other empires appear in the Histories even before the reader’s first encounter with the Persian empire, both closely associated thematically with the Persian empire: Croesus’ Lydian empire and the Medes’ empire; and in Book 2 there are also significant references to the empire of Egypt. I analyse each in detail below.

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239 The possible link referred to in section 0.5.3 of the Introduction between Persian imperialism and Athenian imperialism in Herodotus’ day is addressed further in section 1.2.3 below.
240 See, for example, 2.173.2 and 5.111.4, considered in section 0.2.3 of the Introduction.
1.2.1.1 Croesus and the Lydian empire

That Croesus was king of a large empire is evident in Herodotus’ account.\(^{241}\) But while Croesus, unlike any other king including the Persian kings, is presented on a number of occasions as possessing an *empire* (ἀρχή), he is never shown obsessing about his predecessors and their achievements – there is no expressed expectation of expansion; and his attack on Persia is initially presented in 1.46.1 as driven not by the desire for gain for its own sake but defensive considerations.\(^{242}\) Even the Delphic pronouncement that he so badly misunderstood focused on the destruction of an empire rather than the expansion of one (1.53.3): expansionism *per se* was not in his mind, which suggests one possible difference between Croesus as an imperialist and the Persian kings as imperialists – the latter, unlike Croesus, sought to add to Persian territory, not simply preserve what they already had (though when I analyse the Persian kings at the micro-level in section 1.3 of chapter 1, the situation will be seen to be more nuanced than that).

But the two reasons subsequently expressed at 1.73.1 for Croesus wishing to go to war are both personal in their terms: the first expansionist (but to add to ἐπυποθοῦ μοῖραν) and the second the avenging of Astyages (γαμβρὸν Κροίσῳ). It is unclear whether Croesus had always intended this, or whether his motives had evolved as a result of the encouragement his misinterpretation of the oracle had given him. Certainly the introduction of this dual motivation at 1.73.2 is unexpected given how Herodotus has been presenting Croesus until this point.

As we see in section 1.3, the Persian kings too are presented as having strong personal motivations for expansion and conquest, and in Croesus’ case the interests of the Lydians as a people come a distant second to his own (compare his advice to Cyrus at 1.155.4, to tame the Lydians by metaphorically emasculating them).\(^{243}\) This aspect of Croesus’ imperialism will find some echoes in Cambyses, but far fewer in the other Persian kings (see section 1.3 below).

1.2.1.2 The Medes’ empire

This empire was established by Deioces who, after his friends promoted the idea of monarchy,\(^{244}\) quickly emerged as the leading candidate, whereupon the Medes τοῦτον καταινέουσι βασιλέα σφίσι εἶναι (1.98.1). Many scholars consider the account of Deioces a significant theoretical contribution to the template of despotism,\(^{245}\) and it is true that, at 1.96.1-100.2,\(^{246}\) Herodotus makes a number

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\(^{241}\) See 1.29.1 for the various peoples named in 1.28.1 who had been taken under Croesus’ sway.

\(^{242}\) It is hard to have much sympathy for views such as Waters’: “the ‘good’ Kroisos (for surely that is the general impression of this pious but foolish person)” (Waters (1971) 3). Cf. 1.92.3-4 for an example of how Croesus showed his ‘piety’.

\(^{243}\) See Munson, arguing that both episodes are instances of a choice being made during a power void as to “the best possible form of government to ensure law and order in a state” (Munson (2009, rev. 2013b) 326). I agree that this is how Herodotus presents the Deioces episode, but am unpersuaded that this was the motivation behind the constitutional debate, the focus of which within the narrative is the maintenance of Persian power.

\(^{244}\) Asheri sees the story as an intellectual Greek’s parable on the rise of tyranny (Asheri (2007) 149). The historical value of Herodotus’ account has been severely questioned: see Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1989) and Michels (2011) 690-1.
of points that also apply to the Persian kings.\textsuperscript{247} The account has regularly been taken as a precursor to the negative view of kingship/tyranny espoused by Otales in 3.80.2-6,\textsuperscript{248} though Herodotus makes it clear that, while Deioces ἔρασθεὶς τυραννίδος (1.96.2), he found his way to the throne by dispensing justice.\textsuperscript{249}

Deioces took no steps to develop a Median empire,\textsuperscript{250} though his successors did so and it is presented in the \textit{Histories} as a direct precursor of the Persian empire itself.\textsuperscript{251} In that light one might expect to see similar features so far as imperialism is concerned (indeed, Munson argues that Persian imperialism is in Herodotus’ presentation a Median practice adopted by the Persians).\textsuperscript{252} The Median predecessors of Astyages, however, are not presented as universally expansionist in their outlook: Deioces’ son Phraortes did look to expand, even attacking the still prosperous Assyrians though dying in the attempt, and his successor, Cyaxares, took expansionism even further (1.103.1),\textsuperscript{253} but when attacked by the Scythians (1.104.2) it was to take him twenty eight years to overthrow his conquerors and restore Median power.\textsuperscript{254} Astyages, Cyaxares’ successor and the last in the Median royal line, is presented as not looking to conquer new territory but, like Croesus, to preserve what he already had (1.107.1-2); elsewhere Herodotus gives no indication that Astyages, in contrast with his grandfather and father, had achieved any military success.\textsuperscript{255} In these accounts the Median kings, despite their similarities with the Persian kings, are simply not as focused on imperial expansion – and as successful in achieving it – as the Persian kings themselves would prove to be.

\textsuperscript{247} Current scholarship links the account with the constitutional debate, seeing the “Deioces story in close comparison with the Constitutional Debate (3.80-2), as revealing a meditation about political power, democracy, and the single ruler” (Thomas (2012) 246, reporting Walter’s view as set out in Walter (2004), though she had suggested earlier that the story’s eastern origin is uncertain (\textit{ibid.} 233)). I consider Thomas’ further discussion at section 0.3 of the Introduction. See too Dewald (2003) 28-9 – when referring to “the second version of the despotic template”, cited in note 67 above, she considered the Deioce story to be the first.

\textsuperscript{248} See, for example, Lateiner (1989) 171, who, however, pays insufficient attention to the willing acceptance by the Medes of, first, the principle of kingship and, second, Deioces as the king – he engineered the situation, but he needed the Medes to agree, which legitimised Deioces’ ‘autocracy’ (cf. Provencal’s reference to “constitutional despotism” – a somewhat incoherent concept (Provencal 2015) 65).

\textsuperscript{249} For an analysis of Deioces’ accession to the throne as compared with Cyrus’, see section 0.3 of the Introduction.

\textsuperscript{250} This can be inferred from Herodotus’ statement at 1.102.1.


\textsuperscript{252} \textit{Ibid.} 324-5. Her argument is grounded in the reference at 1.107.2 to the τρόπος ήσυχος of Cyrus’ father, coupled with Tomyris’ charge against Cyrus himself that he would ἄλλα πάντως μᾶλλον ἤδυτος ἔναν δι’ ήσυχης εἶναι (1.206.2). While Astyages is presented as selecting Cambyses as his son in law for his ήσυχος τρόπος, I find no evidence in the text for the claim that Ἦσυχη “denotes a lack of the kind of political and military activism that is typical of individuals or states with ambition to rule – like the Median kings”. Astyages’ choice of Cambyses as son-in-law is presented not as the grounding of Persian imperialism in Median imperialism, but as another instance of Herodotean irony: the son of Astyages’ daughter and Cambyses, selected by Astyages because of his father’s found τρόπος ήσυχος (1.107.2), was to prove to be the opposite of peaceful himself.

\textsuperscript{253} The word άλκιμος is used only ten times in the \textit{Histories}, but only once of the Persians, when at 5.49.3 Aristagoras tells Cleomenes that defeating them will be easy, οὗτος γὰρ οἱ βαρβάροι άλκιμοι εἰσι. This word is never used to suggest that the Persians were warlike, in spite of the way their aggressive expansionism is depicted in the narrative (and, indeed, the warlike declarations in the Achaemenid inscriptions).

\textsuperscript{254} Cyaxares “is the king-conqueror and diplomat; he is the most important of the Median kings” (Asheri (2007) 152); but a period of twenty eight years’ subjugation is hardly the mark of a “warrior-king”.

\textsuperscript{255} The contrast between the first and last of the Median kings is again instructive: the sacrifice by the Medes to Deioces of their freedom (cf. the Persians’ sacrifice at 1.127.1) led to a Median empire: while that in the case of Astyages resulted in the Medes becoming slaves where before they had been masters (1.129.4, confirmed by Herodotus at 1.130.1).
1.2.1.3 Egypt

Herodotus records at 2.147.2 how the Egyptians, ἐλευθερωθέντες (cf. 1.126.6, considered in section 0.2.5.5 of the Introduction), ejected the Ethiopian king, and chose twelve new kings as they could not bear to be king-less (2.147.2). Herodotus does not explain why being without a king was impossible for the Egyptians, but again a vague ‘they’ appointed the requisite kings: ‘they’ could have been the Egyptian elite, the Egyptian priests, the Egyptian ‘people’ – Herodotus does not say, apparently uninterested in how kingly authority is derived.256 A similar vagueness can also be found in another passage (2.172.5), but in this case the word δουλεύειν is very striking – indeed, it is the only instance in the Histories of it being applied to a people being ‘enslaved’ by their own king (reflecting the situation under Deioces rather than under Cyrus).

The first Egyptian king identified by Herodotus as making war on other peoples for the purpose of conquest was Sesostris (2.102.2-103.2).257 He was responsible for a number of pillars in the lands he conquered which proclaimed his name, his native land, and how he had subdued them with his might (so very much a personal conquest by the named king rather than ‘the Egyptians’). But Sesostris’ claim, according to Lloyd, was totally unhistorical and “has its origins in nationalist propaganda aimed at making Sesostris’ conquests equal or even surpass those of the Persians” – which, if correct, suggests that such triumphalism was not imitated by the Persians but originated with them.258 Similar propaganda perhaps lay at the root of the account in 2.110.2-3 of Darius being obliged to accept that he was not entitled to a monument in front of the sanctuary of Hephaistos: while the explanation at 2.110.2-3, Lloyd adds, reflected Darius’ general popularity in Egypt, the statement at 2.110.2, with the emphasis on Darius οὐ δυνασθῆναι to conquer the Scythians rather than simply recording that he did not conquer them, anticipates how Herodotus will present the Scythian expedition as very much a personal failure by Darius.

The most noteworthy feature of the accounts of the other Egyptian kings, however, is the emphasis placed on the nature of the memorial each left (see 2.121.1 and 2.136.3 – this, not conquest, was Asychis’ way of surpassing all his predecessors). Only Apries was an exception to this Egyptian pattern of non-conquest (2.161.2). Amasis added little to the Egyptian empire (adopting instead a foreign policy involving diplomacy and the forging of strategic alliances in the face of Persia’s growing power that was designed to retain what he had rather than adding to it),259 though he did capture Cyprus – and subjected it to the payment of tribute (2.182.2).

These episodes illustrate how, despite some imperial behaviour exhibited by Egyptian kings, there was a real gulf between Egyptian and Persian imperialism as presented in the Histories in terms of

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256 Cf. the same indifference in the constitutional debate (see section 0.2.3 of the Introduction). Herodotus does not seem puzzled by the Egyptians’ preference for monarchy either. The appointment carried the potential for the twelve kings to become one (2.147.4), which duly occurred at 2.152.5 despite the measures taken by the twelve kings to prevent it. The narrative provides no clue as to whether the Egyptians who had been eager to be ruled had any say in this later development.

257 My focus on the account of the Egyptians’ conquests is to ascertain the extent to which they, as presented by Herodotus, possessed non-Persian and shared any Persian features in relation to imperialism.


259 See 2.180.1-182.2 for his gifts to Greek temples and oracles and 3.1.2 for his fearful attitude to Persia.
scale and achievement. The way in which Cambyses swept away Egyptian resistance in the initial Persian conquest and the barely mentioned suppression of an Egyptian revolt by Xerxes illustrate Herodotus’ view of Persia having surpassed Egypt as an imperial power.

1.2.1.4 Persian ‘freedom’

The contrast between Amasis at 2.172.5 and Cyrus at 1.127.1 suggests a qualitative distinction between the two peoples and their respective kingships so far as their ideas of freedom were concerned, reflecting the differences in the two peoples as presented in the Histories: the Egyptians were the face of ancient, long-since expired imperialism which had made slaves of them, while the Persians were the current (within the narrative) version of it, but dynamic and bold, as rule by a king such as Cyrus was different from rule by other types of king in that it created ‘freedom’. Similarly, the comparison with Deioces shows the qualitative difference between Deioces and Cyrus as kings (Croesus too was inferior, having been conquered by Cyrus). This supremacy of Cyrus as a king explains the dilemma faced by subsequent Persian kings: other than the deranged Cambyses (3.34.4-5), they did not presume to compare themselves with Cyrus (3.160.1), while being aware (deeply so in the case of Xerxes) of the need to live up to him. Their differing responses to Persian ‘freedom’ and the legacy of Cyrus are, as I show in section 1.3.2 below, further indicators of their own different styles of leadership.

1.2.2 Persian imperialism in the Histories – non-Persian perspectives

Within the Histories the Persians are presented in opposition to a number of other cultures, not just that of the Greeks, and, while that does not preclude a Greek/Persian polarity, it reduces its significance within the Histories as a whole. Putting the matter at its most basic, Persian imperial expansionism, which patently conflicted with all their neighbours’ expectations that they would be left to live their own lives, permeates the entire Histories, but to regard this as a Persian νόμος overstates the matter: the degree to which Persian expansionism within the Histories was expected of – and by – the Persian kings at the individual level varied, as I show in section 1.3 below.261

I argue that modern scholarship’s unquestioning acceptance of such a Persian νόμος derives from Xerxes’ own misreading of this aspect of his royal inheritance: for Xerxes’ predecessors, expansionism is presented as an integral part of what it meant at a personal level to be a Persian king without being a recognised νόμος. I also address within the imperialism context the themes I have previously identified, strategic issues/risk and succession planning, before concluding with an assessment of the kings’ leadership styles in the same context.

261 See sections 0.4.2 and 0.4.3 respectively of the Introduction for these aspects within Achaemenid sources and in the Persae.
A number of episodes involving non-Persian monarchs present the reader with effectively an outsider's view of Persian imperialism. Tomyris' words to Cyrus at 1.206.1-2 strongly imply that this imperialist venture was not so much a Persian project as that of Cyrus himself (addressing him through her herald as βασιλεῦ Μήδων, a form of address regarded by Dickey as “not entirely courteous”\textsuperscript{262} before proceeding to warn him to be content with the rule he had).\textsuperscript{263} In view of the differences between Median imperialism and Persian imperialism I have drawn out in section 1.2.1.2 above, however, the reference to the 'king of the Medians' here also illustrates the futility of such a plea to a Persian king, whose rationale for expanding his empire cannot be viewed in the same way as that of the Medes.\textsuperscript{264} This is the first time Herodotus presents the reality about the nature of Persian kingship and its drive for expansion: as I show below, other (non-Persian) monarchs did not automatically share that drive, some openly questioned the point of it; ultimately, however, they came to understand that they had no choice but to accept that the Persian kings would not cease their efforts to expand their empire.

At 1.212.2 Tomyris offered the king further advice, but Cyrus was as indifferent as he had been to her previous advice. Strikingly, Tomyris expected that her advice would be ignored – so her level of awareness was above that of Artabanus, who (as will be seen in sections 2.2.3.1 and 2.2.4.1 of chapter 2) believed it possible that the Persian kings he advised (Darius and Xerxes) would heed him. The end result, however, was the same – whichever way it was confronted, the Persian drive for expansion was non-negotiable for all Persian kings (the outcome for each king, of course, depending on his individual performance as a king and leader).

The Ethiopian king’s response at 3.21.2-3 to Cambyses’ overtures again illustrates how non-Persian kings were unable to understand what drove a Persian king (by failing to grasp what was special about it): expansionism as a part of an individual Persian king’s sense of self as a king was a concept far beyond the understanding of non-Persians. The idealisation of kingship in this passage is underlined by the Ethiopian king having no need in economic terms to conquer further territory – indeed, the people themselves would not have thought in such terms, as they would have fallen into the relaxed way of life that Cyrus at 9.122.3 warned the Persians against. The idealisation of the Ethiopian king and his remonstrations with Cambyses indicate his failure to appreciate that peoples could have different strategic goals: the Persian king was no tyrant forcing his people into such a choice, for, as we have seen in section 0.2.5.5 of the Introduction, the Persians had willingly chosen to be guided in all matters by their kings.

Herodotus does not present this cultural clash in a realistic way; rather, the Ethiopian king is presented as a sort of proto-king, chosen by the Ethiopians themselves: an idealised man as

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\textsuperscript{262} Dickey notes that this form of address occurs three times, at 1.206.1, 7.136.2, 8.114.2, each time by “foreign envoys delivering a decidedly hostile speech” (Dickey (1996) 95).

\textsuperscript{263} See section 1.3.2.1 below.

\textsuperscript{264} Tuplin has demonstrated how, in the Histories, the expression ‘Mede’ was not “an unrestrictedly available alternative for ‘Persian’” (Tuplin (1990) 249), finding a number of grouped usages of the term and noting this passage as among the small number where the Great King is given “a title which includes an ethnic term” (Tuplin (1990) 246-7); and he goes on to identify a further grouping of usages, where “‘Mede’ was the name which expressed a sense of horror at the depredations of an alien conqueror”, though he identifies this with Greek observers (Tuplin (1990) 247-8). Is it too speculative to see this presentation of Tomyris’ adopting that ‘Greek’ perspective here (shortly to be followed by her defeat of Cyrus) as anticipating how those Greeks will eventually defeat Xerxes?
idealised king. The confrontation (at a distance) between Cambyses and the unnamed Ethiopian king is presented as a clash between an imperial-expansionist ideology and a contented, ‘be satisfied with what you have’ philosophy. This could be read as a contribution to the theoretical debate about kingship, but, as Herodotus presents it, the Ethiopian king was comparing apples with oranges. Cambyses was so infuriated because the Ethiopian king’s words challenged fundamentally the Persian view of kingship – sitting back and enjoying what you possess was essentially un-Persian. Cambyses’ anger is not presented as simplistically hubristic, but as reflecting the depth of his personal commitment to expansion, as in the case of his invasion of Egypt (it also anticipates Xerxes’ anger with Artabanus at 7.11.1, followed at 7.11.2 by Xerxes expressly listing his royal predecessors and his commitment to emulating them, but in Xerxes’ case underlining his misconception of a Persian νόμος of imperial expansion).

Darius’ encounter with a non-Persian king who challenged Persian expansionism also proves illuminating – but the non-Persian king in this case was the source of a Persian king’s lack of understanding rather than the other way round. Darius had failed to appreciate that imperial expansion required fixed boundaries and defined territories to make notions such as conquest and acquisition meaningful; the Scythians, however, did not inhabit that sort of reality, as Idanthyrsus’ response at 4.127.1-4 to a message from Darius made clear. The Scythian king’s approach is presented as wholly failing to comprehend the Persian king’s drive to expand the empire – as nomads the Scythians had no cities, no fixed territory, and saw no need for battle as they had nothing to defend (4.127.2). But he did not tell the Persian king how he should behave – he was simply dismissive of the Persian demands, making it clear that Darius’ invasion had had no impact at all on how the Scythians lived their lives (4.127.1). The only way in which they might be forced to fight would have been if the Persians were to have destroyed their ancestral graves – though first they would have to find them (4.127.2-3).

Darius belatedly recognised that military success was simply impossible: ‘Scythian territory’ was too nebulous a concept for that. Whereas Cyrus had reached the limits of expansionism by his death in a ‘conventional’ campaign and Cambyses had done so as a result of reaching beyond the boundaries of the normal in the mainstream world, Darius did so in Scythia by attempting to engage with the ‘un-engageable’, a quest doomed to fail.

Herodotus presents us with a clash between Persian monarchy and a ‘proto-monarchy’ (albeit a different type to that of the Ethiopians). When Herodotus depicts Darius at 4.126.1 offering Idanthyrsus a choice – defeat me in battle or yield – he is inviting the reader to see a Persian king who had singularly failed to grasp the nature of his opponent: why would the Scythians have done either, when the Persians chased shadows and depleted their resources without even touching the Scythians’ normal lives? Darius is presented as a king with little imagination, incapable of adapting

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265 3.20.2. There is a hint here that the act of choosing confers authority in a more obvious way than the cases considered at section 2.3.3 above, but again the context is vague (which Ethiopians do the choosing – all of them? An elite?). The focus is more on size and strength being in proportion to each other than an absolute assessment.

266 Expansionism flowed from Cyrus, though not as part of his original pact with the Persians – see sections 1.3.2.1 and 1.4.2.1 below.

267 See section 1.3 below for how Persian expansionism evolved.
a different mind-set to new situations; and it was the Scythians’ indifference to his army that so vexed Darius. The mighty Persian king was unused to being regarded as a minor nuisance – and even then he could not accept what was happening, as illustrated by his initial failure to understand the dismissive nature of the king’s gifts to him (4.131.1-132.1). This inability to put oneself in the position of another people is even more remarkable in Darius’ case, for (as noted above) he had previously been shown conducting the experiment establishing that ‘custom is king’ (3.38.4), yet remained incapable of appreciating cultural variations. So Darius was angered by his own inability to understand an alien people, whereas Cambyses had been angered by the Ethiopian king’s failure to understand the Persians.

The episodes also anticipate Xerxes’ inability to understand the Spartans and the Greeks in spite of the detailed information provided to him by Demaratus, to which I now turn. At 7.103.4 Xerxes stated the effect of Persian kingship on the Persians, in the context of arguing that, were the Lacedaemonians to be ruled according to the Persian way, they might also have overachieved in battle (through fear and compulsion). The corollary, that if they were allowed their freedom they would never do so, was also expressly stated at 7.103.4. While this discourse between Xerxes and Demaratus focused on freedom and servitude, it has relevance for the notion of Persian kingship within the Histories as seen through the eyes of one of the Persian kings.

Xerxes was not suggesting that the Persian type of rule would be as effective everywhere. It was simply a possibility – Spartan men might (γενοίατ᾽ ἄν) be able to excel and attack a numerically superior force (though it was implicit that no other approach would achieve such an outcome). Persian-type kingship being particularly suited to the Persians could be taken as a truism; but it also reflects the Herodotean awareness, manifested throughout the Histories, of some sense of cultural relativism. So when, at 7.104.4, Demaratus contrasted Persian kingship with what ruled the Lacedaemonians, νόμος, he was responding directly to Xerxes’ reference to τρόπον τὸν ἡμέτερον at 7.103.4: it was the nature of rule that was at issue. On the one hand the Spartans saw themselves as free and subject only to their law/custom; on the other, the Persians were subject to an absolute king but also considered themselves free. In this clash of ideologies each side cherished ‘freedom’, but the slogan meant different things to different peoples. So, while at 7.102.2 Demaratus informed Xerxes in the strongest terms that the Lacedaemonians would never accept slavery (δουλοσύνην) for Greece, his emphasis at 7.104.4 was on νόμος being their

268 See section 3.3.3.2 of chapter 3 for more on these gifts and Darius’ response to them.
269 As will be seen in chapters 2 and 3, however, Darius as an individual king is shown regularly as slow to understand what was happening around him.
270 See most obviously 3.38.4.
271 And implicitly rejecting Xerxes’ sneering reference to κατὰ νόμους τοὺς ἡμέτερους at 7.103.1. For a discussion of the episode focusing on the custom/law aspects, see Branscome (2013) 55-75.
272 One must be careful in discussing this passage not to diminish the significance of the fact that Sparta was ruled by a monarchy – a duarchy – of sorts: Xerxes himself remarks on Demaratus’ previous status as a Spartan king at 7.103.1, though his precise words (σὺ φής) suggest that Xerxes was not wholly convinced of the fact. Perhaps this was a subtle manifestation of Xerxes’ failure to accept the Spartan system as a true monarchy – or his inability to recognise as true monarchy anything that was different from τρόπον τὸν ἡμέτερον?
273 Baragwanath has some pertinent observations on the contrast between Demaratus’ idealising of the Spartans and their subsequent actions (Baragwanath (2008) 76).
δεσπότης (a common word for the autocratic Persian king, reinforcing the idea of a people being subject to δουλοσύνη, albeit a different type of slavery).

The presentation of Xerxes in this episode underlines the earlier observation that the Persian kings considered themselves the guarantors of Persian freedom, which was for the Persians as valued as Spartan freedom was for the Spartans, and that this was because (not in spite) of their position as kings: a fundamental feature of Persian kingship as presented in the Histories. As I suggest in section 4.4 of the Conclusion, Herodotus viewed this as a serious proposition, worthy of consideration and respect within the Persian ‘reality’, rather than an inherently offensive position by virtue of its opposition to Greek ideas of freedom.

These passages indicate that, while the Persian kings were aware of different types of kingship, they regarded Persian kingship coupled with their own personal drive to increase the Persian empire as the only worthwhile form of monarchy. Such a view would naturally justify their desire to conquer (the starkest statement of which, at 7.8α 1-2, can be read with Xerxes’ plan to conquer the entire west as articulated at 7.8γ 1-2). Herodotus refrains from expressly judging the Persians on this ground: he accepts that the kings were simply living according to the expectations of a Persian king (which would, by the time of Xerxes, seem to be a Persian νόμος). The manner in which each did so, however, gives a further indication of how, as kings, Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius and Xerxes differed from each other.

All the Persian kings are shown subscribing to the goal of imperialism, presented through the eyes of a non-Persian monarch or former monarch as a distant threat (initially Croesus and ultimately Tomyris in relation to Cyrus, the Ethiopian king in relation to Cambyses, Idanthyrus in relation to Darius, and Demaratus in relation to Xerxes). The non-Persian kings had no illusions about the Persians (Tomyris offered anti-expansionist advice to Cyrus in the expectation that it would be ignored: his drive for expansion was non-negotiable). Similarly, non-Persian forms of imperial expansion as depicted in the accounts of Croesus, the Medes and Egypt do not fully reflect the characteristics of Persian expansion in that they simply lacked the incessant restlessness and appetite of the Persians for expansion – a purpose, however, driven by each individual Persian king at a personal level rather than because of a Persian νόμος (see section 1.3 below). Further, the idealised monarchs shown critiquing Persian expansion misunderstood that unique Persian

274 See, e.g. Hartog (1988) 334-5. For an analysis of the episode from the perspective of the sophistic clash between physis and νόμος, see Thomas (2000) 69; or for a reading of this scene as paralleling the Persae in its view that the Greeks’ victory over the Persians was grounded in their differing ideologies as to freedom, see Forsdyke (2006) 233. 475 Herodotus mentions eleuthēria as a Persian value at 1.126.6; 1.210.2; 3.65.7; 7.2.3” (Munson (2009, revised 2013) 332 note 46). All the passages she cites are voiced (via direct or indirect speech) by Persian kings (with the sole exception of Hystaspes at 1.210.2, Darius’ father, considered at section 0.2.5.5 of the Introduction). This may imply that Herodotus did not consider the Persians actually to be free; that their kings actively deployed a propagandistic (but false) notion of freedom; or that he saw freedom too as a relative concept grounded in peoples’ νόμοι. The last seems to me the most plausible, though an argument could be made for all three.

276 See above. Cf. too Herodotus’ remarks at 5.78.1. Forsdyke sees this as reflective of “official Athenian political ideology” – democracy produced strong-minded citizens, single rulers submissive and weak subjects, in an echo of Aesch. Persae 188-96, though it reads most naturally as a comparison between Greek poleis: the reference to the Athenians having become τρόποι makes sense within the Greek context but not within a wider context (Forsdyke (2009) 238). Cf. “Herodotus considers monarchy a stable, traditional, and very efficient regime for the large oriental states (cf. Thracians, V.3.1), without denying the short-lived manifestations of other political aspirations” (Asheri (2007) 45).

277 Cf. sections 2.2.3.1 and 2.2.4.1 of chapter 2 for Artabanus’ failure to appreciate that Persian kings would not be swayed from expansionism.
driver: as they ultimately discovered (and successfully implemented), strong defence alone would stop the Persians appealing to their better nature was a waste of time.

1.2.3 The Athenian empire

There is one empire that is rarely expressly mentioned in the *Histories*, but its existence pervades the entire work – the empire assembled by the Athenians in Herodotus’ own day. As I mentioned in section 0.5.3 of the Introduction, many scholars have found fruitful comparisons between the Persian empire in the *Histories* and the Athenian empire, particularly settling on the notion of the work in its patterns constituting an oblique warning to contemporary Athens in her own imperial capacity. I accept that, in one sense, the macro-level pattern of the rise and fall of empires is the point of the *Histories* and that this constituted the ‘warning’ to Athens. There are within the narrative a number of express references to Athens, most strikingly the encomium at 7.139.2-6, and Herodotus also makes a number of indirect references to contemporary events involving her.  

To assess this aspect of the *Histories* from the micro-level approach I am adopting, however, would be a challenging task, unless one were to accept that the Persian empire Herodotus depicts is a replica of the Athenian empire of his own day – a suggestion that no one has or would make. The absence of any overt mentions of the Athenian empire means that my micro-level approach as a means of drawing comparisons between the Persian and Athenian empires simply cannot be undertaken. There is a qualitative difference in terms of transparency within the narrative of the accounts of each Persian king within the framework of the Persian empire as presented and the allusions, however compelling, to the Athenian empire of the later fifth century BCE, such that my approach is readily available for the former while having little on which to ‘grip’ so far as the latter is concerned.

While I will at times consider the parallels between Persian and Athenian empires, therefore, this aspect is not my primary focus in this thesis; and it is fair to say that, within the imperial context, I find a great deal of useful material for my micro-level approach in the empires mentioned in sections 1.2.1-3 above.

1.3 Persian kings as conscious imperialists

I analyse the presentations of the four kings to determine the extent of each’s “conscious imperialism”, that is, the extent to which each was self-aware as to the expansionist impulse; and the extent to which each regarded it as a Persian νόμος. One significant distinction I draw in this  

\[278\] See Stadter (1992, repr. 2013a) for one example – he focuses “on certain aspects of Persian aggression, and how they might affect his audience in the light of the fact of the Athenian archē in the Aegean” (Stadter (1992, repr. 2013a) 336). Derow partially agrees with Fornara about Athenian imperialism, though he disagrees with Fornara’s contention that Herodotus saw it flowing from the defeat of the Persians, arguing that for Herodotus the cause lay with destiny and inevitability; and he suspects that Herodotus did not particularly like Athens (Fornara (1971) 78 and Derow (1995) 47-9, 39).  

\[279\] See too section 0.5.3 of the Introduction for the great difficulty in assessing the extent to which Herodotus’ view of Athenian imperialism may have retrospectively influenced how he chose to present Persian imperialism.
context is that between, on the one hand, the Persian king and the royal house and, on the other hand, the Persian people, to which I now turn.

1.3.1 King and people

In view of imperialism’s significance thematically and as part of the overarching structure of the narrative, it is not surprising that Herodotus deploys an extensive range of vocabulary in relation to it. ἀρχή and its cognates are used extensively in the Histories, but the words carried no value-judgment, being used to describe a factual situation rather than suggesting that ruling or being ruled was an intrinsically ‘bad thing’ (for instance, the word is used at 1.7.1 to describe the rule of the Lydian kings, while at 1.46.1, where Croesus is presented as growing concerned at καὶ τὰ τῶν Περσέων πρήγματα αὐξανόμενα, the word is not employed at all in a situation where an adverse implication could have been made).

Powell cites twelve instances of the word being used to mean “Empire of one nation over another”, although only half of those he cites bear this reading (the usages at 1.104.2, 1.106.2, 1.185.1, 1.207.3, 3.126.1, 4.1.2 and 6.98.2 suggest primacy in rule rather than the notion of “empire”). Of the remaining six, five relate to Croesus (and do seem to refer to an empire) and one to Cyrus: but when at 1.207.3 the word is used on this single occasion in relation to Cyrus, it is from the mouth of Croesus, himself uniquely connected with the word in this sense. Perhaps, for Herodotus, the extent of Croesus’ empire was so overshadowed by the sheer scale of the Persian empire that it made no sense to talk of them both in the same terms, but there is no direct evidence for this in the text. It is difficult, however, to establish a consistent usage of ἀρχή and other words such as ἡγεμονίη, κράτος and δύναμις (though δύναμις is interesting for other reasons – see section 1.3.1 below) referring specifically to the Persian empire and no other: a further indicator that Herodotus made no automatic assumptions about the morality of imperialism akin to modern judgments.  

On the other hand, ἡγεμονίη and its cognates appear noticeably less frequently in the Histories than ἀρχή, raising the possibility that ἡγεμονίη may be more specific in its application. Powell identifies two meanings of relevance to this discussion: ‘oriental kingship’, and ‘Persian empire’. The latter usage at 1.46.1, however, refers according to Powell to the ‘empire’ of the Medes καταιρεθεῖσα by Cyrus – but καταιρεθεῖσα suggests that Cyrus, having destroyed the Median empire, would thus presumably replace it with a Persian empire. Alternatively, however, ἡγεμονίη here could be taken as referring to Astyages’ personal position as leader of the Medes (rather than to the Median empire itself), a reading supported by the usage at 3.65.5 (where ἡγεμονίη refers not to the Persian empire but to the Persian leadership of the relevant territories, which is capable of αὖτις ἐς Μήδους περιελθοῦσαν). It should be remembered that both Cyrus and

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280 This may well reflect a contemporary situation in which a fully developed lexicon of empire had simply not yet been worked out (except perhaps to a degree by Thucydides, though for possible tension between his view of Athenian imperialism and the ‘formal’ Athenian view as evidenced by Athenian inscriptions, see Low (2005)).

281 Used twice, at 1.7.1 and 7.2.1: the first in respect of the rule of Lydia, the second in relation to the rule of Persia in succession to Darius.

282 Used four times, at 1.46.1, 3.65.6, 7.8α 1, and 9.122.2.
Cambyses had extended the Persian empire that had replaced the Median empire, so to talk about the empire ‘going back’ to the Medes would be strange – whereas the reversion to the Medes of the position of leadership of whatever happened at the time to be the empire was a perfectly coherent anxiety for Cambyses to express on his deathbed. Of course, the Powell definition “Persian leadership of the relevant territories” could apply to the notion of a Persian empire; but my distinction has force if we contrast the Persian empire with the personal ἡγεμονίη of a named Persian king.

At 7.8α 1, when Xerxes referred not to the empire per se, saying that παρελάβομεν τὴν ἡγεμονίην τῆν παρὰ Μήδων, he contradicted Cyrus’ statement at 1.46.1, where he referred to having “destroyed” the Median ἡγεμονίη; while at 9.122.2, when Artembares states that Ζεὺς Πέρσῃσι ἡγεμονίην διδοῖ, he goes on to add ἀνδρῶν, ἡγεμονίην διδοῖ ἀνδρῶν, <Περσίων> δὲ σοὶ Κῦρε, κατελὼν Αστυάγην, thus distinguishing between the leadership (which Zeus had given to the Persians) and Astyages the king (whom Cyrus had destroyed). Cyrus’ response shows a king leading his people to the correct choice rather than imposing it on them, which underlines the notion of the Persian empire being maintained by Cyrus’ ἡγεμονίη.

This notion of ‘leadership’ as opposed to ‘empire’ is at the forefront of the Persian kings’ thinking – leadership of the empire, of course, but evidence that their primary concern was their personal position as kings benefiting from such ἡγεμονίη. I explore further the distinction between Persian power and the individual king’s house in section 1.3.2 below, analysing the expectation of imperialism placed on the Persian kings. Of course, there is a danger of being overly legalistic in construing Herodotean language and instances can be found which offer a different emphasis, such as at 1.95.1, but even there a distinction is made between king and people.

It is also fruitful to analyse the usages in the Histories of another word involving related concepts, δύναμις (though caution is needed in view of its range of meanings, it is employed by the historian in a more focused way than, for example, ἀρχή). The basic meaning of the word is ‘power’ – obviously relevant to the subject of this chapter, but not automatically appropriate to describe an empire: it is more about motion, potential, dynamism than a static and definable territory: empire not as a physical entity, perhaps, but as an idea. The word refers to an individual king’s power, however, more than to the power of a people – and to an individual Persian king’s power more than twice as often as to the power of the Persians, of non-Persian peoples and of non-Persian kings combined. This further supports the suggestion that, for Herodotus, the notion of empire was, in the

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283 Harrison refers to “a highly sensitized defensiveness on the part of the Persians” as to possibly losing their power, though in the context of the Smerdis usurpation Cambyses’ concern seems justified rather than overly sensitive (Harrison (2015) 26).

284 Xerxes’ misreading of Persian history here is part of his overall misreading of his own position as one in a line of Persian kings – see section 1.3.2.4 below.

285 Cyrus τὴν Κροίσου ἀρχὴν κατεῖλε and the Persians ἡγῆσαν τῆς Ἀσίης.

286 The usages of καταστρέφομαι (conquer) in the Histories, applying to the conquest of nations, rulers, and countries, are also helpful in this context: as with ἀρχή, the word is generally used in a neutral, descriptive way, but there are occasions when the usages underline a particular point. For example, at 1.130.3 the word is used twice in rapid succession to emphasise the significance Herodotus places in this context on the personal nature of Cyrus’ achievement: Cyrus conquered Croesus; and, after Croesus was conquered, Cyrus πάσης τῆς Ἀσίης ἦρξε – again emphasising the personal aspect of Persian conquest and expansion within the Histories (cf. 1.95.1 quoted at note 285 above).

287 For an analysis that takes this sense of motion as critical to an understanding of Herodotus’ Persians, see Ward (2008).
case of the Persians at least, bound up with the actual individual king – which is consistent with the findings as to ἡγεμονίη above.

It would therefore be prudent to assume that, in the Histories, there is no clearly fixed idea of empire/imperialism (and specifically Persian empire and imperialism). This cautious approach would to a degree destabilise the various macro-readings identified in section 0.5 of the Introduction, raising instead the possibility of a range of different ways of approaching Persian imperialism as undertaken by (and reflective of) each different Persian king and his personal style of leadership. A number of passages involving δύναμις illustrate this point.

After his defeat by Cyrus, Croesus was permitted at 1.90.4 to consult Delphi; and the references here to an attack on the Persians and the δύναμις of Cyrus provide a clear differentiation between people and king. That Croesus is presented drawing the distinction is another indication that as a defeated king he had acquired a degree of wisdom particularly relevant to rulers; but this may be contrasted with 3.88.3, where Herodotus notes of Darius δυνάμις τε τῆς πάντα οἱ ἐπιμπλέατο – again, this is expressed in terms of an individual king’s δύναμις, not that of the Persian empire. Atossa at 3.134.1 also drew a distinction between the king’s δύναμις and that of the Persians, but with the additional suggestion that the king could use his power to increase the power of the Persians.

The personal nature of a king’s power is apparent on a number of other occasions, but the statement by Xerxes at 7.8α 2 reinterpreted Atossa’s message at 3.134.1: this was not a case of the king sensibly seeking to demonstrate his manliness to the Persians by adding to Persian power (as Atossa had encouraged Darius to do) – Xerxes considered that he was required to add to that power, with the point being underlined by Mardonius’ subtle reminder to Xerxes (by his use at 7.9.2 of the words καταστρεφόμενοι δούλους ἔχομεν) that, despite that first person plural, none of the peoples mentioned had been conquered by Xerxes.

This idea of the δύναμις of an individual Persian king recurs at 7.24.1, a rare authorial observation by Herodotus. Many scholars have focused on the attribution of μεγαλοφροσύνη to Xerxes, but for present purposes I focus on the fact that it is Xerxes’ δύναμις that was displayed and memorialised (in Herodotus’ expressed opinion): this is not a wider Persian display. Similarly, at 8.140β 2, Alexander reminded the Athenians that they should fear the king’s (not the Persians’) power: it is noteworthy that βασιλεύς is used four times in this speech, while “Persians” is not used

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288 I develop this idea in section 2.2.1.2 of chapter 2.
289 Herodotus notes at 3.88.1 that the lands under Darius’ sway are extensive – thanks to his predecessors, Cyrus and Cambyses.
290 I return to 3.134.1 in section 1.3.2.3 below.
291 For example, when the Ionia tyrants were gathered at the bridge over the Ister debating whether to abandon the Persians fleeing Scythia, only a timely reminder from Histiaeus at 4.137.2 prevented them from doing so: their grip on tyranny would last only as long as Darius held power (ης Δαρείου δὲ δυνάμιος καταιρεθείσης) – again, the power referred to is that of the individual king rather than the Persians as a people.
292 Preceded by the reason for Persian conquests as understood by Mardonius – δύναμιν προσκτᾶσθαι βουλόμενοι.
293 ὡς μὲν ἐμὲ συμβαλλόμενον εὑρίσκειν, μεγαλοφροσύνης εἵνεκεν αὐτὸ Ξέρξης ὀρύσσει, ἐθέλων τε δύναμιν ἀποδείκνυσθαι καὶ μνημόσυνα λιπέσθαι.
294 For a balanced discussion of its use here, see Fisher (1992) 376-7. For Baragwanath, the emphasis of the passage is on ἀποδείκνυσθαι (Baragwanath (2008) 254-65).
295 The creation of memorials by individual kings (Persian and non-Persian) is a feature of the Histories. The usage at 7.24.1 is the only one stated as memorialising δύναμις, however.

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at all. Alexander is emphasising the significance of the king as an individual as opposed to the Persians en masse.\textsuperscript{296}

I am not suggesting that, for Herodotus, Persian power was exclusively Persian king power, or that the kings are presented as the sole embodiments of such power throughout the \textit{Histories}: the pact forged between Cyrus and the Persians was genuine as the accounts of the kings in the \textit{Histories} demonstrate. It is certainly correct that Herodotus presents the pact made between Cyrus and the Persians (see section 2.5 of the Introduction) as a “bond between people, King and royal household”\textsuperscript{297};\footnote{Cf. Bowie, noting Alexander’s subtlety in presenting the proposal in terms of the King being the Athenians’ friend rather than “the other way round” (Bowie (2007) 230) and perhaps thereby implying that personalising the issue in this way was part of Alexander’s sophist repertoire.} but Herodotus also depicts a tension that could arise between king and Persians reflective of the emerging idea of expansionist expectations on the Persian kings – expectations not expressed as those of the Persian people, however, but as those of some of the individual kings themselves (Xerxes and, to a lesser extent, Darius). This is considered in more detail in the next section.

\subsection*{1.3.2 Expansionism as a Persian νόμος within the \textit{Histories}}\textsuperscript{298}

The idea of Persian kings being driven by an overwhelming desire for imperialist expansion (and its function as a major structural feature of the \textit{Histories}) is a commonplace of modern scholarship.\textsuperscript{299} In this section I examine how each king at an individual level is presented as responding to it – and the extent to which it constituted a basic Persian νόμος (by νόμος in this context I do not mean a formal law, but a custom embedded in a people’s sense of its own identity).\textsuperscript{300} I examine the accounts of each king in order, though I note at the outset that Herodotus never as narrator avers the existence of such a Persian νόμος.\textsuperscript{301}

\subsubsection*{1.3.2.1. Cyrus}

The verb ἀτρεμίζω\textsuperscript{302} is used (on two occasions) to describe the threat to non-Persians posed by Cyrus – though the first referred to Nitocris the Babylonian queen “seeing” τὴν Μήδων…ἀρχὴν μεγάλην τε καὶ οὐκ ἀτρεμίζουσαν (1.185.1) rather than Cyrus himself (or, indeed, the Persians – see section 1.2.2 above for another perception by a non-Persian queen of Cyrus as king of the Medes); while the second instance, at 1.190.2, inverts that assessment, as on this occasion the

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306 Cf. Bowie, noting Alexander’s subtlety in presenting the proposal in terms of the King being the Athenians’ friend rather than “the other way round” (Bowie (2007) 230) and perhaps thereby implying that personalising the issue in this way was part of Alexander’s sophist repertoire.
308 For the meaning of νόμος in this context, see section 1.3.2.4 below.
310 Of course, the idea of a Persian νόμος is itself a cultural absurdity, but I take it as an example of Herodotus seeking to convey to his Greek readers concepts in a form that would be familiar to them – a way of guiding the reader through the \textit{Histories}.
311 See section 1.4.2.4 below for the single occasion it is put forward (through the words of Xerxes). Herodotus mentions Persian customs on a number of occasions (see section 1.3.2.4 below).
312 The literal meaning is “stay still” and by extension it is used of nations and monarchs to mean “be unambitious”.

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Babylonians as a group perceived ἔτι πρότερον τὸν Κῦρον οὐκ ἀτρεμίζοντα. The implication is that Cyrus was a figure who unsettled the peoples within his potential sights, a man who threatened their independence. Similarly, when at 1.46.1 Cyrus is introduced to the narrative for the first time, it is through the eyes of Croesus, who saw (and thus encourages the reader to see) Cyrus as a distant figure who posed a serious threat to Croesus’ own empire. The emphasis is on Croesus’ perception of Cyrus having overthrown Astyages’ ἡγεμονία and τὰ τῶν Περσῶν πράγματα αὐξανόμενα: Herodotus links the individual king with the growth of the Persians (contrasting with the absence of any reference to the Medes when Astyages alone is mentioned in the same sentence).

This emphasis is repeated when Croesus turned his mind to καταλαβεῖν αὐτῶν αὐξανομένην τὴν δύναμιν, again being shown as focusing on the Persians (thereby leading the reader to do the same thing), when attention should have been focused on Cyrus, the Persians’ leader; and, when Croesus consulted the oracle, it was to ask if he should make war ἐπὶ Πέρσας (1.46.3 and again at 1.53.2). Cyrus is therefore initially presented as a remote figure, an actor on the stage rather than a real human being presented in the flesh; and it is not until after Croesus had been defeated and already placed on the pyre that Herodotus’ presentation of Cyrus shifts its emphasis. Cyrus is at last shown speaking directly within the narrative (at 1.87.3); and his first words go to the heart of the issue of imperialist expansion.

The immediate contrast, as shown by Croesus’ response, is between advice from man and from gods (though Cyrus in posing his question had framed it in a way that allowed for human guidance only); but the interchange demonstrates that both rulers had an appreciation of strategic issues such as whether to conquer or make treaties with other kings and (by the suggestion of advisers being on hand to offer counsel, the implication of τίς…ἀνθρώπων) basic risk management. But these first words of Cyrus in direct speech also offered the intriguing possibility that war between Lydians and Persians might have been avoidable by some form of alliance, implying that Cyrus had had no thought before then of attacking Lydia (πολέμιον ἀντὶ φίλου) until provoked to do by Croesus’ attack on Cappadocia (1.75.3-76.2). There is another Herodotean irony being displayed here, akin to Croesus’ misunderstanding of which empire would be destroyed if he were to attack Persia: at 1.73.1 Herodotus gives Croesus’ reasons for his attack and, if Cyrus had indeed been undeviatingly committed to Persian expansion, then one would expect that Croesus’ intention to pre-empt it would have been among the reasons then attributed to Cyrus for his own assault (cf. Xerxes’ remarks about Athens at 7.11.2); but the inference from 1.87.3 is that Cyrus might have

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303 It is noteworthy that this verb is not used of any other Persian (or indeed any non-Persian) king in the Histories, save Xerxes (see section 1.3.2.4 below).

304 The power of this perceived threat is highlighted by Herodotus’ statement that Cyrus overthrew Astyages was the event that shook Croesus from the profound grief caused by his elder son’s death (1.46.1).

305 Croesus did focus on Cyrus upon receiving the oracular response – but was utterly confident that he would destroy τὴν Κύρου βασιλείαν (1.54.1). The reader is encouraged to share his confidence by this Herodotean technique of keeping the Persian king at a distance in the narrative; but Croesus immediately demonstrated, in his response to his next mission to Delphi, that he had no understanding of his opponent as an individual (i.e. the aspects of his parentage that allowed the oracle to refer to Cyrus obliquely as a mule eluded Croesus altogether). This inability to understand his opponent had been anticipated by Croesus’ inability to read Solon earlier in the narrative.

306 Even at 1.73 onwards, where Cyrus’ defeat of Astyages is presented as the trigger for Croesus’ decision to seek the oracle’s advice as to whether he should go to war with Persia, the situation is presented from Croesus’ perspective. Cyrus was still an unknown figure – indeed, Herodotus at this point deliberately chooses not to explain Cyrus’ thinking (1.75.1).
found some form of *modus vivendi* with Croesus and the Lydians, had it not been for *Croesus* seeking to extend *his* empire.  

This suggests that Croesus’ initial concern about Persia as presented in 1.46.1 had been misconceived – and that ἡ Ἀστυάγεος τοῦ Κυαξάρεω ἡγεμονίη καταιρεθεῖσα ὑπὸ Κύρου τοῦ Καμβύσεω καὶ τὰ τῶν Περσέων πρήγματα αὐξανόμενα would not necessarily have led to an attack on Lydia. It was Croesus’ own perception of events that triggered the end of his grief for his son – but his response to those events proved his undoing. The irony is that one man had offered Croesus sound advice (Sandanis at 1.71.2-4, particularly his concluding words).

Thus we are presented with a Cyrus portrayed initially at least as an accidental expansionist rather than a king driven by some Persian νόμος of imperialist expansion; and this accords with the notion of Persian freedom I considered in section 0.2.5.5 of the Introduction – which as articulated by Cyrus at 1.126.5 made no reference to imperial expansion, though by 9.122.1-3 the position had changed (having conquered and become masters of so many other lands, the Persians needed to remain tough). Croesus’ misconceived attack on the Persians had not only brought his empire to an end; it had fuelled the Persians’ desire for conquest (and in particular their *king’s* desire for such: 9.122.1-2 implies that there was a limit to *Persian* expansionism collectively).

But one effect of the success of Cyrus’ Lydian campaign was the order to his generals to subjugate the rest of southern Asia Minor (Mazares at 1.161.1, Harpagus at 1.162.2 and 1.177.1), while turning his own attention to conquest of the northern part of Asia Minor (1.177.1); and it also crystallised his plans for even greater expansion (1.153.4). This is presented very much in terms of Cyrus developing strategy as he went along, without any express indication that, in doing so, he was simply acting in accordance with a Persian νόμος. Cyrus’ Lydian and Ionian victories had given him a taste for expansion; and, by the time of his encounters with Nitocris and Tomyris, he is presented as a threat to remote peoples – he was now genuinely the threat that Croesus had mistakenly feared him to be.  

Nitocris’ concern was expressed to arise as a result of τὴν Μήδων ὁρῶσα ἀρχὴν μεγάλην τε καὶ οὐκ ἀτρεμίζουσαν (1.185.1): the *Medes* posed the threat from her perspective, though Astyages had not been presented as having any interest in expanding the Median empire.  

Again the nature of the threat is presented on the basis of Nitocris’ own perception (ὁρῶσα); but when the invasion came (after Nitocris’ death), it was led by Cyrus (1.188.1), who had already τὰ πάντα <ἄλλα> τῆς ἠπείρου ὑποχείρια ἐποιήσατο (1.178.1).  

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307 Inexperience in how to deal with a conquered city could also account for Cyrus’ need for Croesus’ advice at 1.88.2: Cyrus’ remarks at 1.90.1 imply such relative inexperience on Cyrus’ part.

308 Cf. Hystaspes’ words at 1.210.2, referring to Cyrus not just giving the Persians freedom but also domination of others: there was no such statement at 1.126, but by this point of Cyrus’ kingship Hystaspes (who alone made such a claim) expressly incorporated in the pact an aspect that had (as we have seen) developed in Cyrus’ rule since he delivered the Persians from the Medes.

309 See too note 264 above.

310 One element of the use of Μήδων here differs from that considered in section 1.2.2 above (where I examined Tomyris’ use of it at 1.206.1 in a direct form of address): unlike 1.206.1, there can be no intended discourtesy on the part of Nitocris here, as she is presented ὁρῶσα, that is, the usage is her thought rather than an address to Astyages or Cyrus; and the object of her perception is the Medes’ ἀρχὴν μεγάλην τε καὶ οὐκ ἀτρεμίζουσαν.
But at this stage of the narrative Herodotus is presenting a Cyrus who, after previous conquests of great powers such as Lydia (in response, I again emphasise, to Croesus’ aggression) and Babylon, has finally turned his attention to the Massagetae. Herodotus makes no direct comment on Cyrus’ decision, but his description at 1.201.1 suggests a people that will bring little in the way of wealth to the empire. Cyrus’ motivation is explained at 1.204.2: his conviction that he was special, πλέον τι...ἀνθρώπου, and his invincibility in war so far (attributed to divine favour). In other words, Cyrus’ motivation is presented as entirely grounded in his sense of his own self-worth – there is absolutely no suggestion that, as a Persian king, he was required as a matter of unavoidable νόμος to expand the empire.

The words of Tomyris at 1.206.2, in response to his message pretending courtship at 1.205.1, reflect this – it was the covetous gaze of Cyrus, not a Persian νόμος, that she understood as the cause of the assault on her people (indeed, as we have seen above, she had not even registered that Cyrus was king of the Persians). But she immediately accepted in 1.206.2 that Cyrus would not desist (ἄλλα πάντως μᾶλλον ἢ δι᾽ ἡσυχίης εἶναι) and offered to fight. It is noteworthy that the emphasis in this passage is on Cyrus as an individual (σύ is used twice in 1.206.2, adding emphasis to the string of singular imperatives), while by contrast Tomyris talked in the same passage of ἡμέων and ἡμετέρην. Her overall reading of Cyrus as hard-headed and practical prompted her recommendation at 1.206.1 that Cyrus desist from his planned attack; and she showed this spirit again in her message to Cyrus at 1.212.2-3. The king chose to ignore it, however, and paid the price: Tomyris portrayed his quest for expansion as a form of blood lust (Ἄπληστε αἵματος Κῦρε, 1.212.2), which she duly rewarded at 1.214.4 using a ἀσκὸν δὲ πλήσασα.

In summary, therefore, Cyrus is clearly established within Herodotus’ account as becoming (rather than being from the outset) an eager and successful expansionist Persian king by nature and personal inclination: he is not presented as a king complying with (indeed, obliged to comply with) an express Persian kingly νόμος of imperial expansion. But his personal thirst for expansion ultimately proved to be his downfall: it is noteworthy that neither the Persian people nor Cyrus’ own son and successor is ever shown as wanting to punish the Massagetae and avenge their most revered leader’s death. It is as if, at this juncture, Cyrus’ actions were separated from the glories of his previous career and (as Herodotus presents it) the Persians tacitly chose to think of him as the great leader who had given them their freedom, without reference to his end.

311 1.201.1. The use here of the epithet ὄλκιμον is interesting, as it had been (in its comparative form) used of a people by the historian only once before, at 1.79.2, to describe the Lydian people at the time Croesus chose to attack Persia (see too section 1.3.2.3 below). This faint echo might suggest a similar outcome for Cyrus, but, unlike the Lydians, the Massagetae will not succumb – partly because of the qualitative difference between both Croesus and Tomyris as rulers; but partly also because of the reduced effectiveness, as a leader, of Cyrus at this stage of his life, which I explain below.

312 This also illustrates a tension in the narrative between what I have termed the micro- and macro-levels: Cyrus has ended badly and thus satisfied the macro-level expectation that despots ultimately fall (and that transgressions end badly – Lateiner (1989) 126-44, though he makes no mention of Cyrus in this context), while he has also to be presented in the remainder of the Histories as an outstandingly successful leader, both to justify the Persian veneration for him and to allow, at the micro-level, the comparisons with his royal successors that fuel the Herodotean approach to styles of leadership. Not only had Cyrus failed to understand through Croesus the wisdom of Solon: the Persians themselves were incapable of macro-level understanding, except for Xerxes – who, however, got it wrong (section 1.3.2.4 below).
1.3.2.2 Cambyses

It is also difficult to discern any Persian νόμος, express or implied, of imperial expansion in the account of Cambyses. He too is presented as an incipient danger of which kings far from Persia became all too aware, as demonstrated by the Egyptian king Amasis feeling the need to forge a military alliance with Croesus at 1.77.2 and cultivate Greek powers such as Cyrene (2.181.1-2) and Polycrates (2.182.2), as well as lavishing treasure on Delphi at 2.180.2. In view of the assertion at 1.153.4 that Cyrus had desired to subjugate Egypt it would not have been surprising if Cambyses had been shown taking the task on upon his father’s death, but this is never expressly stated in such terms.313

Herodotus puts forward a number of personal reasons that motivated Cambyses’ eventual invasion of Egypt, but it is the first one that he presents as the unqualified cause (δι᾽ αἰτίην τοιήνδε, 3.1.1): Cambyses, having sought Amasis’ daughter in marriage, became furious when he discovered that the Egyptian king had instead sent his predecessor’s daughter (3.1.5).314 The implication (as with Cyrus’ remark to Croesus at 1.87.3) is that Cambyses might not have invaded Egypt in the absence of this insult: there is no suggestion, even in the Persian sources themselves, of a Persian νόμος requiring a Persian king to deliver imperial expansion which would have overridden all other considerations. Rather, even more so than his father, Cambyses is seen acting as an expansionist king in an individual capacity.315

A further interesting aspect of Cambyses’ Egyptian invasion is his single, remote, encounter with Polycrates at 3.44.2, an unusual instance of a Persian king being presented as acting in a strategic manner in the conduct of his campaign. Amasis’ disrespect, as we have seen, had been presented by Herodotus as the personal reason for Cambyses’ invasion of Egypt: at 3.44.1-2 we see Polycrates, after being abandoned by Amasis on the eve, as it were, of Cambyses’ invasion of Egypt, turning to the Persian king for aid. Cambyses took full advantage of the end of Polycrates’ friendship with Amasis,316 ensuring the uncoupling of the Egyptian king from the Samian tyrant by rendering Polycrates the service he had sought from Cambyses, Polycrates’ intention being the bolstering of his own power in Samos as well as the furtherance of his own ambition set out at 3.122.2. This demonstration of effective diplomacy in action sharply contrasts with Cambyses’ Ethiopian venture, considered below.

313 It is noteworthy that Cambyses also left the Massagetae in peace; there is no reference in the Histories even to any thought of avenging the death of the Persians’ greatest king, Cyrus. Contrast this with the repeated desire for vengeance expressed by Darius and Xerxes (albeit on occasions as pretexts only).

314 There are two interesting Herodotean asides in recounting this: the first alludes to the concern of Amasis at the power of Persia (τῇ δυνάμι τῶν Περσέων ἀχθόμενος καὶ ἀρρωδέων at 3.1.2), the second is that this reason for Cambyses’ anger (and it leading to the Persian invasion) was attributed to the Persians at 3.1.5. Again an invading king is shown with ‘good’ reasons at the personal level, while the target saw the matter as an attack by a stronger expansionist enemy. It is impossible to determine whether the Persians were consciously (whether from deviousness, embarrassment, or something else) cloaking their previous kings’ expansionism in a cloak of ‘justification’ or whether they genuinely believed they were acting as they were entitled so to do: in any event, it seems unlikely that such a tale would have been deployed if an established Persian νόμος had required Persian kings to be expansionists.

315 This reading is reinforced by Cambyses’ behaviour after completing the conquest of Egypt, considered below.

316 Pace Asheri (2007) 441, my focus here is, as ever, on the Herodotean presentations rather than the historical actualité.
Returning to the personal nature of Cambyses’ campaign against Egypt, the king travelled to Memphis following completion of his Egyptian conquest and at 3.16.1 ordered that Amasis’ corpse be produced before abusing it and ordering it to be set on fire. Herodotus expressly states that such behaviour disregarded Persian νόμος (so he was prepared to make such an express observation about non-compliance with a Persian νόμος); yet there is no overt suggestion that, when he planned three further campaigns at 3.17.1, he was acting in accordance with another Persian νόμος. Herodotus provided, as we have seen, a ‘personal’ explanation for Cambyses’ invasion of Egypt, but with the proposed invasions described at 3.17.1 (presented starkly in terms of expansionism) the focus is again on Cambyses the individual (as opposed to the Persians as a group); and this would be recognised by the unnamed Ethiopian king when he upbraided Cambyses for his expansionism.

The difference between Cyrus and Cambyses is in a sense straightforward: Cambyses failed where Cyrus had succeeded. But just as instructive are differences of detail: Cambyses nowhere claimed any divine involvement in his campaigns (unlike Cyrus) or any expectation that in military terms he was invincible; he was angered by the Ethiopian king’s refusal to fall for his dissembling approach (whereas Cyrus had simply moved on to the next phase when Tomyris rejected his offer of marriage); and where the Ethiopian king referred to just relations between kings/peoples at 3.21.2, Tomyris had been much more alert to Realpolitik in her dealings with Cyrus.

There is no reference to the influence of divine will, fate or such like in relation to Cambyses’ failure recorded in 3.25.3-4: Herodotus presents it as the fault of the king himself – evident at 3.25.1 from the lack of preparation in his sudden and angry decision to invade Ethiopia, as well as his failure to act decisively at 3.25.5 when he could (Herodotus makes clear) have retrieved the situation. Nor is there any suggestion that Cambyses had failed in a matter of Persian νόμος: as with Cyrus, Herodotus does not suggest at this stage of his account of the Persian kings the existence of an actual Persian νόμος of imperial expansion. Indeed, the emphasis is very much on the personal position of Cambyses as an individual king: the tone of his death-bed speech at 3.65.1-7 was emphatically about his own position, until he urged the Persians not to allow the Medes to regain power. Even that, however, was reduced to the personal in his final words at 3.65.7. This defensive-minded presentation on his death-bed – ‘do not lose’ (rather than ‘add to’) ‘what you have’ – is inconsistent with the idea of an irresistible Persian νόμος of expansion.

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317 This abuse of Amasis’ corpse undermines Baragwanath’s earlier argument that, by maintaining the campaign after Amasis’ death, Cambyses disproved the suggestion that the reasons for it were strictly personal (Baragwanath (2008) 111): on the contrary, for Cambyses (whether deranged or not) this really was personal and not a spurious pretext.

318 Of course, there are similarities too: see Lateiner (1989) 153. My focus, however, is on the detail: sweeping generalizations such as “politically senseless and morally objectionable” are unhelpful. The historical reality was that both kings successfully expanded the empire, again raising the question why Herodotus chose to present them differently at the micro-level – a question I seek to answer at least partially in this thesis.

319 Harrison sees “Persian imperialism as founded on an unrealistic sense of its imminent demise”, citing this passage among others (Harrison (2015) 26). While he acknowledges that sometimes such insecurity is justified, it seems to be so in all the passages he cites. I prefer to read these passages for what they suggest about the kings’ individual attitudes to imperialism.
The beginning of Herodotus’ presentation of Darius the king emphasises the great power Darius possessed at the outset of his reign (articulated quite plainly at 3.88.3). The portrait of a king overseeing a vast empire is reinforced by the interest shown by Darius in relation to administration and financial organisation from the very outset of his reign (3.89.1-2). But what would Darius do with his power? It is notable that Herodotus’ presentation of Darius fails to demonstrate what, if anything, this great power meant in practice – the representation of Darius as a ‘warrior-king’ at Bisitun and in other inscriptions is not evident in Herodotus’ account. It might have been expected that, as a great king known, as a matter of record, to have expanded the empire, Darius would be presented as the doer of great deeds and the conqueror of new territory; but as Herodotus’ portrayal of him continues it is not until 3.134.5 that Darius makes an expansionist move, targeting Greece at the instigation of his wife, Atossa. I consider a number of aspects of this episode involving Darius and Atossa (in particular, the ways in which the passage actually diminishes Darius as man and king) in section 2.2.3.4 of chapter 2, but I focus now on what is only the second overt statement in the Histories (voiced by Atossa) of a Persian expectation that its kings would expand the empire (3.134.1-3).

Atossa offered two reasons: to reassure the Persians of their king’s manliness; and to keep their minds off conspiring against Darius. In other words, Atossa is not couching this in terms of an express Persian νόμος but in terms very personal to Darius himself: his failure to have taken any expansionary steps thus far was simply him failing as a man. There is no suggestion of any disapproval of his inaction in this regard so far as the Persians themselves were concerned. This may be an illustration of the gender-based emphasis on family some have identified in the presentation of Atossa; but it also illustrates (looking at Darius’ reaction too) that neither wife nor husband contemplated in their approach to conquest and expansion the Persian-ness of it (that is, the idea that it was incumbent on Darius as a Persian king to extend the empire). This is underlined when Atossa gave a purely domestic (and trivial) reason for Darius switching his attention away from the Scythians and towards the Greeks – a reason he accepted immediately.

Of course, it would be strange if this episode were to offer the first articulation of a full-blown Persian νόμος; not only was Atossa actually relaying the words of Democedes (διδαχθεῖσα ὑπὸ τοῦ Δημοκήδεος ἡ Ἄτοσσα, 3.134.1), but the location of the conversation itself was that most personal of places, Darius’ and Atossa’s bedchamber (reinforcing the interpretation of this as a challenge to

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320 DB.
322 See note 308 for the first.
323 For example, Dominick (2007) 443.
324 I cannot agree with Baragwanath who reads the use of οἰκός by Atossa at 3.134.2 as tantamount to referring to a Persian νόμος on the basis that Atossa’s words “parallel” sentiments “uttered elsewhere”, particularly Xerxes’ words at 7.8α 1-2 (she refers to no other passages): the use here of a word other than νόμος is the whole point.
325 3.134.5-6. See section 2.2.3.4 of chapter 2 for the suggestion that the reader is being invited to take Darius’ assertion at 3.134.3 that he had already a conceived plan to attack the Scythians as a face-saving lie (the notion of Darius’ insecurity): the episode mirrors other sections of the account of Darius as having little idea of the behaviour expected of a Persian king until explained to him by others. It should be borne in mind that here the advice he received here was not from an underling, but from one of his wives – who happened also to be the daughter of Cyrus himself.
Darius in his *individual* – not his kingly – capacity). It is significant that the idea of such personal shortcomings, the *first* of Atossa’s reasons, is not comparable with anything in the accounts of Cyrus and Cambyses, though both Cyrus and Cambyses are presented as having succumbed to delusions about the need to counter conspiracy (her *second* reason) that were inspired by false dreams (Cyrus ironically about Darius, 1.210.1, and Cambyses about his brother Smerdis, 3.30.2-3).

But Darius’ invasion of Greece petered out, evidencing a very different attitude on the part of Darius in contrast with the eagerness with which Cyrus and Cambyses had been shown to increase their empire. The taking of Samos and its subsequent handing back to Syloson had been triggered by Darius’ wish to reward Syloson (3.139-141); but, in acceding to Syloson’s request – that is, in repaying a personal favour received by Darius *before* he became king at the expense of the Persians as a whole, the balancing of accounts typical of Darius’ style of leadership as a κάπηλος – the king gave no thought to its practicalities.326

Darius’ most significant attempt at imperial expansion was his invasion of Scythia;327 but this much-discussed part of the *Histories* shows Darius in, at best, an inept light, particularly compared with Cyrus. I do not read the account as suggesting that Darius was rash to contemplate such an invasion: Herodotus reminds the reader at 4.1.1 that the Scythians had previously invaded what was now Persian territory – they might do the same in the future. Any king aware of this would have to develop a strategy to deal with such a threat (and a pre-emptive strike could be one solution); but Darius is stated at 4.1.1 also to have wanted revenge on the Scythians for that previous invasion.328 Thus he had two good reasons for such a campaign, both of which could be perceived as ‘state’-type reasons rather than personal whims: Darius is being presented as more concerned about the Persians than about himself (though the emphasis on him as an individual re-emerges when, at 4.87.1, he erected two pillars detailing all the peoples under *his* sway).

Darius’ frustration at the Scythian guerrilla tactics led him at 4.126.1 to taunt the Scythian king in the hope that he would give up (Idanthyrsus’ scornful response at 4.127.1-4 is hardly surprising). The parallels with the encounters of Cyrus/Tomyris and Cambyses/the Ethiopian king have been considered in section 1.2.2 above, but there are differences of detail in the three encounters and the responses of each king within them. Both Cyrus’ and Darius’ targets were peoples with a nomadic way of life,329 who on the face of it would have been hard fighters (Herodotus uses the

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326 Herodotus makes it clear at 3.146.1 that Maeandrius acted as he did through resentment of Syloson recovering Samos so effortlessly – a response that Darius either had failed to anticipate or was indifferent to. Darius’ willingness to acknowledge debts of gratitude owed to non-Persians led to difficulty for him and Persia on other occasions too (Histaieus, for instance – see section 2.2.3.3 of chapter 2). It is striking that, on taking Samos, Otanes felt confident enough to disregard an express order, suggesting that he felt a degree of independence when it came to obeying Darius. I cannot agree with Pelling’s assertion that Darius is presented as dealing effortlessly with any unrest (Pelling (2002) 149) – there was nothing easy or swift about Darius’ actions in these cases.

327 I emphasise that I am focusing on the presentation of Darius within the *Histories* rather than the historical figure of Darius, who consistently and successfully expanded the Persian empire (see Briant (1996) 140-1), which is referred to on occasion by Herodotus (e.g. 4.44.1) but which does not feature prominently in Herodotus’ overall portrayal of him.

328 When it came to revenge, it seems, Herodotus’ Persian kings were capable of seeing themselves as heirs to the Median kings – or at least employing such revenge as a ground for actions they intended to undertake for other reasons.

329 This is not expressly stated in the case of the Massagetae, but a reasonable inference from the descriptions of their way of life and territory, together with the absence of any reference to them inhabiting towns and Herodotus’ note at 1.201.2 that some regarded the Massagetae as a Scythian people.
word ὀλκῖμον of the Massagetae at 1.201.1): 330 what benefits might have accrued to the Persians by conquering such peoples? Neither account addresses the idea of economic advantage: Cyrus is said to have had two motivations for going to war (neither of which related to the economic or other interests of the empire as such); 331 while Darius’ stated motive was revenge. 332 If we compare these two with Cambyses’ proposed assault on the Ethiopians, again no economic reasons are given in the narrative for his invasion, which is presented as simply another instance of a Persian king pursuing conquest for its own sake (it may be that Cambyses’ desire, at 3.17.2, to establish the existence of the Table of the Sun could be taken as implying an economic motive, for gaining such a prize might have been a huge material benefit, though he is never shown to have had this in mind when deciding to invade). 333 The personal aspect arose in the account of Cambyses in his furious reaction to the Ethiopian king’s message, which contrasts with the attitudes of Cyrus and Darius: they showed anger not in the face of military resistance but where they considered themselves challenged in some other way. 334

In summary, Darius was induced by Atossa to seek to expand the empire: it is by no means clear that, in the absence of her intervention, he would have chosen to do so. Even when he did proceed with it, he saw it very much in personal kingly terms rather than as a Persian νόμος – though in this interaction we have the first overt suggestion at the royal level that invading other countries gave a Persian king prestige among the Persians themselves.

1.3.2.4 Xerxes

The links between Xerxes and his predecessors are readily apparent. 335 But the similarities arise at the structural level: at the micro-level there are significant differences between accounts. In this section I argue that Xerxes himself was the victim of his own macro-reading of his royal predecessors, leading him to the erroneous conclusion that expansion was a full-blooded Persian νόμος to which he owed unquestioning loyalty. 336

330 See note 311 above
331 1.204.2 – see section 1.3.2.1 above.
332 4.1.1. The vengeance was for an historic act of unprovoked aggression. Corcella sees the invasion as “part of Darius’ general expansionist thrust” (Corcella (2007) 573), though I can find no evidence in the text for such a policy.
333 Most commentators have seen Cambyses’ interest in Ethiopia as representing an instance of “Persian rulers [who] are portrayed as grasping, tyrannical, and aggressive” (Lateiner (1989) 180). But Herodotus (as so often with him) had a matter-of-fact rather than moralistic attitude to expansionism, akin to Tomyris’ pragmatic reaction to Cyrus’ invasion considered above. Cf. too Gray (1997) 133, suggesting that one of the adverse (for Athens) consequences of the Peisistratid tyranny was that it “held the Athenians back from military conquest” (which suggests a further distinction between Persian king and Greek tyrant: the former enhanced his people’s ability to conquer others); and Pelling’s astute observations on the difficulties presented by simply blaming the Persians for being “an aggressive imperialist nation” (Pelling (2000) 95 onwards).
334 E.g. Cyrus at 1.141.4 and Darius as noted by Otanes at 3.72.1. The kings may also have considered it necessary for the Persians to keep testing themselves against more primitive (and thus ‘harder’) peoples in war (a motive that could be inferred from Cyrus’ observation at 9.122.3, that soft lands produce soft men), though there is no clear support for this in the text.
335 See, for example, Hartog’s linking of Darius’ Scythian and Xerxes’ Greek invasions, referencing the Oebazus and Pythius interactions and the shared adviser Artabanus (Hartog (1988) 37). As I show in section 3.3.4.1 of chapter 3, however, at the micro-level such apparent similarities fall away, leaving a far more nuanced portrayal of each king.
336 It is worth recalling the emphasis within the Achaemenid inscriptions on the personal aspect of conquest (noted at section 0.4.2.1 of the Introduction), which accords with my readings of Cyrus, Cambyses and Darius in the Histories. As will
That Xerxes had been only too conscious of the weight of expectation on him is apparent from his own words at 7.8α 1. The use of ἠτρεμίσαμεν by Xerxes here recalls that the same verb has been used (on two occasions) to describe the threat to non-Persians posed by Cyrus (see section 1.3.2.1 above). The Herodotean irony is clear in the final usage of the verb in this sense, by Artabanus of Xerxes at 7.18.3: the idea that Xerxes, by not behaving as Cyrus (i.e. he would be ἀτρεμίζοντα rather than οὐκ ἀτρεμίζοντα), would lead to Xerxes being μακαριστὸν...πρὸς πάντων ἀνθρώπων is there rejected by Artabanus, who now believed that the expedition against Greece had some form of divine sanction, echoing Xerxes' own words at 7.8α 1 (I offer an analysis of the additional significance of this interaction in section 2.2.4.1 of chapter 2).

Initially, however, Xerxes is presented in the Histories as uncertain about the whole idea of a Greek invasion (7.5.1). There is at this point no hint of the existence of any Persian νόμος requiring him to launch any invasion against anyone; even more significantly, Xerxes is presented at 7.5.1 as (unlike his three predecessors) indifferent at a personal level (that is, in terms of his own preference as an individual) to expansionism: from the outset of the presentation of Xerxes, Herodotus is putting forward with this Xerxes a significantly different portrayal of a Persian king.

Xerxes was thus perfectly free to follow his inclination stated at 7.5.1: presented as a king who did not unthinkingly subscribe to any personal preference for expansionism as demonstrated by his predecessors, he could indeed have chosen to be his own man, but he went on to launch the largest failed invasion in the entire Histories. How does Herodotus explain this unexpected outcome? Very simply, while the accounts of the previous kings (as I have argued in section 1.3.2) had projected imperialist expansionism as an option implemented by each king at an individual level rather than as a result of a commonly accepted Persian νόμος, Xerxes came to ‘read’ those accounts as evidence for the existence of such a Persian νόμος.

One key way to the understanding of this about-turn is recognising the type of leader that Xerxes went on to reveal himself to be. At the outset of his reign he was a king unsure of his strategy  

be seen below, it also underlines how Xerxes was led to a shift in emphasis by his own understanding of expansionism as more than personal and constituting a Persian νόμος.

337 See section 1.4.1.1 below for further consideration of this passage.
338 The use of ἠτρεμίζω at 7.8α 1 underlines both Xerxes’ relationship with Cyrus and (as the word is used in his own speech) his awareness of it, in a way that has not been echoed in the accounts of Cambyses and Darius (although θεός τε οὕτω ἄγει καὶ αὐτοῖσι ἡμῖν πολλὰ ἐπέπουσι συμφέρεται ὡς τὸ ἄμεινον is, in the context of Persian imperialism, the clearest reference within the Histories to the message set out in the Achaemenid inscriptions – see section 0.4.2 of the Introduction for the idea of Ahuramazda’s favour leading to conquest and tribute). This divine aspect is picked up at 7.18 by Artabanus when, after experiencing the same dream as Xerxes, he underwent a complete change of mind as to the wisdom of the invasion of Greece and urged the king at 7.18.3 ποίεε δὲ οὕτω ὅκως τοῦ θεοῦ παραδιδόντος τῶν σῶν ἐνδεήσει μηδέν: the idea that a god was guiding but that Xerxes may yet fall short encouraged the king to be more like Cyrus by οὐκ ἀτρεμίζοντα (see section 1.3.2.1 above).
339 According to Powell (1938) 51, the verb in the sense of “nations and monarchs, be unambitious” is used on these occasions only each of Cyrus and Xerxes. There is one further deployment, in the sense “stay still”, at 8.68 β 2.
340 Cf. Harrison’s detection of “the makings of a kind of a religiously-founded form of imperialism” in Xerxes’ speech at 7.8 combined with “the anecdote story of Darius releasing an arrow into the sky and swearing vengeance against the Athenians” (Harrison (2009) 386-7. I tend to read the latter, with Darius then requiring his slaves to remind him on a daily basis of the need to punish Athens, as somewhat akin to Cyrus’ disdainful attitude to the Spartans at 1.153.1-2: the implication is that the Athenians and their offence were too unimportant to be remembered without the slaves’ promptings.
341 Xerxes’ ambivalence is recognised as distinctive by Immerwahr (Immerwahr (1956) 273). Baragwanath too notes the “drawn-out process by which Xerxes comes to invade Greece”, reading the portrayal of him here as a “cautious and reflective, as well as self-determining, ruler” (Baragwanath (2008) 242). See too Pelling, who is (for once) even more exculpatory of Xerxes (Pelling (2000) 96).
(7.5.1), but then became influenced by an adviser with his own agenda: he began to emerge as troubled by the weight of expectation that Persian kingship placed on him (even though on my reading the ‘Persian νόμος’ driving him on was a misconception borne out of the very pressure he felt). A significant passage for understanding this is Xerxes’ address to the leading Persians at the council called to announce his decision to invade Greece. As I show below, at the individual level the emphasis is very much on Xerxes’ personal position and the burden of expectation weighing him down, but his speech began with the declaration οὔτ᾽ αὐτὸς κατηγήσομαι νόμον τόνδε ἐν ύμῖν τιθείς παροδεξόμενός τε αὐτῷ χρήσομαι (7.8α 1): the new king was very clear that his proposed invasion followed an established Persian custom – we Persians οὐδαμά κω ἠτρεμίσαμεν. Thus Xerxes was announcing that the idea of expansion was not new and that “we” did this sort of thing – it was a full-blown Persian νόμος which he accepted as his inheritance.

Yet, as we have seen in the preceding sections, no previous king had suggested such a νόμος: Xerxes’ predecessors were presented choosing expansion for reasons of an individual nature, for personal esteem (Cyrus) or for vengeance, a pattern of individual approaches to expansion rather than a collective and conscious subscribing to expansion as a fundamental requirement of ‘being’ Persian, while Xerxes had understood this as evidence of an actual Persian νόμος. It is striking how Xerxes, expanding on this in 7. 8α 2, presented himself: the initial emphasis was on him matching his predecessors’ achievements and him adding to the Persians’ power before noting that “we” could gain glory, take possession of lands as rich as those “we” already possess, and exact vengeance. In this way he brought together various collective rather than individual motivations.

Xerxes was rejecting the individualistic elements of his predecessors’ commitment to expansion, preferring to see his kingly role as a sort of collaborative facilitator who would allow the Persians to achieve as a group. His reason for this is never expressly stated by Herodotus, but a close examination shows that it was Xerxes’ favoured approach because he fundamentally doubted his own ability to act alone as a strong king to deliver in accordance with Persian expectation, blinded by the image of his father that fed his misreading of Persian kingship and failing to appreciate just how often Darius had been regularly saved from mistakes by his advisers. There was also an element of reluctance to recognise the individualist aspect altogether, as he preferred in his insecurity to spread the burden that such an imposing inheritance placed on the kingly successor, demonstrating a further failing on Xerxes’ part, to recognise that, for his predecessors, leadership was a more relevant concept than empire, and that leadership relied on the qualities of an

342 For more on Xerxes’ relationships with advisers, see section 2.2.4 of chapter 2.
343 7.8α 1-5 2 and his response to Artabanus’ contribution at 7.11.1-4. Evans suggests that this shows a shift in Xerxes from the “shallow prince” to the enunciator of the principles of imperialism actuating the empire (Evans (1991) 12). See below for my view of this reading of Xerxes.
344 Harrison too observes that Xerxes is himself noting that these earlier conquests formed a pattern (Harrison (2002) 554) – though in doing so Xerxes was, I am suggesting, misreading them.
345 So Cambyses and Darius, in response on Cambyses’ part to a personal slight and on Darius’ part to a national slight – themselves significant differentiators between those two kings.
346 In the light of Herodotus’ interest throughout the Histories in νόμος and how it influenced behaviour at national and individual levels, it is intriguing to note here how he presents the coming into being of a new Persian νόμος – one which would go on to define Persian kingship for future generations down to Herodotus’ own (and, as I have previously suggested, for many modern scholars too).
347 See section 2.2.3 of chapter 2.
individual – it had been, indeed, the basis on which the Persians had compromised their liberty in favour of Cyrus’ kingship in the first place (see section 0.2.5.5 of the Introduction). In focusing on his pattern, Xerxes had missed the importance of the details at the micro-level.

So when he made a direct connection at 7.8β 2 between his campaign and his father, he did so to honour his father but also for the benefit of the other Persians (ὑπέρ…τῶν ἄλλων Περσέων).³⁴⁸ Xerxes, convinced (in spite of his original willingness at 7.5 to treat the possibility of conquest as ‘optional’) that he had no choice as a result of Persian νόμος but to expand the empire,³⁴⁹ did not appreciate that this notion was very much grounded in his own reading of Persian history and not something evident to all the other Persians: it is significant that neither Mardonius nor Artabanus (in making the case for and against invasion respectively) picked up on this (save that Artabanus, emphasising the singular οὐ, exorted Xerxes at 7.10δ 1 ἐς κίνδυνον μηδένα τοιοῦτον ἀπικέσθαι), as one would have expected both to address the idea of a νόμος had they considered it to exist and apply.³⁵⁰ Mardonius did at 7.9.2 list the peoples “we” have conquered – μεγάλα ἀδικήσαντα Πέρσας οὐδέν, ἀλλὰ δύναμιν προσκτᾶσθαι βουλόμενοι: he had picked up the communal element of Xerxes’ statement and responded supportively, at the same time reminding Xerxes obliquely of the scale of conquest he would need to emulate. Similarly, had the Persians themselves been aware of a νόμος to expand the empire, their response at 7.13.3 to Xerxes’ change of mind would surely have been disappointment – but instead κεχαρηκότες προσεκύνεον. This supports the notion that the Persians expected their king to decide, to lead them – without reference to any νόμος to expand the empire.

Of course, νόμος conceptually covers a wide range of possible meanings. Herodotus refers in his own words to Persian νόμοι at 1.131-40; 3.2.2; 3.15.2-3; 3.16.2-3; [3.31.2] 3.118.1; 7.2.1; 7.238.2; 9.111.1. The word is used of Persian religious beliefs at 1.131-132, and Herodotus sometimes refers to Persian νόμοι in direct or indirect speech, such as in 3.31.2 and 3.31.4, where the word is used to refer to formal laws rather than customs (the judges were able to give Cambyses the answer he sought after they had consulted a body of laws, presumably written down or inscribed);³⁵¹ and also at 5.18.2 and 5.97.1, where, however, the word is used to refer to custom and practice.

But Herodotus never in the narrator’s voice refers to a Persian νόμος of imperial expansion: that concept is presented only in Xerxes’ direct or indirect speech as I have identified above; and, in that context, the word seems to refer to a custom Xerxes believed had been imposed on the king (cf.1.136.1) rather than a formal law recorded somewhere. In other words, it was behaviour expected of a king in his position as king – and, indeed, went to the heart of how a Persian king

³⁴⁸ Cf. Cambyses’ invasion of Egypt: Cyrus had planned to do this but was killed before he could, but there is no suggestion that Cambyses had decided to undertake his own invasion on that account.

³⁴⁹ Lateiner also reads Herodotus as showing how limited, by virtue of his status and Persian νόμοι, Xerxes’ freedom of choice was here (Lateiner (1989) 181), though his focus is on what he sees as a moral dimension to the account.

³⁵⁰ Mardonius does, at 9.41.4 (long after Xerxes has withdrawn to Persia) refer to νόμῳ τῷ Περσαῖῳ, but this refers to the detail of battle – that the Persians actively engaged the enemy. Cf the view that this must be an allusion to “the Persian νόμος of imperialism” (Flower and Marincola (2002) 184 – as is usual, the only passage cited in support of such a νόμος is Xerxes’ speech at 7.8α 1-2, considered above).

³⁵¹ See Asheri (2007) 431.
was expected to behave: there would have been no legal sanction for failure to send gifts to the Persian man with the most sons (again 1.136.1), but it would have resulted in a perception among the Persians that the king was not behaving as a king should. It is a νόμος of this type that was expected of a Persian king, in Xerxes’ misunderstanding of the matter; and such a reading of νόμος is consistent with my argument that no Persian king before Xerxes was ever shown as aware of such a νόμος – it had never been a law-type νόμος.\footnote{This reading of Xerxes fits neatly with others’ readings of him misunderstanding various aspects of history (e.g. Christ (1994), Grethlein (2009), and Harrison (2015) 30-4).}

As matters developed, however, it becomes clear that Xerxes’ words at 7.8α 1 were incorrect: he had introduced a new Persian νόμος.\footnote{There is a suggestion that a νόμος could develop in this way at 3.31.2, with Herodotus implying that this was the first time that what subsequently became commonplace, a king’s cohabitation with a sister, occurred. νόμος here, according to Asheri, corresponds to “the Persian dātā, ‘law’ in general, and in particular the traditional ‘law of the Medes and Persians’” (Asheri (2007) 431). This seems to be a permissive rather than a mandatory law, however: there is no suggestion that a king had to cohabit with his sister.} Xerxes’ reading of the exploits of his predecessors as constituting a νόμος indicated both his misunderstanding of the role of the Persian king and his own inability to fulfil it.

Herodotus presents this as Xerxes’ own interpretation of his role as a Persian king, one which arguably clashed with his own personal inclination as stated at 7.5.1, reinforcing the notion of Xerxes feeling bound by a custom which he feared he was incapable of living up to.\footnote{It is noteworthy that when at 7.12.1 he reappraised his plan, his conclusion was that marching against Hellas would not be in his interests: the communal concern has been laid aside as the king reasserted his own position, though this was not a case of him reclaiming his sovereignty, as can be seen in 7.13.3 (which I consider further in section 2.2.4.5 of chapter 2). The emphasis is on “my” decision, but “you” now be easy (ὕσυχοι ἔστε); though the admission of inexperience is a remarkable statement for a Persian king to make in front of the leading Persians.} But the νόμος identified by Xerxes did not equate in every respect with the approach taken by his predecessors. At 7.8γ 1 he said that he had ‘calculated’ (λογιζόμενος) the ἀγαθά that the invasion would deliver – but the explanation of these was couched not in economic terms but in terms of enhanced mastery of the world.\footnote{Ward argues that Xerxes is threatening here to destroy all foreign customs and conventions as a result of bringing the entire world under the rule of the Persian king (Ward (2008) 10), but that does not follow from the text (and cf. Persian open-mindedness towards others’ customs, 1.135.1).} In other words, he sought imperial conquest for its own sake – but to be shared with the leadingPersians rather than accruing to Xerxes alone (note the shift to the first person plural and expressions such as ἔγω ἅμα ὑμῖν at 7.8γ 2).

This type of kingship is a long way removed from that offered by Cyrus and accepted by the Persians at 1.126.5-6, with its emphasis on freedom through obedience and which had been adopted, albeit in the particular guises of their own type of kingship, by Cambyses and Darius: Xerxes was effectively abrogating his responsibility to be obeyed.\footnote{The way in which each king regarded Cyrus is interesting in terms of differentiation as to the type of king is represented as being. Cambyses required the leading Persians to compare him with his father and is duly told that he surpasses him (3.34.4-5). As for Darius, see note 117 above.} His reading of the past as imposing a particular νόμος on him had a resulted in him ignoring the fundamental basis of Persian kingship; and, as we shall see, the inability and even incomprehension of the Persians when faced with this would ultimately undermine and bring low his rule.
suggesting that Xerxes' uncertainty about the invasion threatened to undermine the very concept of himself as king; but more importantly it shows how challenging the role of Persian king could be. Xerxes put Artabanus in the king's position so as to allow Artabanus (the man counselling caution) the opportunity to himself take his own advice and 'be' a cautious king in such circumstances, but Artabanus' response to the same dream was to abandon that caution and become even more enthusiastic about invasion than Xerxes himself. The account subtly demonstrates how Xerxes had no choice but to invade Greece, as in his position even wise old Artabanus would have done the same.\(^{357}\)

Such temporary transfer of kingly decision-making, suggestive of a king who at some level believed himself unfit for the role, finds no echo elsewhere in the accounts of Persian kings other than in relation to Xerxes again, when in the aftermath of the defeat at Salamis he did transfer – or delegate – his kingly role to Mardonius literally rather than metaphorically; and also in Book 9 when he reluctantly gave his shawl – clothing again – to Artaynte. The episodes with Artabanus and Mardonius show Xerxes 'trying out' the other very different approaches to kingship each offered, with an outcome that ultimately ended his effectiveness as a king, underlined by that passing on of his shawl;\(^{358}\) or more compellingly as Xerxes (frustrated by Artabanus' persistently failing to appreciate the requirements of a Persian king) literally put him in the king's place to see how Artabanus performed in the role. Xerxes, it is clear, needed those around him to appreciate the burdens of kingship, which of course emphasised his own awareness of them, unlike his predecessors (another way in which he is shown as a very different sort of ruler from Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius).

This is not necessarily a sign of weakness on Xerxes' part, since, if a king opens the way to a more consultative form of leadership, it would make sense to ensure that the other decision-makers (or those contributing to the decision) are fully apprised of the relevant facts; but whether the Persians themselves were ready to accept such a form of kingship was extremely questionable.

### 1.4 Leadership and expansionism

In section 1.4.1 below I analyse within the imperialist expansionism theme of this chapter the aspects of leadership I identified in section 0.2.4 of the Introduction, followed in section 1.4.2 by my analysis in the same context of the styles of leadership identified in section 0.2.5 of the Introduction.

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\(^{357}\) Cf. Pelling's remarks referred to in note 341 above.

\(^{358}\) I am using the association between the clothing of the king and his kingship itself in this context to suggest that persons wearing the king's clothing were not "sharing" kingship but being made to appreciate the nature of his burden of kingship. For the basic association, cf. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, who notes "a taboo on wearing the royal robe on anyone else but the king..." (Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1983), repr. Munson (2013b) 144). I do not accept her view that this was overlooked by the Greeks: the two episodes I discuss illustrate that Herodotus appreciated it.
1.4.1 Aspects of leadership in the context of expansionism

1.4.1.1 Strategic issues and risk

Within the *Histories*, there is little express reference to the strategic aspects of expansionism (that is, what ultimate goals lay behind it). While there was the occasional implication of the economic benefits of conquest, before Xerxes the drive for Persian expansion was, as we have seen above, motivated at the personal level. Xerxes alone saw his expansionist role in strategic terms, in the sense that, while he too was determined to demonstrate that he was not inferior to his royal predecessors (7.8α 2), he believed, as a result of his misconceived notion of a Persian νόμος of non-stop expansion, that he had no choice but to seek conquest in order to demonstrate his commitment to that νόμος. Of course, the greater an empire became, the more a king had to lose; and I turn now to the ways in which the kings are shown to have been aware of (and managed) risk in the context of such expansion of the empire.\(^{359}\)

It is no surprise to discern various strategies to reduce the risks inherent in the military aspects of expansionism. So Cambyses sent out the Fish-eaters to scout Ethiopia (3.17.2, 3.19-25), Darius did not rush headlong into an invasion of Greece when persuaded by Atossa to turn his sights on it (ironically sending, at 3.135.1-2, Democedes, whose persuasive words had come from Atossa’s mouth, with fifteen eminent Persians to scout out all of Greece), and Xerxes at 7.208.1 sent scouts to monitor the Spartan forces before Thermopylae (though when he sought an explanation from Demaratus for the Spartans’ behaviour as reported by the scouts, he was incapable of giving it any credence).\(^{360}\) But none of these kings showed consistency: Herodotus emphasises at 3.25.1 how ill-prepared Cambyses was when he subsequently launched his attack on the Ethiopians and, at 3.25.5, how indifferent he was to the dangers of his position.\(^{361}\)

Darius too launched a misconceived campaign against the Scythians. His lack of preparation and his lack of basic understanding of his foe resulted in absurdities such as that recounted at 4.124.1-2: the building of eight huge forts in an uninhabited part of Scythia, which he subsequently abandoned half-built as the Scythians he had been pursuing seemed to have disappeared (see further section 3.3.3.2 of chapter 3); and Xerxes, while never being shown as cavalier in the same way as Cambyses and Darius (at 7.20.1 he sought to reduce risk by spending four years preparing his forces for the invasion of Greece, no doubt influenced by Artabanus’ warnings at 7.10 γ 1-2), indirectly undermined his own use of spies by giving the Greek spies captured by his army a guided tour of his forces before sending them safely on their way (7.146.2-3), justifying this by believing that news of his strength would intimidate the Greeks into submission (7.147.1).

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\(^{359}\) For what I mean by “risk”, see section 0.2.4.1 of the Introduction.

\(^{360}\) See section 2.3.1 of chapter 2 for the role of advisers in relation to risk.

\(^{361}\) Meissner, focusing exclusively on narrow military strategy – how, rather than why, wars were fought – also notes Cambyses’ strategic shortcomings in terms of neglect of logistics (Meissner (2004) 226). See also Baragwanath, contrasting Cambyses’ lack of preparedness at this point with his previous careful planning, which she sees as the “first explicit note of his madness” (Baragwanath (2008) 114).
But the impact of risk on styles of leadership is not always as one would expect: while Cambyses had been enraged by the Ethiopian king’s advice and as a result rashly engaged with the enemy, he ultimately managed to survive the encounter. Cyrus, on the other hand, in spite of not being provoked in a similar situation by the advice of Tomyris, nevertheless failed in his campaign and was defeated and killed: he heeded Croesus’ advice at 1.207.1-7 as to the risk of conducting the battle on Persian territory. Thus, on this one occasion when Cyrus took advice on a significant military matter, attempting to manage risk by consultation, he proceeded to lose both the battle and his life. There are more factors involved in successful outcomes, it is clear, than the quality of a king’s risk management. And similarly, Darius was careful to plan the assault on the Greeks prompted by Atossa/Democedes (3.135.1-3), while, so far as can be discerned from the narrative, taking no steps to minimise risk when launching his invasion of Scythia. \(^{362}\) Xerxes, in spite of all his planning, suffered the greatest humiliation of all the kings.

### 1.4.1.2 Succession planning

While an imperial dynasty might be expected to have particular regard to further expansion when it came to matters of succession, there is (in the context of this chapter’s topic) little evidence for it save in the case of Cyrus.\(^{363}\) Cyrus, as will be seen in section 2.3.2 of chapter 2, went to great pains to appoint Cambyses his successor and leave him Croesus as a special adviser, but Cambyses failed in this respect: his campaign against Egypt had been launched presumably without appointing a successor himself, allowing the Magus to supplant him in his absence; while Darius, with a choice to make between competing claims, chose Xerxes on the basis apparently of a hair-splitting form of priority (7.3.4), though Herodotus states without qualification that Darius’ decision was actually driven by the influence of Atossa.

Xerxes did not assume as part of his inheritance an obligation to continue his father’s plans to invade Greece – his instinct was not to do so (7.5.1). Mardonius’ various arguments deployed at 7.5.2-3 to persuade him otherwise echoed those of Atossa with Darius at 3.134.1-3: punish the Athenians, and thus discourage future military challenges (though he added a new reason – Greece would make a productive addition to the empire), rather than referring either to a Persian νόμος of expansion (see section 1.3.2.4 above) or having any expectation that Xerxes would do so to honour his father. It is only when Xerxes announced to the leading Persians his intention to invade that he presented himself at 7.8β 2 as carrying on his father’s work. It is not difficult to interpret this as an additional reason for the invasion rather than the reflection of a fundamental requirement on a Persian king to continue his father’s imperialist expansion (contrast this with Cambyses – never once is there any suggestion that he might resume Cyrus’ failed campaign against the Massagetae, whether to expand the empire or to avenge his father).

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\(^{362}\) See section 2.3.1.3 of chapter 2 for the way Darius managed to survive the Scythian invasion because of his advisers rather than his own efforts.

\(^{363}\) Cf. Herodotus’ statement at 7.2.1 – ὡς δεῖ μιν ἀποδέξαντα βασιλέα κατὰ τὸν Περσέων νόμον οὕτω στρατεύεσθαι.
1.4.2 Styles of leadership in the context of expansionism

In the brief account of Cyaxares considered at section 1.2.1.2 above, Herodotus presents a ruler who was the first to organise the multinational Median army and expand the Median empire, developing an idea of ruling that went beyond the static and inward-looking model offered by Deioces (1.103.1), though such a way of ruling involved risk, leading (in Cyaxares’ case) to rashness resulting indirectly in the marriage of Astyages to Alyattes’ daughter.\footnote{This marriage would, of course, have deeply adverse consequences for the Median empire, as it was to produce a daughter who in due course gave birth to Cyrus.} Is Herodotus simply acknowledging that this is another, equally legitimate way to rule, or is there any suggestion that it may be better than Deioces’ way? The historian remarks that Deioces ruled for fifty-three years (1.102.1), Cyaxares for forty years – although those forty included twenty-eight years of subjugation by the Scythians (1.106.2). On the face of it, the Deioces model worked better from the subjects’ perspective; and even in the brief presentation of Cyaxares, Herodotus shows that he was not without faults – see 1.73.1 for his unreasonable anger with the Scythian refugees. So we are presented here with a tension between different types of monarchical ruling, of leadership style, with the suggestion that kings who sought imperial expansion (such as Cyaxares) were less successful than those who simply maintained their existing borders (such as Deioces). What we find in the case of the Persian kings, however, is that expansionism was a given; but how each king understood it and how he sought to achieve it were key markers of their individual leadership styles.

Each episode analysed in section 1.3.2 showed the kings as different in their style of leadership: Cyrus, once taken with the idea of expansion, could not stop himself pursuing it. Cambyses’ response to the self-righteous words of the Ethiopian king was anger leading to a reckless campaign against him, while Darius misunderstood the Scythians and continued to seek symbols of submission even after they have made it clear they would never surrender (and he had to be saved, as so often, by the advice of others – see section 2.2.3 of chapter 2). Xerxes is shown as more open in principle to understanding his opponents, consulting Demaratus for information and, finally, advice, but his efforts to be a king who consulted others fell short of genuine collaboration (see section 2.2.4 of chapter 2), leading to his own ultimate failure.

1.4.2.1 Cyrus as πατήρ

Cyrus is consistently shown in this context as a king entirely sure of his own actions and convinced of his own special position as a leader (1.204.2), a stance accepted unquestioningly by the Persians themselves (1.210.2-3); but his downfall arose from his reliance on Croesus’ advice as to risk rather than trusting his own judgment. So far as ‘Cyrus as πατήρ’ is concerned, the pact between king and Persians originally made no mention of imperial expansionism (though Hystaspes was to refer to it at 1.210.2-3): the emphasis was on Cyrus’ perception of himself as...
leader, rather than the Persians’ perception of him as a father. This dichotomy between individual king/leader and the Persians/followers has already been noted; but, by having the idea of expansionism voiced for the first time by Hystaspes, Herodotus invites the reader to consider that (as I argue in section 1.3.2 above) it did not form a core part of Cyrus’ pact with the Persians as originally entered into but was subsequently embraced by them when Cyrus himself developed his own taste for conquest (section 1.3.2.1 above).

1.4.2.2 Cambyses as δεσπότης

Cambyses’ attitude to expansionism was, as we have seen, even more solipsistic than Cyrus’: his motivations are always presented in personal terms (invading Egypt to avenge his mother’s honour, attacking the Ethiopians in anger at their king’s scorn for him). Even on his deathbed his concern is for himself to be avenged: his responsibility for the turmoil he has left the Persians to face through his failure to plan the succession is acknowledged merely as a problem for the Persians who will have to deal with it (and they were cursed if they failed). This aspect of the account of Cambyses emphasises the δεσπότης-style relationship between leader and subjects considered in section 0.2.5.2 of the Introduction, whereby Cambyses’ personal interests are his only concern.

1.4.2.3 Darius as κάπηλος

Darius has again been shown to be unable to behave as a king unless told what to do: his attitude to expansion was unformed until he was confronted by Atossa (see section 1.3.2.3 above). His invasion of Scythia suggested a king with little idea of how to mount and sustain a campaign that threw up unexpected challenges, his saving grace being that he did take good advice when he received it (see section 2.2.3 of chapter 2). His leadership style was that of an effective administrator/manager rather than an inspirational leader such as Cyrus: in Herodotean terms, Darius’ κάπηλος-style of leadership is clearly demonstrated in choosing to trade off conquered territory to return a personal favour (Syloson and Samos).

Another possible reference to Darius’ unsuitability as a strategic leader may be inferred from the account at 5.108-122 of the general Artybius and his death at the hands of the Carian squire of Onesilus: by positioning this account immediately before the list of conquests by Darius’ generals, Herodotus invites the reader to consider such vicarious success on the part of Darius in the light of this introductory account, which contains guidance from the squire on the behaviour expected of a king.\(^{365}\) While the advice is given clearly within this account of Onesilus and Artybius,\(^{366}\) it cannot

\(^{365}\) This account at 5.111.3-4 of a nobleman being aided by a shrewder social inferior who works with horses, a faint echo of Darius and his wily groom (3.85), subtly reminds the reader of how Darius had attained the throne in the first place. But the kingly ideal articulated by the squire at 5.111.3-4 anticipates the contrast at Thermopylae between Leonidas and Xerxes (which I consider in section 3.3.4.1 of chapter 3) and reinforces the point made at section 1.2.1 of chapter 1 about the differences in the way Persian kings are presented – though in the current context the contrast with how Cyrus led is clear.
but strike the reader how sharply it contrasts with the figure of Darius as he is now being presented – safely removed from events, miles away in Sardis, and thereby failing to gain glory in the terms of the squire’s guidance (as well as offering little in the way of support for his generals). I am not suggesting that Darius should be condemned on these grounds: Herodotus is subtly drawing out differences between Persian and Greek leadership, though hinting again at the deficiencies of Darius as an *inspirational* leader.

### 1.4.2.4 Xerxes

The entire account of Xerxes shows a king creating problems for himself by his misunderstanding of the expectations his position imposed upon him: his acceptance of a Persian νόμος of expansionism turned him from an uncertain imperialist at 7.5 into a committed (and unrealistic) one, while his sense of inadequacy led him to adopt a style of leadership that we have encountered within the repertoire of Cyrus’ leadership, but taken to extremes and deployed without any other elements from Cyrus’ own broader style. While occasionally showing awareness of the limitations of the approach (such as at 7.15.3 when he demonstrated, by putting Artabanus in the king’s position, that a king stands alone when making hard decisions), he ultimately abandoned his army and his own leadership ambitions by handing them over to Mardonius in the aftermath of Salamis. His consultative style was forged in his decision to invade Greece, where the expectations imperialism imposed upon him as king led him to try to share that burden.

### 1.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have analysed the differences in the Persian kings’ approaches to imperial expansion as a way of illustrating their individual styles of leadership and how these influenced Persian expansionism. Cyrus extended his pact with the Persians to encompass such expansion once he realised that he had a taste for it; and this was readily accepted by them (section 1.3.2.1 above). Cambyses’ focus on his personal interests at the expense of those of all the Persians, on the other hand, resulted in expansionist failures which resulted in the usurpation by the Magus (section 1.3.2.2 above). Darius’ accepted the challenge of expansionism, though his ability to achieve it was compromised by his style of leadership and its inadequacies from a strategic perspective: he had to be rescued on a number of occasions (section 1.3.2.3 above). Xerxes managed, through his misunderstanding of his predecessors and his own sense of personal insecurity, to impose a burden of Persian νόμος on himself that he could not withstand – his solution, to implement a consultative style of leadership, proved ineffective in the context of expansionism, which required the strong leadership of a Cyrus to be successful. But in according expansionism the status of a νόμος – that is, not a formal law but a custom that spoke very directly

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366 See Serghidou (2007) for a reading of the passage that focuses on Onesilus himself.
to the Persian sense of self—a king always aware of the need to live up to his illustrious successors, had effectively trapped himself in an expansionist strategy that he could never thereafter challenge: his loyalty to it had to be sustained even as he feared in his heart that he was incapable as a leader of succeeding in it (section 1.3.2.4 above).

367 See section 1.3.2 above.
CHAPTER 2 – PERSIAN KINGS AND THEIR ADVISERS

2.1 Introduction

Herodotus peppers the Histories with advisers, who appear across all cultures counselling kings or peoples. Given the relative absence of references to advisers in both the Achaemenid inscriptions that may have been available to him and in Aeschylus’ Persae,368 an analysis of Herodotus’ use of advisers in the context of the Persian kings (a significant element within the work) is required. Interactions with advisers are shaped in the Histories not only to structure the narrative, but also to further the reader’s understanding of the Persian kings at the individual micro-level.

In this section 2.1 I review some significant preliminary aspects of this topic: in section 2.1.1 I explain precisely what I mean by “advice”, before considering in section 2.1.2 the notion of “wise adviser” in modern scholarship (challenging the emphasis often given within scholarship to the wisdom of advisers).369 I conclude, in section 2.1.3, with an assessment of the ethnic status and gender of advisers, considering whether the ethnicity or gender of advisers had any significance across the presentations of the four kings and their advisers and whether either or both may serve as indicators (or otherwise) of their value to the king they advised.

In section 2.2 I use kingly interactions with specific advisers as the starting point for my analysis of their styles of leadership in this context. It is noteworthy that Herodotus does not simply offer accounts of king/adviser interactions. He puts forward, at various times, almost theoretical reflections by some of the kings (directly or indirectly) about the nature and role of advisers: indeed, their appearance in the text supports the notion that king/adviser interactions may be read as more than straightforward narrative technique on the part of Herodotus.

In section 2.3 I return to the aspects of leadership identified in section 0.2.4 of the Introduction. As my analysis shows, adviser interactions prove to be one of the clearest ways in which the kings are presented as managing risk; and the analysis also assists in unravelling the effectiveness of different styles of leadership. The results of the analysis are set out in section 2.4.

2.1.1 The nature of ‘advice’

Throughout the Histories Herodotus presents individuals (and sometimes poleis or peoples) receiving “advice”, by which I mean guidance as to what action is to be taken or how to implement an action that has already been decided upon – not mere information.370 ‘Information’, of course, 368 See sections 0.4.2.2 and 0.4.3.2 respectively of the Introduction.
369 Gray, examining the pattern of wise adviser, notes Herodotean variations, which she considers “as worthy of investigation as the patterns themselves” (Gray (2002) 299, 301). Her conclusion mirrors my approach to some degree, as I have explained in section 0.5 of the Introduction.
370 The distinction between advising and giving information has been noted before, but without exploring the consequences of the distinction (Boedeker (1987) 192-3). I have considered all occurrences within the Histories of the verbs συμβουλεύω, παραινέω, ὑποτίθεμαι, νουθετέω, παρηγορέω, and διδάσκω and their respective cognates: the most common usage is that
may inform decisions, but a request for or offer of information does not fall within the king/adviser interactions that I consider. Rather I consider only situations where actual guidance is sought or given, such as at 7.234.3, when Xerxes for the first time asks Demaratus how he thinks the Spartans may be overcome with least effort.

As will be seen, Cyrus apparently received advice without concern, Cambyses did not seek it out but on occasion adopted it when he received it, while both Darius and Xerxes were involved in adviser situations much more than their predecessors – but with a marked difference between them: Darius is rarely presented seeking advice but was regularly offered it; while Xerxes is regularly shown seeking advice and receiving it on more occasions than the other three kings in aggregate.

2.1.2 “Wise” advisers in the Histories

Modern scholarship has focused to a great degree on the king/wise adviser motif within the Histories. Indeed, one could sometimes forget that advisers who are not wise appear at all in the Histories (so widespread is this approach), though it would be rash to suppose that all instances of king/adviser interaction involve a ‘wise’ adviser: advisers, whether wise or not, can miss the mark, whether through simply being wrong, or because they misunderstand the other factors that individual kings have to take into account when making their decisions. I am not suggesting that all modern scholarship subscribes to this view of the ‘wise adviser’: Greenwood, for example, observes how the way advisers are framed within the narrative can give hints of the quality of their advice; and Lattimore himself, with many others, has made similar observations.

But I challenge the default position of many scholars (that advice is generally delivered by a wise adviser and ignored by a rash and arrogant king). For even when advisers are wise with their advice and the kings recognise this, the implication is that this is not always the point. Artemisia, for

of συμβουλέω and its cognates (75 in aggregate), while the next most common, ὑποτίθεμαι (27) and παραινέω (24), together comprise just two thirds of the total for συμβουλέω. When all the usages are broken down, the totals of those two words (the verbs and cognates) for the individual Persian kings are: Cyrus nine, Cambyses six, Darius seven, and Xerxes twenty (by contrast, Croesus totals six and Mardonius five). In addition, I have counted a further twenty eight episodes without adviser vocabulary, of which no fewer than twenty five (if we include Mardonius after Xerxes has left him in command) concern Persian kings.

So I do exclude those situations where information (as opposed to advice) is sought or given (such as, for example, when Xerxes at 7.101.2, 7.209.1 and 7.234.1 asks Demaratus whether the Spartans will fight – he is seeking information, or Demaratus’ opinion, rather than advice).

Not all cases are necessarily clear-cut: see Darius and Oebares in 3.85.1-3, where Darius sought help rather than advice. Lattimore in a classic paper of 1939 built on Bischoff (1932) to identify and analyse the figure of the “wise adviser” in the Histories, identifying the tragic warner and the practical adviser (Lattimore (1939) 24-5). I focus on the ‘practical advisers’, who by their words offered suggestions to a king on what he should be doing (or how he should be doing it) in a specific situation. ‘Tragic warners’, as a literary motif, do not assist reading the Persian kings as individual kings (though they are a key element of the patterns surrounding them considered by others).

So the index entry for “advisers” in Baragwanath (2008) simply says “see wise advisers” (Baragwanath (2008) 343); and similarly Foster and Lateiner (2012) 395. Said, narrowly and somewhat dogmatically, asserts, “[Tragic warners and wise advisers]’ only role in the narrative of Herodotus, as in Sophocles’ tragedies, is to foreshadow what is going to happen and help the reader notice the blindness of the rulers who did not pay attention to them” (Said (2002) 122). Though I do not deny that such patterns may be present (for an example of one, see Immerwahr (1966) 74).


A recent example can be found at Branscome (2013) 24. Branscome goes on, however, to consider a number of adviser interactions quite fruitfully without applying this default position (see below).
example, is regularly shown offering Xerxes advice he valued (and Herodotus notes at 7.99.3 πάντων τε τῶν συμμάχων γνώμας ἁρίστας βασιλέω ἀριστείς). But Xerxes never took her advice (save when he had already decided on the course of action she recommended – see 8.103.1), for reasons I consider in section 2.2.4.4 below; nor does he take the ‘wise’ (as it is generally assumed to be) advice of Demaratus at 7.237, for reasons that I consider fully in section 2.2.4.3 below. As I show, king/adviser interactions are consistently presented with a much greater range of nuance and subtlety than implied by the default position.\(^{379}\)

For example, the overall interaction between Croesus and Cyrus has been analysed by many. Some view Croesus as a wise adviser to Cyrus, passing on to him the wisdom gleaned from Solon, while others see Croesus as a failure (including as an adviser) overall. Which view one takes depends on whether the focus is on Croesus or on Cyrus: for example, Harrison suggests that Cambyses’ observations at 3.36.3 on Croesus’ lack of success as a king and thereafter as a king’s adviser may reflect his failings as an adviser;\(^{380}\) and Rutherford sees Croesus as able, after learning from his suffering, “to act as adviser to Cyrus in his turn, through unsuccessfully” (my emphasis).\(^{381}\) Such a notion of Croesus as a failed adviser contrasts with the views of Evans and Gould, who simply see Croesus emerging from his travails as a “wise” adviser.\(^{382}\)

While these scholars are ‘looking to the end’, their awareness of Croesus’ failings takes no account of Cyrus and his role within the narrative. It is disproportionate to see Croesus simply as some sort of symbol of man’s inability to avert fate, just as it is unfair to consider Croesus’ entire career as an adviser to Cyrus as a failure: indeed, Cyrus is shown on two occasions delighting in the wisdom of the Lydian’s advice (and in section 2.3.2 below I argue that Cyrus handed him on to Cambyses as part of his own kingly legacy to his son).\(^{383}\)

Another example is Artabanus – an unusual figure in the Histories in that he was a Persian adviser who failed to persuade Darius to act on his advice (unlike such as Gobryas and Megabazus). The explanation is to be found in the way in which Artabanus advised, counselling a wholly negative, apathetic course of inaction to Darius and later doing the same with Xerxes. This may have been ‘wise’ advice, but it ignored the pressures on Persian kings, who looked for their own reasons to add to the expanse of empire through conquest (see section 1.3 of chapter 1). I consider fully in section 2.2.4.1 below how, in his interaction with Xerxes, Artabanus is presented as not so much a wise adviser as an adviser who saw matters solely through the prism of his very limited outlook: the one time he was symbolically placed in a king’s position (7.17.1), he instantly abandoned his own

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\(^{379}\) Characteristically, Fehling noted “a clear relation between the warner and the idea of hubris and retribution” (Fehling (1989) 203). Indeed, he took Lattimore’s observation (Lattimore (1939) 34) that certain situations required a “sage” as further evidence for his case that Herodotus invented his sources (Fehling (1989) 203), an example of a scholar, in underestimating the richness and complexity surrounding the concept of advising/listening to advice within the Histories, being misled by the ‘tragic warner’ focus and its implicit ineffectiveness of advisers to influence their advisees in any helpful way, for while there are occasions where an adviser is introduced as a sort of plot device, on many others (as I will show) a king/adviser interaction illuminates and indeed defines the sort of king we are being presented with.\(^{380}\)

\(^{381}\) Harrison (2000) 43.

\(^{382}\) Rutherford (2012) 24; and see too Lateiner (1989) 221.


\(^{384}\) Pelling observes that at an oriental court the ability of any single adviser, however wise, to influence events to any significant degree must be limited (Pelling (2006c) 171-2). I would add that the nature of the king with whom the adviser is dealing also played its part in the effectiveness or otherwise of the advice proffered.
counsel and became even more enthusiastic than Xerxes himself about the plan the king had conceived (7.18.3).  

Baragwanath notes, of the overall Xerxes/Artabanus interaction, how unlikely it was that a Persian king could be given a range of views; and while in this case Artabanus did offer advice, his record so far in doing so was not good, “but Xerxes does in the end prove receptive to what advice is available.” While agreeing that Artabanus was not exactly a ‘wise’ adviser, I think the figure of the king as recipient/non-recipient of advice is more nuanced than Baragwanath believes and it is the issue of availability of advice that was crucial. Xerxes was eager to receive advice notwithstanding the “structures of Persian autocracy”, she notes, and it was the Persian elite that failed to transcend them, despite Xerxes willing them to do so. I analyse this further in section 2.3.1.4 below.

Conversely, Cyrus, the greatest king of all, consciously accepted the risk of the advice being wrong (see the next section). Herodotus presents him as fully aware that his decision to act on Croesus’ advice might prove to be a mistake for which responsibility was his alone. By way of further comparison, Darius took advice regularly and always to good effect. That such advice was wise is not in doubt; but nor is Darius’ own wisdom in adopting such advice, even though at times, as will be seen in section 2.2.3, the advice was given in a manner at complete variance with any notion of respect for the Persian king.

Thus wisdom or otherwise was less important in assessing the value of advice to a king than the ability of each king to accept and act upon specific advice, as a matter of individual temperament but also and more importantly in the way each addressed, within the circumstances in which he found himself, his individual style of leadership.

2.1.3. The status of advisers

I explained at the end of section 0.1 of the Introduction that ethnicity and gender would not be specifically considered in my analysis, with the exception of the subject-matter of this current chapter. The reason for this different approach is that advisers are presented in the Histories as distinct individuals and these aspects of them are an integral part of their presentation. Thus the ways in which the individual kings are shown responding to them – particularly where any differences occur – have the potential to provide further evidence for each individual king’s style of leadership.

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384 The notion of Artabanus once in the king’s position being unable to adhere to his own advice is reinforced by 7.47.2, when he admits in response to Xerxes’ direct question that had he not experienced the dream himself, he would never have changed his counsel: ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἔτι καὶ ἐς τόδε δείματός εἰμι ὑπόπλεος anticipates Xerxes’ own emotions after the defeat at Salamis (section 2.2.4.4 below). Artabanus can be contrasted with Mardonius when he was put in the king’s place (section 2.2.4.2 below).

2.1.3.1 Advisers from the ethnic perspective

Save for Cambyses, \(^{386}\) all the kings at some point are shown surrounding themselves with loyal advisers from the Persian elite, though with differing outcomes. At 1.208.1 Cyrus preferred the advice of Croesus over that of all the leading Persians he had summoned, with disastrous consequences. His acceptance of Croesus’ advice was self-proclaimedly based on Croesus’ previous royal status (1.90.1), so Croesus’ ethnicity played no substantial part in Cyrus’ decision to heed him. \(^{387}\)

Darius, the king whose whole enterprise is presented as depending on advisers for its success, usually relied on leading Persians for advice (who, as will be seen in section 2.2.3 below, rarely hesitated to show their own frustration at the king’s incompetence). On one occasion, however, Darius heeded the good advice of a Greek when, at 4.97.2, apparently prepared to commit what must self-evidently have been an extremely rash act (disregarding or even failing to appreciate a basic requirement of warfare, the need to secure one’s line of withdrawal), he was dissuaded from doing so by the Mytilenean commander, Coës (4.97.3-6). \(^{388}\) The Persian king subsequently at 5.11.1-2 rewarded Coës for this service – an illustration of Darius’ attachment to reciprocity linked to his driving obsession, profit.

Xerxes’ eagerness to seek advice led him to do so from both Persian and non-Persian advisers, but I argue in sections 2.2.4 and 2.3.1.4 below that Xerxes was forced to seek non-Persian advice more often than his predecessors as a direct consequence of the Persian elite’s failure (most apparent on the final occasion where Xerxes summoned the leading Persians to council, at 8.101.1 following the defeat at Salamis), through its members’ inability to form opinions of their own and rise to the responsibility of aiding Xerxes by offering advice, in contrast with Darius’ adviser interactions with the Persian elite. \(^{389}\)

Again, while Munson has shown how Artemisia’s ‘otherness’ from Xerxes’ perspective resulted in her being given more latitude than a Persian adviser or advisers, \(^{390}\) Xerxes seemed unable to take the final step of actually adopting the advice of a non-Persian; and when finally he did accept Artemisia’s advice, Herodotus at 8.103.1 makes it very clear that the king had already decided to do as she advised anyway. \(^{391}\) Such a notion of Persians simply being unable to offer their king advice could be taken as an illustration of the way the Persians placed emphasis on unquestioning

\(^{386}\) A meeting of his advisers is alluded to at 3.34.4 – Περσέων οἱ συνέδρων ἐόντων καὶ Κροίσου – the only non-Persian present being Croesus, though this is plainly attributed by Herodotus throughout the narrative to his status as adviser derived from Cyrus’ esteem of him (see section 2.3.2 below).

\(^{387}\) I reject Wilson’s text at 1.90.1 in favour of the text adopted by Hude in the previous OCT, on the basis that it does little damage to the transmitted text, it anticipates a similar observation at 7.103.1 by Xerxes (see note 272 above), and Wilson’s justification offered at Wilson (2015b) 12 is not compelling.

\(^{388}\) Coës sensibly (in view of Darius’ reaction to anyone seeking to avoid active service for their sons) made it clear that he fully intended to travel with the army himself (4.97.5).

\(^{389}\) Xerxes had also summoned Περσέων τοὺς δοκιμωτάτους at 7.53.1, but to offer encouragement rather than seek advice – and to emphasise his consultative/collective approach, which I consider in section 2.2.4 below.


\(^{391}\) Munson observes, citing Lattimore, how Artemisia was at 8.102-4 able to use her position as an independent (i.e. non-Persian) adviser – in contrast to the leading Persians – to offer advice uninfluenced by courtly considerations (Munson (1988) 96-7). Another reason is that the leading Persians had by now lost the ability to offer practical advice and Xerxes had nowhere to turn, as I argue in section 2.2.4 below.
loyalty to their king (with no cultural expectation that they might advise him); but such a limited reading, when examined closely against the detailed accounts of the other individual Persian kings receiving advice, fails to reflect the richness and variety of the interactions — and the differences between the kings. One particularly striking aspect of Xerxes’ interaction with non-Persian advisers is the regularity with which he praised their advice, while preferring to take Persian advice and behaving cautiously (in a manner that he himself regarded as ‘un-Persian’ — see section 2.3.1.4 below). Xerxes above all the other kings exhibited a keen awareness of the ethnicity of his advisers, in an effort to bring his consultative style of leadership to a logical conclusion — consult everyone: but, as I show in section 2.3.1.4 below, he lacked the boldness and conviction to follow it through.

### 2.1.3.2 The gender of advisers

A significant number of the kings’ advisers (in the broadest sense) were female, including Tomyris, Atossa and Artemisia. Tomyris advised Cyrus to desist from conquest at 1.206.1; and at 1.212.2 she offered the king further advice, but Cyrus remained as indifferent as he had been to her previous advice.

Darius is unique within the Histories as a Persian king who is never shown receiving advice from a monarch or former monarch — the closest he came to doing so occurred at 3.134.2-5, when his own queen Atossa challenged him to prove himself worthy of the throne. That Persian imperialism is presented in the account of Darius through the eyes and speech of a woman suggests not a gender-based difference, but rather mirrors the rest of the account of Darius as having little idea of how to be a Persian king unless it was explained to him by others (a theme I explore further in section 2.3.1.3 below). But the adviser’s gender in this episode certainly carried some significance: a challenge to a king by a queen who was also Cyrus’ daughter to prove himself worthy of the throne was not something Darius could take lightly; and this undermining of Darius’ status was even more pronounced when we analyse the episode in detail, for Atossa was not actually advising the king herself, but relaying the words of Democedes.

The two reasons for an invasion of Greece — one personal (war will prevent the Persian elite plotting against him, which recalls his mistrust of his fellow conspirators at 3.119.1) and the other kingly (the drive to expand the empire, considered in section 1.3.2.3 of chapter 1) — reflected Democedes’ insight into Darius the king, the slave not of his wife (pace Immerwahr) but of his...
advisers. The gender of the adviser was, however, critical for one reason: had Democedes, a man, tried to offer the same advice to Darius, it could not have had the desired outcome; and when Atossa (still acting on Democedes’ instructions) rejected Scythia as a target, on the apparently trivial ground that she wanted Greek women servants, such a reason further underpins the notion that Darius could only have accepted such advice – such a challenge – from a woman employing a ‘womanly’ reason.

I have considered Artemisia’s role as an adviser in the preceding section. Her gender is never presented, directly or indirectly, as an issue within that context – the emphasis was very much on her royal status and the quality of her advice: though this was usually not taken, there was no suggestion that her gender was in any way responsible. The episode at 8.103.1 involving Xerxes and Artemisia underlines, so far as Artemisia’s gender was concerned (at 8.88.3 Xerxes had remarked οἱ μὲν ἄνδρες γεγόνασί μοι γυναῖκες, αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες ἄνδρες, as a direct response to his (false) perception of Artemisia’s performance at the battle of Salamis), the differences between Darius and Xerxes: Darius was advised by a woman controlled by a man to allow Darius, as it were, to accept advice in terms that may well have been unacceptable if delivered by a man openly, while Xerxes had already decided to adopt what was arguably a less heroic course of action in front of a woman who had already proved herself braver than many men. But there is one common feature of the two episodes: Darius’ interaction occurred in the privacy of the bedchamber – and Xerxes too consulted Artemisia μεταστησάμενος τοὺς ἄλλους, τοὺς δοσκοπούς Περσέως καὶ τοὺς δοκιμόφορους (8.101.2).

2.1.3.3 Conclusion

From my analysis in sections 2.1.3.1 and 2.1.3.2 above it is clear that neither ethnicity nor gender had any intrinsic significance in the context of advisers in the presentations of Cyrus and Cambyses: each was so entirely focused on his own kingship and style of leadership that no considerations arose at all from those elements.

In the case of Darius the picture is more nuanced: his style of leadership needed to be supplemented by timely advice and, while this mainly came from Persians, he was able to

396 It is clear that Herodotus had to show Darius receiving such advice from a woman, as even the abrasive Megabazus would have hesitated to speak to Darius in ways that questioned his manhood – see 3.134.2 and note the repetition of ἀνδραῖον ἀνδρον. Immerwahr’s reading of the episode as showing Darius to be “the slave of his wife” gives insufficient emphasis to this aspect of the interaction (Immerwahr (1956) 261).

397 Darius’ instant response at 3.134.4 reads very much like a face-saving attempt, though his opening words can be read as genuine: the mode of address was perfectly normal, though it also reminds the reader of the gender divide between king and adviser; and Herodotus may be suggesting that Darius did have such a plan regarding Scythia in his mind though Atossa’ articulation of the pressures on him was needed to bring it to the surface. Be that as it may, the response addresses Atossa’s criticisms – the reference to ζεύξας γέφυραν ἐκ τῆς ἀπείρου ἐς τὴν ἄπειρον shows that Darius had a good grasp of what was required (see Hartog (1988) 57-60 for the association of Persian expansionism with ‘bridging’).

398 De Jong believes that Herodotus was “fond of suggesting trivial motives for Persian imperialism” (de Jong (2013 [1999]) 255). The point here is the (female) triviality of the request.

399 I have noted at note 97 above the strange absence of Atossa in an advisory – or any other – capacity in the account of Xerxes, which I attribute to his preoccupation with emphasising the collective Persian interest at the expense of the king’s house (reflecting his consultative style of leadership).

400 So Munson, in her paper on Artemisia referred to in the preceding section, has a short section on her role as adviser that makes no reference to her gender (as opposed to her ethnicity) as a feature of it (Munson (1988) 95-8).
appreciate and act upon good advice from Coës too. The relative sparsity of non-Persian advisers, however, suggests a king mostly able to function effectively within the Persian environment. The single situation in which he was advised by a woman, on the other hand, was significant because the approach taken by Atossa – challenging his courage – would not have been so placidly received had it been issued directly by a man. The episode underlines both Darius’ reliance on advice and the dangers in having a limited style of leadership for an expansionist Persian king (as explained in section 1.3.2.3 of chapter 1).

So far as Xerxes was concerned, both ethnicity and gender form a major part of his adviser interactions, illustrating his consultative style of leadership in practice – but also its shortcomings: he never quite managed to take non-Persian advice when he should have, undermining both his commitment to his leadership style and his prospects for success; while his understanding of a reversal of gender roles at 8.88.3 came too late for him to have accepted the same woman’s advice at 8.68α 1-2, to avoid sea battles altogether (though it is possible that Artemisia, who is presented as ambivalent in her support of the king’s cause (8.88.1-2), simply hoped to avoid leading her ships against Greek ships). As always with Xerxes, his reluctance to embrace a different approach to advisers proved disastrous.

2.2 Styles of leadership in the context of advisers

While clearly grounded by Herodotus in the text (there are a number of episodes where advisers exhibited reluctance to put forward advice to a Persian king), the notion that advisers needed to be cautious about offering advice proved rarely to be necessary adviser-behaviour (Cyrus, Darius and Xerxes are never shown treating advisers brutally, even where they had failed to take the precaution of ‘clearing’ their advice with the relevant king). These subtle subversions by Herodotus of any tyrant template, combined with Darius confounding the predictions of Otanes in the constitutional debate by failing to exhibit the worst features of a tyrant once he became king, may be taken as warnings to the reader that macro-readings can be unhelpfully rigid when it comes to considering, at the micro-level, the performances of the individual Persian kings within the Histories.

The notion that caution was misplaced is reinforced by analysing responsibility for advice that had been implemented, a fundamental issue in the king/adviser context. There is a striking consistency across the accounts of three of the kings (Cambyses being the exception): they accepted, as kings, responsibility for acting on advice rather than blaming the adviser. So Cyrus at 1.208.1 urged

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401 Such as 1.88.1 (Croesus initially reluctant to offer Cyrus advice, though this reads more as the proper subservience due from a vanquished king to his conqueror rather than to any fear that Cyrus may have reacted harshly); at 4.97.2 (Coës and Darius); at 7.10.1 (where the implication was that, in spite of Xerxes’ statement at 7.88 2, it would have been dangerous to disagree with the king); and at 7.101.3 (Demaratus somewhat impudently asking the king if he wanted a truthful or comforting answer to his question about the likelihood of the Greeks resisting the Persian force).

402 While some such as Bowie (2007) 153 and Pelling (2006c) 152 have seen truth-telling to the Persian kings in the Histories as a risky undertaking, it is an exaggeration to say that no one dared to talk straight to kings: many did so, albeit after checking that their words would not bring them trouble (indeed, this is noted elsewhere by Pelling himself (Pelling (2006a) 111 and 120 n. 33)).
Cambyses not to blame Croesus if his advice turned out badly (see section 2.3.1.1 below for the assumption of risk by Cyrus here). When Artabanus was symbolically placed in a king’s position (7.17.1), Xerxes displayed his own awareness of the responsibility he bore as king when deciding whether or not to act on advice received – a responsibility he could not pass on to the advisers themselves, though this awareness of a king’s essential solitariness proved to be temporary as he was quickly to revert to his consultative style of leadership.

The key variation in the way the caution of advisers is presented at the micro-level is that, in the case of Cyrus and Darius, the advisers rapidly adapted to their willingness to receive advice, but in the case of Xerxes caution remained a regular feature of king/adviser interactions, despite his attempts to encourage advice. Indeed, it is fair to say that the web of advisers Herodotus weaves around Xerxes results in a highly complex portrait of this Persian king, not only in its depiction of how his consultative style of leadership operated in practice, but also how it failed.

2.2.1 Cyrus as πατήρ

A king who constantly needed or sought advice would be unlikely to fit the style of leadership identified so far in the case of Cyrus. Unsurprisingly, therefore, while some episodes feature Cyrus taking advice (such as at 1.80.2 and 1.88.1), these do not undermine his leadership style within the narrative, but reinforce his portrayal as a strong leader who inspired loyalty and respect in friend and foe alike. Cyrus is never shown as vexed or angry with advice he received (if advice were unwelcome, as in the case of Tomyris, he simply ignored it), but he is shown reacting positively on two occasions – both involving Croesus (at 1.90.1 and 1.156.1-2).

Generally Cyrus had an uncomplicated approach to advisers: sometimes he acted without advisers – or, as at 1.79.1, acted as his own adviser (βουλευόμενος) – while at other times he acted on advice received. Herodotus does not present Cyrus as in any sense beholden to his advisers: on occasion he exhibits narratorial indifference as to whether an action of Cyrus was his own or another’s idea. Cyrus is shown being pragmatic so far as advice from the likes of Harpagus was concerned, both before and after becoming king, while the most ‘paternal’ adviser interaction in the portrayal of Cyrus involved Cyrus himself advising the Persians at 9.122.3 – a wise paternal figure not seeking to impose his views but guiding his subjects/children to reach the correct conclusion themselves (which they did). But the episode also highlights another aspect of such a style of leadership: Cyrus advised the Persians, but was rarely seen being advised by the Persians himself. Even more significantly, he is never shown interacting with a named Persian adviser (Harpagus was a Mede) – perhaps a father could never seem to a child/subject not to have all the answers.

403 See section 2.1.3 above.
404 So from Harpagus at 1.80 2. At 1.124.1-3 Harpagus encouraged Cyrus to take his advice and stir the Persian to revolt, in order to win the Median throne from Astyages.
405 1.191.1.
406 1.80.2 and 1.124.1-3.
2.2.1.1 Harpagus

Harpagus manipulated the Medes by exploiting their dissatisfaction with Astyages to consider Cyrus as a possible leader (1.123.1-2) before advising the young Cyrus to persuade the Persians to revolt (1.124.2). Herodotus makes it clear at 1.123.1 that, for Harpagus, Cyrus becoming king was a means for him to obtain vengeance on Astyages: the Median throne was toppled by Cyrus’ ability but also by a disaffected leading Mede sacrificing Median power for his own personal reasons. Harpagus is presented after Cyrus became king advising on tactical matters (1.80.2), but he is not presented as a confidant of Cyrus in any sense after Cyrus became king: Cyrus in Herodotus’ account had no need for such a prop.

2.2.1.2 Croesus

Far more significant is the figure of Croesus. Indeed, the first mention of Cyrus in the Histories occurs in the context of Croesus; and Cyrus’ first remark to Croesus at 1.87.3 assumed that Croesus’ downfall was the result of him having been persuaded (presumably by a poor adviser) to challenge Cyrus and the Persians, rather than attributing responsibility to Croesus for his own actions. At 1.89.1 Cyrus encouraged the circumspect Croesus to offer a recommendation – and was delighted (ὑπερήδετο) with Croesus’ suggestion, observing at 1.90.1 that he was such an effective adviser because he had been a king. Cyrus’ expressions of delight serve to emphasise how much value he placed on the former Lydian king: the respect Cyrus showed for Croesus as an adviser is a significant feature of the presentation of Cyrus overall, leading him, as a ruler, to leave his son (and successor as king) a legacy that was intended to assist him as a ruler too. This showed concern for the Persians as much as for the house of Cyrus, a view reinforced by Cyrus’ emphasis that Cambyses should retain Croesus and not blame him. As a defeated king, Croesus became, for Cyrus, almost an exemplum of a kingly adviser, as is evident in 1.208.1, which I consider further in section 2.3.1.1 below.

Wallace has recently argued that Croesus as presented in the Histories cannot be sustained: he was, effectively, an invention of Herodotus, adapted from a Lydian source that Bacchylides also used (Wallace (2016) 179). If that is right, it is a further indication of the importance of Croesus within the Histories and his role as a foil in a number of respects to Cyrus (and subsequently Cambyses).

Cyrus’ obtaining the throne was the event that shook Croesus from the profound grief caused by his elder son’s death (1.46.1).

I read Croesus’ address to Cyrus at 1.88.2 as respectful deference from Croesus to the king who has conquered him and his people, unlike Lateiner who sees it as a slave/vizier interaction (Lateiner (1989) 184). This ignores the intriguing dynamic of the encounter: Croesus, indeed, defined himself as a slave at 1.189.1 but accepted his lot as an adviser – for whom Cyrus continued to have a high regard. In an interesting echo of this, Xerxes at 7.103.1 referred specifically to Demaratus’ former royal status as the discussion between the two developed, although unlike Cyrus he gave little weight to the information Demaratus was providing. Branscome has a good discussion of Xerxes’ response here to Demaratus, focusing on the νόμοι/τρόπος of the Spartans/Persians, though I think that Xerxes’ “mockery” of Demaratus is more patronising than mockingly condescending (Branscome (2013) 60-5).

The repetition of ἐντειλάμενος at 1.208.1 is striking. Apart from the Peisistratos episodes at 1.60.4 and 1.63.2 (in each of which it is used in a noun form, τὰ ἐντεταλμένα), this verb is employed on twelve occasions in book 1 of the Histories, no fewer than nine being instances of Croesus and Cyrus ordering (or having what they have ordered implemented). The striking double usage of the word at 1.208 reinforces its significance within Herodotus’ presentation of the two kings, providing as it does a formal recognition of the duality of their relationship – and both the similarities and the differences between them. Within the particular context of 1.208 itself, undoubted resonances arise from the other (i.e. non-Croesus
Cyrus is shown on one occasion receiving conflicting advice: the leading Persians recommended that he fight Tomyris on Persian territory, but Croesus favoured fighting her on her own soil. Cyrus elected to follow the former king’s advice – and ultimately died as a result of that decision. There are two significant aspects to this incident: Cyrus fully accepted that he was assuming a risk in taking Croesus’ advice, warning Cambyses not to blame Croesus if the outcome was bad (see further section 2.3.1.1 below); and the way that Cyrus entrusted Cambyses as his successor to the guidance of Croesus, which I consider in section 2.3.1.2 below.

2.2.2 Cambyses as δεσπότης

The strong impression from the account of Cambyses is of an isolated king intent only on his own decision-making. His angry response at 3.25.1 showed the frustration of an autocrat thwarted – the predictable response of a δεσπότης who, as we have seen in section 1.3.2.2 of chapter 1, tended to see obstacles in personal terms only. Cambyses’ volatility is illustrated in the adviser context by his decision at 3.36.4 to order the death of Croesus followed at 3.36.6 by the execution of his servants for disobeying the order even though they had correctly anticipated his subsequent change of heart. The dangers of offering advice to such a king are reflected in the disappearance of Croesus from the narrative as Cambyses’ madness increased: Cyrus’ attempt to secure the succession by making available an exemplary adviser had failed.

Cambyses is never shown seeking advice but, like his father, pragmatically accepting it when offered, before his madness destroyed his ability to function as a Persian king should (symbolised by his rejection of Croesus as adviser at 3.36.3): his response to advice he was unwilling to hear tended to be emotional (usually anger) and his remarks at 3.36.3, directed at Croesus, should be read closely with 3.34.4-5, for these episodes represented the final attempts by Croesus to fulfill the duty imposed on him by Cyrus. Cyrus’ express instruction at 1.208.1 to his son not to blame Croesus if the plan did not work out was at 3.36.3 forgotten, just as Cyrus’ implicit lesson on how to rule was simultaneously rejected by Cambyses’ venomous words to Croesus. Croesus spoke out in reproach (3.36.1) and, significantly, provided his reasons at 3.36.2 where ἐμοὶ δὲ πατὴρ σὸς Κῦρος ἐνετέλλετο offers a distillation of the entire Cyrus/Croesus/Cambyses narrative, reflecting both the difficulty of ruling and the notion that rulers/former rulers could advise or speak with more authority to other rulers; and its acceptance that, for Cyrus/Croesus, the attempt to ensure that Cambyses would be a good ruler – by requiring Croesus (Cyrus’ own valued adviser) νουθετέειν και υποτίθεσθαι the heir – had failed.

and non-Cyrus) three uses of the word, which all occur within the Astyages/Harpagus narrative: indeed, the usage at 1.109.2 is almost immediately followed by οὐδ᾽ εἰ παραφρονήσει τε καὶ μανέεται κάκιον ἢ νῦν μαίνεται, which explicitly foreshadows Cambyses’ own future: see 3.29.1, 3.30.1, 3.37.1 and 3.38.1 for Herodotean references to Cambyses’ madness. The similarities between Astyages and Cambyses have been noted by many commentators (e.g. Asheri (2007) 156); but the last of the three cases (1.123.4) refers not to Astyages himself, but to Harpagus – in the context of him commencing the plot to place Cyrus on the throne. The circle of reference culminating in the word’s usages at 1.208 is complete.
The episode involving Cyrus at 9.122.3 may be contrasted sharply with the final scene involving Cambyses, lying stricken on his death-bed: as we have seen at section 1.3.2.2 of chapter 1, Cambyses’ speech at 3.65.1-7 was emphatically about his own position as king, and, significantly, his advice to the Persians at 3.65.7 took the form of a threat – a king not showing paternal concern for his people, but rather obsessed with his own personal position (Cambyses has been shown at 3.25.4 both as focused on his personal objectives and as prepared to expose the Persian army to severe hardship). 412

In short, Cambyses’ limited interaction with advisers (and the complete absence of any interaction on his part with Persian advisers) is consistent with the δεσπότης style of a leader used to unquestioned and immediate obedience to his commands and whose sole focus was his own personal position (with no interest at all in the Persians as a whole).

2.2.3 Darius as κάπηλος

It is clear from the account of Cyrus that, for Herodotus, the fact that a king took advice was not in itself an indicator of a weak king: what mattered was how a king managed his advisers and his responses to them. In the context of advisers, the recurrent theme I have previously noted in respect of Darius (inability to act as a king until guided to do so by an inferior) is again evident – indeed, Darius is shown with almost monotonous regularity having to be rescued by advisers in a number of situations, even before he had acquired the throne.

2.2.3.1 Artabanus

The adviser who will play such a prominent part in the account of Xerxes barely featured in the account of Darius. In his first significant appearance, at 4.83.1, he failed to dissuade Darius from attacking Scythia, as Herodotus notes at 4.83.2 ἀλλ᾽ οὐ γὰρ ἔπειθε συμβουλεύων οἱ χρηστά, ὃ μὲν ἐπέπαυτο. As will be seen, the Persian advisers who did succeed in persuading Darius verged on being disrespectful when playing their adviser part – it is hard to imagine Gobryas and Megabazus, for example, being fobbed off in the same way as Artabanus here. 413 Darius had no time for Artabanus’ advice, as Herodotus presents it, his response to Artabanus contrasting sharply with that of Xerxes, who would be shown giving far too much weight to his uncle’s interventions. 414 Nevertheless, Darius had made a mistake in disregarding Artabanus’ advice (4.83.2) and would have to be saved by another adviser in Scythia.

412 Though even Cambyses had realised that he had to pull back when the soldiers were compelled to resort to cannibalism (3.25.6).
413 That the failure of a single attempt to persuade the king resulted in Artabanus dropping the matter entirely perhaps accounts for the way in which, when advising Darius’ son in the future, he would persist and persist in spite of Xerxes’ hostile response.
414 The damage done to Xerxes by his different approach, symptomatic of his consultative style of leadership, is analysed in section 2.3.1.4, showing how Xerxes’ mishandling of risk derived to a considerable degree from his leadership style vis-à-vis Artabanus.
2.2.3.2 Gobryas

Gobryas had advised Darius even before he became king when, at 3.78.4-5, he had to tell him to stab the Magus as the future king stood ineffectively by. This interaction presents Gobryas as the man of action, the leader, while Darius meekly followed the advice Gobryas gave him. An even more significant example involving Gobryas occurred at the end of the Scythian expedition, which I analyse in detail in section 3.3.3.2 of chapter 3, but it involved Gobryas having to explain the correct meaning of the Scythian king’s gifts in the face of Darius’ stubborn incomprehension, which Gobryas did with a degree of impatience, strongly implying that Darius should have been able to work it out for himself.

2.2.3.3 Megabazus

This idea of Darius as unable to act as a king until guided to doing so by an inferior is most strikingly illustrated by Megabazus who, while on a mission to deliver the Paeonians to Asia (5.23.1), had seen how Histiaeus was fortifying the city given to him by Darius – and his reaction at 5.23.1-2 is remarkable: it was one thing for a general to give a king advice when offered, but this is presented as a very different sort of encounter. Herodotus captures the incredulity of Megabazus’ tone of voice in the opening few lines (ὦ βασιλεῦ, κοῖόν τι χρῆμα ἐποίησας); and Megabazus’ ensuing advice was couched not in courtier phrases but as a direct – and very blunt – command. Even more remarkably, Darius’ response was not an angry dismissal of Megabazus’ effrontery but something that reinforced the picture of a king who was failing to act as an autocratic king should: the narrative at 5.24.1 suggests a matter of fact recognition by Darius of the force of Megabazus’ argument.

Megabazus’ view was all too clear: Darius had forgotten that a king’s priority should be the security of his people. While naturally alarmed at what was happening with Histiaeus, Megabazus was even more shocked that Darius himself had given Histiaeus the means of building up his power – without apparently appreciating the strategic consequences (Megabazus spelt out the detail at 5.23.2, no doubt wondering why he had to state these obvious points to his king). Megabazus’ lack of respect for the Persian king is particularly striking when one recalls the subservience the Persians usually displayed towards their kings: Darius was now performing so inadequately as a king and leader that he had almost ceased to be one.

415 Contrast the freedom with which Megabazus offered his advice here with the implied reluctance to do so in the Persian court as pictured by Aeschylus at Persae 591-4.
416 “Megabazos is saying to the king, in effect, ‘you are a fool to have done what you did’, but he gets away with it, and Dareios takes it very well” (Hornblower (2013) 119). Contrast this with the view of Achaemenid scholars that Persian kings were remote and imposing and thus unapproachable – for example, Brosius (2007) and, in her analysis of royal audiences as evidenced by the Achaemenid physical remains at Persepolis and other locations, Allen (2005).
417 See Greenwood (2007) for another reading of Megabazus’ interaction here with Darius that, had Megabazus been better informed, this “might have made him advise Darius otherwise. This is tantamount to suggesting that Megabazus would have offered Darius better advice if he had read Herodotus’ Histories” (Greenwood (2007) 132), though the same could be said of Darius if he had read Herodotus’ Histories. Greenwood’s analysis, while thought-provoking, is generally too strained and too at variance with the natural reading of the narrative to convince.
Thus the episode illustrates the potential inadequacies of Darius’ κάπηλος style of leadership, as Darius’ interest in the Paeonians had been triggered by their exceptional work ethic and productivity (as to which he had actually been deceived), yet at this point Darius, perhaps stunned by Megabazus’ fury, is shown to address belatedly his wider leadership responsibilities – not with anger but, instead, acquiescing in Megabazus’ reversal of the usual protocol, quickly taking steps to restore his control. The potential failure of Darius’ leadership had been averted thanks to Megabazus’ advice – and Darius’ acceptance of it.

2.2.3.4 Atossa

I considered in section 1.3.2.3 of chapter 1 the imperialist aspects of the scene at 3.134.2-5 involving Darius and Atossa (the only occasion in the Histories where a Persian woman ever advised any Persian king, though Atossa was acting as the mouthpiece of Democedes). I concluded at section 2.1.3.2 above that her gender and her status as Cyrus’ daughter were significant for the psychological manipulation Democedes was undertaking in his successful deployment of Atossa. After this episode, however, Atossa makes no further appearance – in an advisory or any other capacity – in the remaining account of Darius.

2.2.3.5 Conclusion

It is clear that the advisory context presents the reader with a particularly helpful insight into the style of Darius’ leadership: input from advisers allowed Darius to consider a different perspective on the risks in a given situation; and he was so grounded in efficient administration that he unhesitatingly adopted the course of action that risk-reduction required. This managerial style of Darius’ leadership, so evident in his interactions with advisers, resulted in his dispassionate acceptance of advice when offered, even if it was uninvited and regardless of any impertinence in the manner of its offering. As a manager-style leader, Darius was focused on outcomes rather than personal status and did not allow personal emotion – including his own sense of self – to influence his assessment of advice. This lack of emotion, however, permeates the presentation of Darius as a whole – cold calculation being one of the hallmarks of his κάπηλος style of leadership. So he had shown no hesitation in adopting the plan of Zopyrus to secure Babylon, apparently indifferent to the sacrifices of soldiers required (3.155.5 and 1.157.2-4); and similarly his barefaced lies to his wounded soldiers at 4.135.1-3 are presented without any compunction on the king’s part (the soldiers subsequently, Herodotus states unequivocally at 4.136.1, γνόντες οἱ ὑπολειφθέντες ὡς

418 See section 2.2.3.5 below.
419 In summoning Histiaeus to Sardis at 5.24.1-2, Darius is shown reclaiming his royal majesty – ἐπινοέω γὰρ πρήγματα μεγάλα κατεργάσασθαι, he stated in his message to Histiaeus. Greenwood has an insightful and broadly convincing account of Darius’ skill and cleverness in this interaction with Histiaeus (Greenwood (2007) 133-5), although Darius would never have been in a position to exhibit these qualities had Megabazus not confronted and advised him in the first place.
420 For a different emphasis on Darius’ relationship with the leading Persian advisers (described as “more heroic peers”), see de Bakker (2015) 60-1.
προδεδομένοι ἑῖεν ὑπὸ Δαρείου: strong words of a king who had assumed the Persian king/subject relationship originally established by Cyrus (section 0.2.5.5 of the Introduction).

It was not a case of Darius simply benefiting from good advice: his whole kingship would have failed without it.\textsuperscript{421} In other words, his style of leadership was inferior to that of Cyrus in many respects, though it was nevertheless deployed in a way that ultimately bore fruit: by never reacting emotionally in situations where he was given advice (the passion shown towards Darius by his own advisers contrasts with the king's own non-emotional response), Darius led successfully in his own style even though it differed from that of Cyrus.\textsuperscript{422}

Before becoming king Darius had argued that oligarchy was weak because the best men fought among themselves to have their opinion prevail (3.82.3), while the monarch, being the best man, would also have the best judgment (3.82.2). In reality, Herodotus' presentation of Darius shows a king who rarely came up with the best idea himself.\textsuperscript{423}

\textbf{2.2.4 Xerxes}

The consultative style of leadership I have associated with Xerxes in the Herodotean account came to the fore in the adviser context. I use the interaction between Xerxes and a number of advisers to analyse further his leadership style – and to understand why it failed.

\textbf{2.2.4.1 Artabanus}

Artabanus is presented at 7.16α 1-2 having thoughts on the role of an adviser, specifically targeted at Xerxes (ἀνθρώπων κακῶν is an implicit reference to οἱ παρηγορεόμενοι at 7.13.2) and openly suggesting that Xerxes was set on increasing ὕβρις, which, Artabanus added, would be 'more perilous' both for Xerxes himself and for the Persians. He prefaced his remarks, however, by saying that having a good plan oneself is the same as τῷ λέγοντι χρηστὰ ἐθέλει πείθεσθαι. This suggestion that the king should be willing to obey someone who spoke well is surprising, but it makes sense if seen as part of Xerxes' effort to bring a consultative approach to his rule: Artabanus had previously shown some impatience with this notion (suggesting at 7.10δ 1-2 that the king should make a decision on his own in private, this attempted undermining of the consultative

\textsuperscript{421} On the other hand he is shown displaying the logistical expertise associated with a κάπηλος style of leadership without the need for advice, though he did sometimes make mistakes in this area, as at 5.12.1-14.1, an episode noteworthy, as Osborne points out, for how the beauty of the two Paeonians' sister was not the reason for Darius' attention being caught; her beauty drew his attention to her work-rate – another illustration of Darius' interest in logistics and performance (Osborne (2007) 93).

\textsuperscript{422} I am referring to Darius' lack of emotion in advisory contexts. Cf. how, when Artaphrenes and Harpagus took the matter into their own hands and executed Histiaeus (in the certain knowledge that Darius would not do so, a conclusion with which Herodotus agrees – 6.30.1), Darius blamed them for doing so and ordered that Histiaeus' body be treated with respect (6.30.1) – though even here it is not clear that Darius was actually angry with them (and no punishment was apparently meted out); and his chilling actions towards Oebazus at 4.84.1-2 (which I analyse at sections 3.3.3.1 and 3.3.4.1 of chapter 3).

\textsuperscript{423} It is noteworthy that the two predictions in the constitutional debate as to how monarchy would work in practice – from Otanes (unbridled tyranny) and Darius (a king coming up with the best plans) – both failed to be realised in the account of Darius' kingship.
approach underlying Xerxes' angry outburst at 7.11.1). But having come to realise Xerxes' commitment to it, Artabanus spelt out the consequences: it would work only if the king willingly embraced the possibility of obeying someone else. This is a particularly valuable insight into Xerxes' consultative style of leadership, but, in practice, Xerxes found this difficult to accomplish, mainly as a result of his reluctance (perhaps attributable to the reasons articulated by his brother Achaemenes at 7.236.1) to heed the good advice given him by non-Persians.

Initially it appeared that, following the first dream, Xerxes had been persuaded by Artabanus at 7.15.1 (χρηστῆς εἵνεκα συμβουλίης is a clear echo of Artabanus’ failure with Darius); but ultimately Artabanus failed as an adviser with Xerxes as well, for reasons considered in section 2.3.1.4 below (how Xerxes’ approach to risk (in theory at least) is presented as reacting (and then acting in opposition) to Artabanus’ timidity).

2.2.4.2 Mardonius

The importance of understanding a king's character is evident in the account of Xerxes' interaction with Mardonius. He is not presented simply as a counterpoint to Artabanus (though this was the case at times, particularly at 7.8 onwards when Xerxes first announced the plan to invade Greece). While Mardonius was the prime mover in overcoming Xerxes’ initial resistance to the plan (7.5.1-3), Herodotus makes two things clear at 7.6.1: Mardonius had his own reasons for wanting invasion; and he was able to use a number of ways to persuade the king. Thus Mardonius had a completely different agenda to Artabanus right from the outset: he was looking out not for the king’s or the empire’s interests but his own. The contrast not only with Artabanus but also with the likes of Megabazus and the other Persian advisers to Darius could not be starker. Xerxes had to negotiate a course between the nervous, risk-free approach of Artabanus, which ran counter to Xerxes' misconceived notion of a Persian νόμος of kingly expansion (see section 1.3.2.4 of chapter 1), and the bold, perhaps even rash, approach of a man who was prepared to exploit the king's responsibilities for his own ends. Xerxes' belated recognition of this is considered in section 2.3.1.4 below.

But Mardonius is also shown to be alert to Xerxes' idea of leadership. As the first Persian to react to Xerxes' announcement of invasion at 7.6.1, he was careful to praise Xerxes as an individual before focusing on the very consultative approach that Xerxes had identified as his personal style of Persian leadership: this is clear at 7.9 γ1 from the first person plural usages ἡμῖν and εἰμέν, before the concluding words ἔστω δ᾽ ὦν μηδὲν ἀπείρητον· αὐτόματον γὰρ οὐδὲν, ἀλλ᾽ ἀπὸ πείρης

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424 Cf. the suggestion that Xerxes possessed total power but limited authority, as evidenced by this episode (Zali (2015) 87). I agree, but subject to the proviso that such limitation had been assumed by Xerxes in his adoption of a consultative style of leadership. Zali notes later a certain openness in the air with Xerxes' requests for consultation (ibid. 89).

425 Cf. Harpagus at 1.124.2 urging Cyrus to rise up against Astyages – σύ νυν, ἢν βούλῃ ἐμοὶ πείθεσθαι, τῆς περ Ἀστυάγης ἄρχει χώρης, ταύτης ἁπάσης ἀρξεῖς (my emphasis) – obeying Harpagus had turned out very well for Cyrus and Persia. 426 Cf. 4.97.6 the only other occasion where the words χρηστῆς συμβουλίης are used of (and here by) Darius: a rare incident where the effectiveness as an adviser to Darius of a non-Persian contrasts with Artabanus’ failure (though Coës advised Darius only after ensuring that his advice would be welcome).
πάντα ἀνθρώποισι φιλέει γίνεσθαι, a clear recognition (in contrast with Artabanus) of the boldness of Xerxes' proposal so far as it related to the invasion of Greece and (with the switch to first person plural forms) to Xerxes' novel approach to leadership; but it also revealed Mardonius' ambitions to go beyond Greece and send a message to all men.\(^{427}\)

That Mardonius was the most blatant adviser-manager of a king in the *Histories* is apparent from 8.101.1, where Mardonius proffered the advice he knew Xerxes wanted to hear (8.100.3);\(^ {428}\) but, in contrast with Xerxes' delight at the advice of Mardonius at 8.101.1 (when Mardonius was the only person to realise the extent of the king's despair),\(^ {429}\) Mardonius is no longer presented as the person who understood Xerxes best, for, while Herodotus indicates that Xerxes wanted to act on Mardonius' advice, he shows him prevaricating, first summoning the leading Persians to council before deciding to summon Artemisia too and then at 8.101.1 dismissing the Persians to take her advice alone.\(^ {430}\)

Xerxes is then shown presenting the situation to those around him as a decision inspired by the advice of a non-Persian (it is clear from the text that Xerxes had already decided, before receiving the same advice from Mardonius, to carry out that course of action), as though the king could not acknowledge that his consultative style of leadership (represented by Persian advisers such as Artabanus and Mardonius at two extremes and non-Persian advisers such as Demaratus and Artemisia) had failed. Instead, this taking of non-Persian advice for the first time served as a direct criticism of the Persian elite whose advice (or lack of it) had brought him to this pass (Bowie notes Mardonius' "almost hectoring instructions…with repeated deference to the King's likely wishes").\(^ {431}\) This clearly echoes the confrontation between Megabazus and Darius at 5.23.1-2, but the contrast between the two situations is clear: Xerxes was happy to fall in with the advice, without wanting to appear to be doing so immediately, given that it reflected his abject failure; while Mardonius (unlike Megabazus) was seeking not to preserve the Persian empire and throne but to undermine them in his own interests. This reinforces the effectiveness of Darius' style of leadership when it came to advisers, compared with Xerxes' futile efforts to use advisers to secure his own consultative style of leadership.

\(^{427}\) It is interesting to compare Mardonius' approach to Xerxes here with the approach of Atossa when persuading Darius to consider invading Greece (3.134.1-6). Her emphasis was very much on challenging Darius to behave as a king like Cyrus would (3.134.1), going on to stress that Darius should do this ἵνα καὶ Πέρσαι ἐκμάθωσι ὅτι ὑπ᾽ ἄνδρος ἄρχονται (my emphasis) (3.134.2).

\(^{428}\) Herodotus had described Xerxes as ὑπερλυπεόμενός τε καὶ πάντας αἰτιώμενος at 8.90.3. Mardonius has tried to encourage the king, exhorting him at 8.100.2 μήτε λυπέο μήτε συμφορὴν μηδεμίαν ποιεῦ τοῦδε τοῦ γεγονότος εἵνεκα πρήγματος, but his use of λυπέο (rather than a form corresponding to ὑπερλυπεόμενός) subtly suggests that even he has underestimated the impact of the defeat on Xerxes (the use at 8.90.3 of the intensive ὑπερλυπεόμενός is its only occurrence in the *Histories*).

\(^{429}\) See further section 2.1.3.1 above. Contra Munson, I see Xerxes speaking with Artemisia alone here as dramatizing not "the king's absolute arbitrium and...his unaccountability vis-à-vis subjects, allies, and advisers", but instead the failure of Xerxes' attempts actually to mitigate the conventional kingly "arbitrium and...unaccountability" through his consultative leadership style (Munson (1988) 96).

\(^{430}\) Bowie (2007) 189.
2.2.4.3 Demaratus

While Xerxes is presented as a king who was aware that kingship could mean different things in different places, he was nevertheless dismissive of the notion that men who were free could be successful fighters; and he gave an insight into his own view of a true king’s role at 7.103.4 – reflecting the pact between king and Persians not as entered into by Cyrus but as distorted by Xerxes’ misunderstanding of the role of expansionism (which I explained in section 1.3.2.4 of chapter 1).

Demaratus’ speech at 7.104.4 is particularly striking for its use of ὑποδειμαίνουσι. Powell translates this as “fear inwardly”, LSJ as “stand in secret awe of”: the formation carries a suggestion of concealment of fear, of fear being masked. This cannot but recall the beginning of the discussion, when Demaratus had asked Xerxes if he wanted a pleasing or truthful response: the default position of Persian courtiers, as has been seen at 8.68-9, had by now come effectively to be the same sort of secret fear. Such an attitude would have seriously compromised Xerxes’ consultative style of leadership; but in addition, the thing that so constrained the Spartans was νόμος – which (in its Persian guise) Xerxes himself had stated at 7.8α 1 was not something he would seek to change.

So after assuring Demaratus that kings who wanted to have any prospect of their armies delivering outstanding valour must rule κατὰ τρόπον τὸν ἡμέτερον (7.103.4, considered in section 1.2.2 of chapter 1), Xerxes had come up against a contradiction that was now subtly subverting his own consultative approach. Demaratus’ account suggested that the ‘secret awe’ felt by subjects should be reserved for custom itself; but where a people’s custom required such secret awe to be shown towards the ruler himself (as Persian custom, as understood by Xerxes, did), then how was that custom itself to be reconciled with the demands of a king who ostensibly required his people to speak freely without such secret fear? This conflict underpins the complete failure of Persian advisers so far as Xerxes is concerned: as will be seen in section 2.3.1.4 below, Artabanus became completely unreliable as an adviser through his inconsistency; Mardonius was eventually perceived to be driven solely by self-interest; and on every other occasion where Xerxes needed a contribution from the leading Persians, they gave him nothing (save only for Achaemenes in an incident I consider shortly).

This interaction between Xerxes and Demaratus has reinforced the notion that Xerxes’ style of leadership may have been misguided and the presentation concludes with Demaratus’ somewhat cautious words at 7.104.5 (sometimes taken to illustrate the need for men in Demaratus’ position to be ever alert to Xerxes’ tyrannical unpredictability, but also anticipating that Xerxes might, in the face of Demaratus’ challenge to his whole approach of consultation, have forgotten his initial...
encouragement to speak, and punish Demaratus for his temerity). Here is the first faint suggestion, then, that the boldness of vision that Persian kings needed their advisers to offer (I consider this in the context of risk in section 2.2.4.5 below) would not necessarily have been well received by him — and unfortunately for Xerxes this anxiety on the part of advisers (largely misplaced) played a part in undermining Xerxes’ consultative style, as the leading Persians were so inhibited by it that for the most part they acted simply as yes-men (such as when they had veered between being for or against the invasion of Greece depending on which view Xerxes was espousing at the time).

Xerxes’ most explicit statement of his attitude to advisers and the advice process occurred at 7.237.2-3. Xerxes had, at 2.234.3, for the first time asked Demaratus for advice on how to defeat the Greeks, but when the Spartan gave his advice, Xerxes’ brother, Achaemenes, παρατυχών τε τῷ λόγῳ (7.236.1), instantly intervened to launch a strong attack against Demaratus’ proposal. Xerxes was persuaded by his brother’s advice (7.237.1), but then proceeded to explain why he also valued Demaratus’ advice. It has been argued that Xerxes displays “a (now familiar) intellectual arrogance in this passage”, although this is not so self-evident to me: Xerxes’ tone was respectful — and the fact that he was taking the trouble to explain why he was rejecting Demaratus’ advice, emphasising that he had every confidence in Demaratus as his guest-friend, accords with that. Xerxes had adopted Achaemenes’ advice because, for once, he was receiving advice from a Persian adviser who could be trusted to have the king’s interests at heart — his own brother (Xerxes’ statement at 7.237.2, involving the idea that the best advice would not be forthcoming where one’s fellow countrymen were envious, anticipates the return of Xerxes here to the personal/family stance away from the collective).

Such a conclusion was by no means inconsistent with the portrayal of Xerxes’ experiences with advisers so far. It underlines the difficult relationship he was having with Persian advisers (see section 2.3.1.4 below), while also demonstrating that advice from a full brother would be given more weight than that from even a guest-friend; but the point is also that Xerxes had reverted to Persian advice and for the last time rejected the advice of a former king, preferring that of a fellow countryman, and in doing so undermined his own statement at 7.50: for, having received from Demaratus bold advice, he had instead adopted the prudent advice of his own brother (whose concern expressed at 7.236.2-3 about the risks in splitting the fleet recalls Xerxes’ assumption of the need for numerical superiority when he addressed Demaratus at 7.103.1-3). The last thing

436 Cf. the king’s anger at 7.11.1 towards Artabanus when he questioned the new approach, and the idea, considered in section 2.2 above, that advisers are presented as having been more fearful of kings’ reactions than the accounts of the kings’ behaviour actually warranted.
437 Branscombe (2013) 93, albeit acknowledging that Xerxes’ treatment of Demaratus here is “gentler” than the ridicule in 7.101-105. Xerxes in my view is in 7.101-105 more patronising than outrightly ridiculing.
438 Lateiner sees it as simply as a statement “hostile to democratic government”, but in context there is more to it (Lateiner (1989) 274 n.19).
439 It also raises the idea that in this passage Herodotus is addressing the adviser relationship in a broader context, equating the Persian constitution in some sense with the democratic constitution hinted at by the words συμβουλευομένου τοῦ ἀστοῦ πολιήτης ἀνὴρ.
440 The narrative assumes that the Persian king accepted fully the Greek concept of guest-friendship. Branscombe, relying on the statement at 7.236.1 of Achaemenes δέος τὲ ἄναγνωσθή Ξέρξης ποιεῖν ταῦτα, believes that the historian “implies [Achaemenes] has a vested interest in the rejection of Demaratus’ plan”, which may or may not be so, though in my view there is nothing in the text to preclude this being read as Achaemenes genuinely disagreeing with the quality of Demaratus’ advice (Branscombe (2013) 93).
Xerxes wanted, in spite of his words at 7.50, was an even contest; and, not for the last time, rather than adopting the more daring advice, he chose to act in a way he had previously said was not that of a Persian king (see 7.50.3).

Herodotus, in presenting Xerxes acting in conflict with his own view (as opposed to a view espoused by Herodotus himself), encourages the reader to make use of such contrasts and comparisons in the presentations of the kings as a tool for judging and understanding them. Branscome notes how Xerxes, forgetting his earlier praise of Demaratus, was unable to select the better advice,⁴⁴¹ (though I would stress that Demaratus’ previous reliability occurred in relation to information he had provided rather than advice); but this arose from that innate inability to act in the way he ‘knew’, at an intellectual level, was the way required of their kings by his misconceived Persian νόμος. In clinging to the less risky approach in this way, Xerxes showed that, in spite of his intellectual openness to risk-taking, he could not make the necessary emotional commitment to it that would have allowed him to break from the familiar.

2.2.4.4 Artemisia

I have considered Artemisia at section 2.1.3.2 above. The tribute to her advice by Xerxes implied at 8.101.1 supports the analysis in the preceding section: Xerxes had belatedly realised that his inability to take non-Persian advice had been at the root of his failure. I explain in detail in section 2.3.1.4 below how this interaction also illustrates Xerxes’ failure as a risk-managing leader.

2.2.4.5 Conclusion

Xerxes, the king most regularly shown seeking and receiving advice, is presented voicing his thoughts on the advice/adviser process in a number of key passages. In 7.13.2, an extraordinary passage in many ways,⁴⁴² Xerxes explained to the convened Persians why he had changed his mind about invading Greece, expressly stating that φρενῶν τε γὰς τὰ ἐμεωυτοῦ πρῶτα οὐκ ἀνήκω and, further, that he could not cope with the pressure of being constantly advised.⁴⁴³

In view of the context (Xerxes’ recanting of his earlier decision and his anger with Artabanus for disagreeing with him), it may be inferred that Xerxes nevertheless needed – indeed wanted – the

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⁴⁴² There are surprisingly few discussions of this episode in the scholarship. Exceptions are Baragwanath (see below) and Stahl (2012) 139, who observes that Xerxes “apologizes for his youthful outburst against older Artabanus (7.13). So reason seems to have won out”. De Bakker reads it as highlighting both “his insight and willingness to remedy his errors” and “the stress and the vulnerability of his position” (de Bakker (2015) 55); while Zali sees the episode in terms of Xerxes apparently – but only temporarily – embracing a collective Greek style of debate (as opposed to the Persian style of debate where the king can effectively impose his own will regardless of others’ contributions (Zali (2015) 155). I argue that Xerxes did (in Zali’s terms) try to adopt a Greek style of debate, but the Persians themselves were unable to adapt to it. When Xerxes then turned to non-Persians/Greeks, they were more receptive – but Xerxes himself then failed to follow through on his commitment to the consultative (collective) approach – for such a style of leadership was, at heart, fundamentally inconsistent with a monarchical system.
⁴⁴³ The verb παρηγορεόμενοι goes beyond the notion of advice to mean something more pressing – ‘urge’, according to Powell (1938) and ‘address, exhort’ according to LSJ, with ‘advise’ offered only after those two meanings. Cf. the usages at 5.104.2 and 9.54.1/9.55.1, where the sense of ‘urge’ is very clear. There is no other example in the Histories of this verb being used in a Persian king/adviser interaction.
Persians to continue to offer him advice. This acknowledgement of the possibility of a Persian king allowing his strategic goals to be deflected by an adviser (unlike Darius, who had not been dissuaded by Artabanus from attacking Scythia) reinforces the impression that Xerxes’ relationship with advisers would be more significant than those of his kingly predecessors: a young king being harassted by ‘advisers’ suggests a weak and uncertain king, but also a king trapped by his need for advisers, and Xerxes’ prominence in adviser interactions is one of the most significant ways in which Herodotus differentiates him from his predecessors.  

His most overt statement of his approach was at 7.53.1-2, when he expressly referred to his collective approach and the need for the leading Persians to fully commit to it. The plea in 7.53.1 focuses in its terms on this collective aspect, but the beginning of 7.53.2 (τῶνδὲ εἵνεκα προαγορεύω) underlines the challenge Xerxes’ style of leadership faced – how can a consultative leader “order” commitment to the collective cause?  

This inconsistency is theoretically capable of being overcome, but Xerxes as presented by Herodotus possessed neither the character nor the skills to make that happen: as we have seen, he failed through a combination of innate kingly reluctance to be disagreed with (notwithstanding his suggestions to the contrary) and Persian reluctance, perhaps even inability, to voice counter-opinions (as they had so readily – and effectively – done in the case of Darius). There were times when advice received from non-Persians rendered Xerxes’ consultative approach fruitful; but ultimately the king showed himself trapped by the way he clung to his perception of Persian νόμος – even as he praised the likes of Demaratus and Artemisia for the quality of their advice, he fell back on the Persian advice he was receiving. Perhaps the reason for this can be found in Artemisia’s statement at 8.68γ 1 questioning the loyalty of some unnamed non-Persian subjects of the king – at heart he could never have had the complete confidence in non-Persians’ loyalty as he had in his own countrymen; but if that is so, it is further evidence for the inappropriateness – and ultimately the failure – of his selected style of leadership.

Persian kings in the Histories all eventually failed, but only Xerxes had failed to add to the empire, as his consultative style prevented him from assuming any risk: in general terms, the basic cause of Xerxes’ failure may be attributed to it simply not being the way of the leading Persians in his entourage to take on any degree of risk, simply keeping their heads down when the king sought their advice (and even non-Persian advisers could be strangely circumspect in such situations); and underlying this is the basic inappropriateness of a consultative-style of leadership within a monarchical system. Herodotus presents by way of comparison with the Xerxian approach the

444 Baragwanath reads 7.13.2 as suggestive not of a weak tyrant but of a king not ashamed to admit to having changed his mind after reflection (Baragwanath (2008) 249).
445 Zali notes both the effectiveness of Xerxes’ speech here in its use of Greek motifs and its strangeness in seeking rather than demanding unity (Zali (2015) 291-2). She sees it as intended to offer a contrast with Greek disunity – with which I do not disagree, though she misses its importance for the understanding of Xerxes’ style of leadership.
446 “A corollary of the Persians’ time-hallowed monarchy (3.82.5) is an almost complete lack of effective advice” (Harrison (2002) 569). This was clearly so in the case of Xerxes, though not (as we have seen) Darius.
447 It is instructive to compare Darius’ approach: at 5.24.1 he used the suggestion that no one was more well-disposed to him than Histiaeus when attempting to lure Histiaeus back to Susa. Even though Megabazus had shown him that Histiaeus was a potential threat, Darius cleverly adapted his approach to good effect (see Zali (2015) 94).
448 See too Xerxes’ possible suspicion of advice from fellow countrymen voiced at 7.237.2, which I consider in section 2.2.4.3 above.
debates among the Greeks before Salamis. The openness of Greek debate contrasts with the Xerxes’ inability to galvanise the Persians into contributing to his discussions, as the Greeks eventually committed to battle: first Themistocles at 8.58.2 convinced Eurybiades to convene another commanders’ conference, at which he not only repelled Adeimantos’ attack on him at 8.61.1 but also brought Eurybiades round to his plan to fight the battle at Salamis, before tensions flared again at 8.74.1-2, resulting in yet another Greek debate, which Themistocles feared might go against him. His response (at 8.75.1-3) was to trick the Persians into deploying their ships in such a way as to leave the Greek forces with no choice but to fight (8.82.1). and thus bring about victory through being less rigid than the Persian deliberations. In the vagaries of this episode, Themistocles’ own style of leadership is shown to be fluid and imaginative, the style needed for a truly consultative leader operating within a collective, reinforcing the clear picture I have already drawn above of Xerxes as a monarch whose attempts at a consultative style of leadership would fail.449

Xerxes’ view of Persian kings being obliged to accept risk as a key element of successfully expanding the empire (see his protestation at 7.50.1 that the Persian king’s way is to take risks) must call into question his decision in the first place to adopt a consultative style of leadership, as the approach with which the Persians had by Xerxes’ time become familiar involved taking no risks, so they could hardly be expected to be capable suddenly of putting forward advice that would be grounded in a calculated assessment of risk (unlike such as Gobryas and Megabazus in the case of Darius).450 The point can be illustrated by Xerxes’ relationship with Mardonius, who is presented as astute enough (unlike Artabanus) to pick up on the king’s desire to be a consultative sort of leader, with his clever switch to first person plural forms at 7.9 γ1. Xerxes is no fool: his unease is illustrated by the repeated dreams and his anger with Artabanus for failing to appreciate that how he has presented his advice left Xerxes unable to accept it – perhaps if Artabanus had understood his king as well as Mardonius had, he could have presented his argument in a way that Xerxes might have found acceptable. Artabanus’ failure in this respect is underlined at 7.48-50; but, as will be seen in section 2.3.1.4 below, the analysis of Xerxes’ relationship with risk confirms how, as a king, he knew in his mind what was required but, in his heart, could not do it: that was his failure.451

449 As I explained in the Introduction, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to offer a detailed analysis of Greek leadership as evidenced in the portrayals of individuals such as Themistocles, but the comparison I highlight here is made as a further way of illuminating the shortcomings of Xerxes’ consultative style of leadership. The behaviour of Themistocles after the Persian defeat recounted at 8.111-112 could also be read as foretelling how the Athens of Herodotus’ own day will also cynically extort some small Ionian islands, noted by Fornara (1971) 66-73 and Evans (1991) 75-81 – though at least in Themistocles’ case the islands in question had been allies of Persia.

450 In that sense it is possible to accept Harrison’s observation quoted in note 446 above, though to account for the phenomenon fully we have to compare Xerxes’ style of leadership with those of his predecessors, particularly Darius (Harrison (2002) 569).

451 The scarcity of episodes involving the receipt of conflicting advice by the other Persian kings emphasises how Xerxes’ whole-hearted commitment to a consultative style of leadership too often led him into receiving conflicting advice, while his failure fully to embrace the consequences of such a style of leadership (which I explain fully section 2.3.1.4 below) eventually resulted in the undermining of his whole kingship.
2.3 Aspects of leadership in the context of advisers

In this section I analyse how those aspects of leadership identified in section 0.2.4 of the Introduction are presented and explored within the context of advisers to the Persian kings.

2.3.1 Strategic issues/risk

In this section I analyse in particular the issue of risk in the context of advisers, and how the kings may be said in Herodotus’ presentations to have used advisers and advice to ‘manage’ it. I show how, within the adviser context, the kings can again be differentiated in their approaches to (or even their awareness of) risk. Particularly noteworthy is the way in which Herodotus develops the different leadership styles of Darius and Xerxes in relation to risk through this perspective of advice and advisers.

2.3.1.1 Cyrus

Cyrus was a leader who usually needed little guidance at the military level, though he was happy to take Harpagus’ advice at 1.80.2 to deal with the threat posed by Croesus’ cavalry; and after defeating the Lydians he accepted Croesus’ shrewd advice about managing the Persian army’s expectations when it came to looting the Lydian capital (1.88.2).

Both instances of Cyrus giving advice involved the getting and keeping of an empire: the first, at 1.125.1-126.6, suggested that a calculated gamble to obtain a kingdom was a sensible step; while the latter, at 9.122.1-4, indicated that excessive enjoyment of the fruits of empire risked losing it as it made men soft (the counterpoint to Croesus’ advice to Cyrus at 1.90). These are instances of risk analysis at its most basic – and, in the manner we have come to expect when Cyrus is presented by Herodotus, the issue as described and its resolution were straightforward: Cyrus’ position was self-evidently unchallengeable. Ultimately, Cyrus would take Croesus’ advice in a situation where risk had to be carefully balanced (1.207) – as Pelling puts it, ‘Croesus, as the court’s resident expert on human vulnerability, knows all about risk’\(^{452}\) – though the outcome for Cyrus would be disastrous.\(^{453}\) But when Cyrus took this final ‘unsound’ advice from Croesus in spite of the dissent of all the leading Persians, he is shown (as I noted at section 2.1.2 above) to have consciously accepted the risk of it being wrong, being presented as a king fully aware that his decision to act on Croesus’ advice may prove to have been a mistake for which responsibility would be his alone when, at 1.208.1, he presciently warned Cambyses not to blame Croesus if his advice resulted in a Persian defeat.

\(^{452}\) Pelling (2006c) 167.
\(^{453}\) Grethlein observes how Croesus’ ‘wise advice’ fails to “protect against a downfall” (Grethlein (2010) 191-2). But as I show, Cyrus too had no illusions about outcomes.
2.3.1.2 Cambyses

With Cambyses, however, risk is presented as something that was not susceptible to rational treatment. The absence of any named Persian advisers in the account of Cambyses echoes the style of leadership in the same context adopted by Cyrus; but Cambyses’ rejection of Croesus as a symbol of his father’s legacy – his style of leadership – underlined his own δεσπότης style and undermined the possibility of him using advisers as a means of risk management.

2.3.1.3 Darius

Before he became king, Darius is presented as a man who believed risks were worth taking for potential gain (see section 0.4.1.2 of the Introduction). Darius is never shown receiving advice from others on how best to perform the logistical and administrative functions of a Persian king – for, as a leader in the style of a κάπηλος, this was entirely within his area of competence (and confidence); but he is also presented as an effective manager of risk in areas where his narrow style of leadership fell short, particularly in relying on the input of advisers to guide him in his weak areas (though it should be stressed that this was not a formalised response to risk – usually Darius appreciated the need for advice after it had been given – his risk management in that sense was a fortunate accident). Darius is presented within the Histories as a king who would without such advice (usually offered to him unsought) have completely failed as a ruler.454

He is shown adopting helpful advice in the military context (for example, when Gobryas convinced him to abandon the Scythian campaign). Generally receptive to good advice though inept when it came to Persian security (5.23.1-2), he could also be clinically calculating, as at 3.155.5 and 1.157.2-4; and similarly his barefaced lies to his wounded soldiers at 4.135.1-3 are presented without any compunction on the king’s part. Darius made it clear at 3.72.4 that he had no scruples about anything, if it led to profit,455 it drove him to take risks, thus anticipating his κάπηλος style of leadership as a king who was more comfortable with overhauling the tribute system than invading Scythia. Darius would take risks where he saw the prospect of financial return (while Xerxes regarded expansion as an end in itself as well as the bringer of riches),456 but he was also able dispassionately to cut his losses where his calculations told him to do so.

2.3.1.4 Xerxes

In contrast with the other three kings, the presentation of Xerxes shows a king both more aware initially of risk and also more intimidated by it. Artabanus, having retreated from his gung-ho attitude displayed at 7.18.1-4, highlighted at 7.49.1-5 legitimate concerns about the invasion

454 See too the episode involving Coës referred to in section 2.1.3.1 above.
455 Cf. at 3.74.4 the uses of κερδήσεσθαι and κέρδος.
456 As evidenced by Xerxes’ words at 7.8.2.
In response, Xerxes is presented as a more sombre king than at 7.13, replying to Artabanus at 7.50.1, ἀτὰρ μήτε πάντα φοβέο μήτε πᾶν ὁμοίως ἐπιλέγεο: caution, Xerxes was pointing out, could all too easily lapse into timidity and even paralysis (τισθείσαις ἄν οὐδόμοι οὐδέν, 7.50.1); and he went on, in a clear rejection of advice that was both cautious and risk-averse, to link this approach to that of his royal Persian predecessors. Artabanus’ advice, Xerxes suggested, would not have been in the Persian tradition, which he now recalled in a way strongly reminiscent of his own acknowledgment (at 7.8α2) of the pressure on him to succeed as a Persian king that had been the primary driver (in Herodotus’ account of him) for the entire invasion – and which is the clearest statement in the Histories of the imperialist pressures on the Persian kings (though as I showed in section 1.3.2.4 of chapter 1 this was grounded in Xerxes’ own misunderstanding of his predecessors).

The echo of Darius having rejected Artabanus’ advice not to invade Scythia resonates strongly here as well, but not in a way that is unflattering towards Xerxes (or, indeed, flattering towards Artabanus): Xerxes is presented as coming out of the encounter as a sager figure than the old adviser, a reading reinforced by Xerxes at 7.52.2 removing Artabanus from the campaign and sending him back to Susa – an incident with faint echoes of Cyrus entrusting Cambyses to the care of Croesus at 1.208.1 before his own fatal assault on the Massagetae.

Thus Xerxes, like his father before him, could not accept the cautious counsel of Artabanus: Xerxes was no longer the inexperienced and put-upon king of 7.13 but his own man, aware of the need to take risks in the manner of his forbears if he were to match their achievements. But the passage is not suggesting that Xerxes no longer needed advisers. Rather, it raises in the reader’s mind, first, the expectation that Xerxes’ need for advisers may have to be met by different types of adviser and, second, the question whether, in future Xerxes/adviser interactions, the king would adopt that risk-taking approach which he was suggesting as the ‘Persian way’, rather than give heed to any advisers urging excessive caution.

It will be appreciated that I interpret the episode very differently from Stahl, who has no doubt that Artabanus’ original advice was wise, and he goes on to challenge the logic of Xerxes’ assertion at 7.50.1 (and his claim at 7.50.3) that risk-taking had been a fundamental part of Persian

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457 Xerxes showed no anger with Artabanus for “reverting to his earlier pessimism” (Waters (1971) 75).
458 Herodotus is at 7.50.3 providing insight into Xerxes’ attitudes to judging between possible courses of action, risk management, and the influence of the divine in human affairs, in a measured and rational analysis of the relevant issues. Cf. how Sancisi-Weerdenburg sees the account of Xerxes beginning at 7.45 as signalling a monarch “prepared to take reasonable risks” (Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1989) 587).
459 My view of this episode is incompatible with such as Raaflaub, who cites 7.49-50 among others as depicting a king “ignoring good advice and warnings” (Raaflaub (2011)). Xerxes is, rather, choosing (for his own good reasons) to override the advice. Pelling is nearer the mark when he notes that the episode at 7.50 is “more than a crude contrast between a rash king and a cautious sage” (Pelling (2006a) 109), though the notion of ‘wise adviser’ is so embedded that he needs to explain away reading the encounter in a way favourable to Xerxes.
460 The connection between the two episodes is also made by Stahl, albeit with a different conclusion (Stahl (2012) 149).
461 Baragwanath detects here a contrast between Xerxes representing Persian “ceaseless activity” and Artabanos representing a “Greek philosophy of caution and moderation” (Baragwanath (2008) 268). I am not convinced that the emphasis is on such a Persian/Greek polarity (Baragwanath herself acknowledges that such is not consistently presented). The episode illustrates rather Xerxes’ acceptance of the Persian way but with an emphasis within that of his own doubts as to his ability to live up to it. For the polarity explored to its furthest limits, see Ward (2008).
success in the past, pointing to “the deadly outcome this philosophy has meant for” Cyrus, Cambyses and Darius.\footnote{Stahl (2012) 147.} This disregards, however, the personal element in the account: Xerxes had been presented initially as not genuinely open to advice,\footnote{So it is understandable why opposing views were not voiced (7.10.1) – Xerxes’ challenge was to overcome that caution in the leading Persians, as witness one attempt in his speech to them at 7.53.1-2, the most overt statement of his collective style of leadership.} but after the first dream he rejected the original advice from Mardonius and apologised to Artabanus and the other leading Persians, until then persuaded to change his mind once more by Artabanus and the dream figure. Herodotus’ patterning may require Xerxes’ “blinding” in Stahl’s terms,\footnote{“And for this blinding, the wise adviser must at least temporarily become, in the human sphere, unwise” (Stahl (2012) 147). In other words, Xerxes is condemned for ignoring Artabanus’ advice when it is ‘wise’, and equally condemned for being guided by it when it is ‘unwise’!} but at the micro-level it is hard to see how Xerxes could have managed the situation any differently. An inexperienced king had been misled by his ‘wise’ adviser (at a point when that wise adviser had proved himself ‘temporarily’, to adopt Stahl’s somewhat specious term, to be not so wise)\footnote{Perhaps in Lattimore’s terminology Artabanus functions here as a tragic warner as well as a practical adviser, the latter reflected in his reminder to Xerxes of the need for adequate harbours (7.49.2) and the necessary huge logistical effort to keep his army fed and watered as it advanced deeper into enemy territory (7.49.5): this would then be another illustration of the inadequacy of the terminology, even when considered in a patterning context.} – and this in Stahl’s analysis was Xerxes’ fault.

But Xerxes ignored this advice, regardless of its wisdom or otherwise: the expectations imposed on a Persian king (in Xerxes’ misunderstanding of Persian νόμος)\footnote{Section 1.3.2.4 of chapter 1.} themselves precluded the implementation of such advice.\footnote{Further, Stahl’s challenge to Xerxes’ notion of Persian kings’ risk-taking underplays its validity: Herodotus has nowhere suggested in the Histories that the Persian empire has been declining under the three previous kings – quite the contrary; and I see no evidence for Stahl’s assertion that, by the time he left Asia, “optimistic Xerxes was no longer in touch with reality”, pointing to Xerxes’ misreading of the Ionians (Stahl (2012) 149-50).} The kings in question may have died or come close to disaster, but there was much force to Xerxes’ argument, as I have noted above: the empire had, under its previous three kings, expanded by judicious risk-taking; and where any kings had failed, they had done so in spite of receiving advice to the contrary – but not for the same reasons and not in a way that undermined their previous achievements.\footnote{So, for example, Cyrus understood that his attack on the Massagetae was risky and that adopting Croesus’ advice was no guarantee of success: hence his sending Cambyses away with Croesus, with the express instruction to his son at 1.208.1; while Cambyses’ lack of understanding of it led him to destroying his brother (who would have supported him, according to their sister: 3.32.1-4) and ultimately lose his throne to Smerdis. And cf. Darius, who was regularly helped by timely advice.} In saying this, Xerxes was acknowledging the disasters that always lay in wait for Persian kings who chose to expand their empire, while the advice of such as Artabanus if adopted would have had the same outcome as predicted by Cyrus at 9.122.3 – it would have left the Persians ὡς οὐκέτι ἄρξοντας ἀλλ᾽ ἀρξομένους.

Thus Herodotus presents Xerxes as particularly alert to the need to balance risk: indeed, the king clearly understood at 7.50.2 that no action could be risk-free and the reference there to τὰ κέρδεα recalls Darius’ approach to risk considered above – risk and rewards have to be properly aligned. But to what extent did Xerxes successfully manage risk in the subsequent account of the invasion? It is possible to read Xerxes’ failure to factor into his plans any of the information provided by Demaratus, for example, as indicative of the daring approach he had espoused at 7.50; but the reality, as Herodotus presents it, was that Xerxes saw the odds as entirely in his favour – he
actually computed numbers at 7.103.2. The notion of Xerxes as rash and impetuous is not supported by his interactions with advisers generally: he was cautious or quite rational in not believing that any risk was being taken (it was not necessarily irrational of him to disregard information that might undermine his certainty – it would have been more surprising, for example, if he had decided, on the basis of his information from Demaratus, not to proceed with the invasion before it had even begun: he was surely entitled to test Demaratus’ outlandish (to Xerxes) information).

Following Xerxes’ dreams the focus had shifted to Artabanus as royal adviser, who remained prominent until he was returned to Susa (7.53.1), while Xerxes was to heed (as we have seen) non-Persian advisers such as Demaratus and Artemisia – all the while acknowledging the need for Persian kings to take risks, without ever actually daring to do so himself. But Mardonius reappeared as the king’s adviser in the immediate aftermath of Salamis, and he, Herodotus makes clear, remained the man with the best understanding of Xerxes’ character (8.100.1). The king’s delight at 8.100.5 when Mardonius’ advice offered him a way out sits uncomfortably with Xerxes’ belief that a Persian king’s primary role was as military leader within the context of militarily expanding the empire (see section 1.3.2.4 of chapter 1); and Mardonius’ suggestion that he with a smaller force would achieve what the king had failed to do constituted both an insult to Xerxes and also a challenge to him with its implication that Mardonius was a better military leader than his king (who was supposed to be pre-eminent in that arena). Xerxes had no apparent issue with this, however: Herodotus makes it plain that he had every intention of taking this advice, despite his suggestion at 8.101.1 that he would consult on it.

But Xerxes, in any event, ultimately proved himself to be incapable of following advice that was not risk-free. The king consulted Artemisia exclusively; and her cynical calculation at 8.102.2-3, recalling Darius’ weighing of actions and outcomes, is expressly stated by Herodotus at 8.103.1 to have been in accordance with the king’s own intentions, a clear example of Xerxes weighing possible outcomes in a manner that focused on reducing his own (personal) risk. But Xerxes’ words to Artemisia at 8.101.1 are even more intriguing, acknowledging that Artemisia’s previous advice had been the only worthwhile advice he had received – and yet he had not taken it at the time (8.68-9). This reminds the reader that Xerxes’ approach had consistently been risk-averse (by taking an orthodox Persian approach rather than trusting to non-Persian guidance in the spirit he had identified at 7.50, as set out above). Xerxes was far indeed from the Persian ideal (as he had himself formulated it) of a king demanding bold advice, despite his outspokenness on the point to Artabanus considered above. Having shown at 7.50.3 that, at an intellectual level, he understood how to behave as a king, Xerxes’ repeated inability to take the course of action such understanding required, illustrated by his regular disregard of advice requiring boldness for its implementation, undermined his whole project of seeking to live up to his illustrious predecessors through a consultative style of leadership.

471 Indeed his entire expedition is predicated on overwhelming force: see 7.20.1 – it took four years to prepare. Perhaps the earlier warning of Artabanus on the dangers of such an expedition at 7.10α 1-θ 3 had made a permanent impression on him (the pointlessness of such a risk is spelt out at 7.103.1).
472 This aspect has been considered in section 2.2.4.2 above.
The concept of empire transcended the individual – a notion I have previously considered.  

It was, Herodotus shows, in the nature of risk-taking that, one day, the odds would catch up with a Persian king: Cyrus, Cambyses and Darius had all accepted this (whether shown consciously doing so or not), and the empire had flourished notwithstanding that as individual kings they ultimately failed. Xerxes, however, had been content to see risk-taking simply as something an expansionist king had to do as a consequence of Persian νόμος without being able to accept the consequences – that sometimes a king did actually have to take a risk. This analysis of Xerxes and risk, however, re-emphasises how as a king he knew in his mind what was required, but in his heart could not bring himself to do it: that was his failure – not his alleged rashness and impetuosity, but his inability to take the right risks, in the manner of his predecessors (all of whom, in spite of ultimate failure, had added to the empire), despite clear advice to him to do so.

### 2.3.2 Succession planning

Cyrus, Cambyses and Croesus – ruler, former ruler and future ruler – appear together on only one occasion, at 1.208.1: δὲ Κροῖσον ἐς τὰς χεῖρας ἐσθεὶς τῷ ἑωυτοῦ παιδὶ Καμβύσῃ. This is the first indication of who Cyrus’s successor would be; and in that context the expression ἐς τὰς χεῖρας seems almost ritualistic. It is as if Cyrus were handing Croesus to Cambyses because he was the heir – it marked him out as the future king, a heavily symbolic way of placing Cambyses in loco regis, as it were: Herodotus had presented Cyrus and Croesus as having a special bond following the latter’s reprieve from the pyre, with Croesus the former monarch having consistently delighted Cyrus with his capability as an adviser.

Cyrus’ respect for Croesus as an adviser (noted in section 2.2.1.2 above) is a significant feature of the presentation of Cyrus and led to Cyrus, as a ruler, attempting to leave his son (and successor as king) a legacy that would assist him as a ruler too. Henceforth, however, Croesus’ duty as an adviser to Cyrus would accrue to Cambyses.

This brief passage, therefore, suggests that Cyrus tried to extend the legacy he was leaving his son to encompass not just the throne but also a way of ruling, symbolised by Croesus as a valuable (because he too had been a monarch) adviser. Croesus’ relationship with Cyrus had been elaborately described at different times in terms of ruler/adviser, conqueror/vanquished, willfulness/judgment. The Herodotean irony, of course, is that this passing on of Croesus (as a

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473 See section 1.3.1 of chapter 1 for the contrast between an individual king and the Persians collectively.
474 It occurs again in the Histories on only one occasion, at 6.68.1, where it is used of Demaratus placing the entrails into his mother’s hands before formally requesting her help.
475 See Croesus here as Cyrus’ representative rather than (as Kindt argues) a quasi-oracular voice (Kindt (2006) 42).
476 ἐντειλάμενος at 1.90.1 is immediately followed by Κροῖσε, ἀναρτημένου σεῦ ἀνδρὸς βασιλέως <διὰ> χρηστὰ ἔργα καὶ ἔπεα ˂εὖ> ποιέειν.
477 Albeit coupled with a warning that the heir will need τιμᾶν τε αὐτὸν [i.e. Croesus] καὶ εὖ ποιέειν.
478 It is worth recalling that there is no historical evidence outside the Histories for Croesus’ role as royal adviser to the Persian court after Cyrus (it may well have been pure invention on the part of Herodotus). West argues that, as a matter of historical truth, Croesus died on the pyre, though her reading of Croesus as adviser to Cambyses in its emphasis on Croesus’ failure to observe protocol when addressing Cambyses gives insufficient weight to the idea of Croesus constituting Cyrus’ legacy to Cambyses (West (2004) 422).
symbol of paternal/kingly guidance) to Cambyses occurred immediately before Cyrus’ final, fatal campaign – which the king fought on the basis of a faulty plan suggested by Croesus.479

2.4 Conclusion

In section 2.2 I examined the Persian kings’ attitudes to advisers, showing how they are presented as less likely to react harshly to advice than advisers seemed to think. I went on to consider how the attitudes to advice may influence our reading of the king/adviser interactions and demonstrated how our readings of each king in that context differentiated quite sharply between them: Cyrus is presented as a figure of natural authority, unafraid to use advisers if their advice was valuable, while Cambyses too took good advice when offered. Both ultimately failed (as all risk-taking kings will).

Darius on the other hand is shown as in great need of advice without always realising it. He rarely sought advice, but when it was offered (usually by leading Persians) he unhesitatingly – and fruitfully – adopted it. It paid to be lucky in the context of risk-management.

His son Xerxes, however, was only too aware of his need for advice, though he failed regularly to take the right course of action. The interplay with advisers throughout the narrative sharply emphasises how Xerxes, in his attempts to rely as part of his consultative style of leadership on good advisers, ended up through his own personal failings abandoning the expedition against Greece and symbolically handing his command to Mardonius (who in the aftermath of Salamis had suggested that he, with fewer men, would succeed where his king had failed).

My analysis has again shown a consistent leadership style for each king: Cyrus as the inspirational leader (unconcerned about his own personal prestige when taking advice from others, while all around him acted unquestioningly to smooth his path to the throne), who had regard to his succession and, as the only king shown giving advice himself, gently fostered (rather than simply ordering) in his people the wisdom to choose hardship as a means of preserving their empire rather than enjoy their wealth and luxury; and Cambyses, as an unpredictable and somewhat isolated king though by no means devoid of certain kingly qualities, is presented as ill-equipped (expressed by his anger) to cope with any challenges to his rule and unable to obtain full benefit from good advisers (which constituted a symptom of his isolation and a symbol too of his descent into madness).

Darius, while also presented as a king who never thought to consult the leading Persians as a group at all, however desperate his situation, is effectively propped up by his advisers: he was fortunate in having men who were astute, loyal and bold enough to challenge him when he missed

479 Interestingly, Herodotus makes no comment at this point on Cambyses’ (or indeed Croesus’) reaction to Cyrus’ action. See section 2.3.1.1 for Cyrus’ acceptance of the risk of failure here.
something critical – and he played his part by accepting and implementing such advice, in spite of
his occasional remoteness and somewhat cold personality.  

Xerxes, uniquely among the Persian kings, regularly consulted advisers, initially Persians but
eventually non-Persians too – indeed, his whole approach was consultative in a novel and distinctly
un-monarchical way. Ultimately, however, he failed as a consultative king for the simple reason that
he lacked the strength of character to fully embrace the consequences of a consultative approach
to ruling (symbolised by his abandonment of Persian advisers in favour of non-Persians).
Herodotus makes clear that Xerxes had opportunities to accept advice which, if taken, could have
changed the outcome of the expedition against Greece; yet always he failed to act on non-Persian
advice – save only when he had already decided to cut and run, in a way which, Herodotus makes
clear, embodied his very failure as a king to rule in the Persian – the Cyrus – way.

\[\text{\footnotesize 480} \] It is noteworthy that both Darius and Xerxes are presented as remote from their forces when they are fighting – either they have sent the army out under a general, or they sit on a throne at a distance to observe proceedings: this shows how the styles Persian kingship had shifted their emphasis compared with Cyrus and Cambyses, who were perceived as remote by the enemy (not their own side) and were more threatening on that account – see sections 1.3.2.1 and 1.3.2.2 of chapter

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CHAPTER 3 – LEADERSHIP STYLES AND MODES OF BEHAVIOUR: VIOLENCE, UNCERTAINTY, AND FEAR

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I consider the leadership styles of the four kings in three specific behavioural contexts: the kings being violent (either personally or ordering violence); the kings being uncertain or perplexed; and the kings being fearful or anxious.

In section 3.3 I analyse the styles of leadership displayed by the kings in each of these contexts, before going on in section 3.4 to analyse them in relation to those aspects of leadership identified in section 0.2.4 of the Introduction. I conclude in section 3.5 with a summary of the findings in this chapter.

3.2 Modes of behaviour

I have chosen these three modes of behaviour for a number of reasons: each presupposes a degree of loss of kingly control, the responses to which can offer a stark illustration of any differences between the individual kings’ styles of leadership; the violence of Persian kings is a staple of macro-level accounts referring to despotism (so an analysis of it at the micro-level that identifies differences again supports the validity of the micro-level approach); and together they provide an opportunity to drill down into very specific (and individual) actions of the kings as Herodotus presents them.

3.2.1 Violence

Violence permeates the Histories and Herodotus employs a wide range of words to describe specific acts of violence.\(^{481}\) I examine usages in the context of Persian kings in subsequent sections, but it is clear that this particular element of the vocabulary of violence was not the sole province of the Persian kings. Similarly, usages of general words denoting force or violence are relatively rarely used of the Persian kings.\(^{482}\) While the Persian kings are all shown acting violently at one time or another, the same can also be said of the Greeks: at both 9.5.2-3 and 9.120.4 the Athenians are presented en masse (as opposed to the Persian kings individually) performing

\(^{481}\) Rollinger usefully lists acts of violence encompassing verbs such as ἀνασκολπίζω, ἀνασταυρῶ, ἀνακρεμαννυμι, and so on.

\(^{482}\) Words such as ἀρπαζω, βιῶμαι, βιάζομαι, and ἀνάγκη and their respective cognates are hardly ever used of actions by the Persian kings.
extremely violent acts as punishment of fellow citizens, the implication being that no form of constitution precluded the possibility of violent acts.\textsuperscript{483}

It is therefore unsurprising that, while one of Otanes’ most telling criticisms of one-man rule in the constitutional debate was the propensity to commit acts of violence (βιῶται γυναῖκας κτείνει τε ἄκριτους: 3.80.5), this is simply not the case with three of the Persian kings.\textsuperscript{484} Of course, the Persian kings as presented in the Histories were capable of cruel violence against others: indeed, this is one of the most enduring ways in which they have been read by modern scholars.\textsuperscript{485} Rollinger offers an interesting analysis of violent acts between Greeks and non-Greeks, finding that, out of a total number within the Histories of 92 occurrences,\textsuperscript{486} 42 are committed by Persians (the next highest group, the Greeks, totalling only 20). He concludes that Herodotus’ concern with human behaviour in political matters constitutes a powerful contrast of despotism with freedom, a duality he sees as not identical with that between East and West: “That is the reason why Greek tyrants exhibit the same modes of behaviour as the Persian kings.”\textsuperscript{487} But a closer analysis of his 42 episodes reveals that only 18 involved the Persian kings.\textsuperscript{488} The basis for his whole argument, therefore, is not as clear-cut as he suggests.

From the perspective of my argument, I focus on violent behaviour as exhibited (or ordered) by the individual Persian kings whether or not accompanied by “undue” cruelty, save that where violence occurs within a military context it will be considered only if it contains any unusual features (such as “undue” cruelty), as violence \textit{per se} is too generic an element in accounts of military conflict to offer any insights.\textsuperscript{489} This often coincides with the accounts considered by Rollinger, although I consider a number of episodes that he ignores (presumably because they do not fall within his parameters – for example, Darius’ treatment of Oebazus and his family at 4.84.1-2, considered in sections 3.3.4.1 and 3.3.4.2 below).

\textsuperscript{483} Cf. Allen’s assessment of the significance of ὀργή underpinning Athenian approaches to punishment throughout the fifth century (Allen (2000)) and how, at the end of the fifth century, the Athenians passed a decree authorising “the performance of the most violent crime – murder – without recourse to judicial process” (Forsdyke (2012) 177), concepts not so far removed from the violent autocrat described at 3.80.1-5.

\textsuperscript{484} Cf. “While this is definitely true of Otanes’ immediate model, Cambyses, it is not true of every monarch or even tyrant presented in the Histories (Roy (2012) 307).

\textsuperscript{485} “Despotism is always based on fear and compulsion….orders for lashing in Herodotus invariably are given by despots”, Lateiner states, going on to note “They are especially crowded in book 7 (22.1, 35.1, 54.3, 56.1, 103.4*, 223.2), where the contrast to Spartan ‘freedom’ and self-motivation is most dramatic” (Lateiner (1989) 153). He emphasises the preponderance of lashings given by Persian kings, though there is no sense in the Histories that lashings \textit{per se} are unacceptable: as Rollinger argues (see below), they are actually a given so far as ruler behaviour is concerned and have to be read as such. Of course, rulers are not always viewed solely in this way: Flory, for example, rightly argues that Herodotus offers his readers “positive exemplars of one-man rule to contrast with negative ones” (Flory (1987) 121).

\textsuperscript{486} Rollinger (2003) 129; for the purposes of his paper he defines violence as ‘the exercise of physical force so as to inflict injury or damage to human beings’, but narrowed down ‘to the combination of violence with acts of undue cruelty’ (Ibid. 121)).

\textsuperscript{487} Rollinger (2003) 142.

\textsuperscript{488} Rollinger does acknowledge that he includes Median acts (by Astyages) in his figures; and he sometimes double-counts where I do not (for instance, Xerxes at 7.238.1 ordering Leonidas’ head to be cut off and then put on a stake is counted as two separate episodes in Rollinger’s methodology though I consider it a single episode), but this is partly balanced by him including two episodes as violent where Darius actually changed his mind about carrying out his violent intention (3.132.2 and 7.194.1-2); and to include the episode at 8.118.2-3 where Xerxes first rewarded the ship’s master for saving him and then had him executed for putting him in danger ignores the fact that it is stated by Herodotus to be οὐδαμῶς ἔμοιγε πιστός (8.119.1).

\textsuperscript{489} So, to illustrate my approach, I consider Cyrus’ instruction to his army at 1.80.3 to kill all the Lydians except Croesus to fall within the ‘routine’ parameters of warfare; while Xerxes’ treatment of Leonidas’ corpse (7.238.1) is considered below, as it seems excessive to readers and, indeed, to Herodotus.
Mantzouranis, building on Rollinger’s distinction between political and institutional (as opposed to cultural) differences accounting for the inflicting of violence, has noted that actions of autocratic physical violence occur often at the beginning of a military expedition that turns out badly, citing the examples of 4.84 and 7.38-9 (the accounts of Oeobazus and Pythius). There are clear similarities between the two episodes, but my interpretation of them and their relationship with each other emphasises the differences between them at the micro-level rather than seeking to read them in terms of a pattern, to identify the extent to which Darius and Xerxes may be read within the accounts as individually different in their styles of leadership.

Otanès, in his contribution to the constitutional debate, identified violence towards women as a characteristic feature of a monarch’s behaviour (3.80.5). Although Herodotus has stated at 1.4.2 that the Persians consider τὸ…ἅρπαζεν γυναῖκας to be ἀνδρῶν ἀδίκων…ἔργον, he adds that they also believe that seeking to avenge it is foolish – that the wise man will ignore it, δῆλα γάρ δὴ ὅτι, εἰ μὴ αὐτάι ἔβούλοντο, οὐκ ἂν ἥρπαζον (1.4.2). Disregarding the shortcomings by modern standards of such a response, the two passages taken together (and that at 4.43.2) suggest a gradation of violence towards women. In fact, acts of violence (including sexual violence such as rape) carried out by Persian kings targeted at women are not evident in the Histories: there are no occasions where the Persian kings are seen to behave in the way described by Otanès. Indeed, the only Persian king ever presented as violent towards a woman is Cambyses, in the accounts of his killing of his sister at 3.32.1-4; and so far as Cambyses is concerned, Herodotus states that his actions amounted to ταῦτα μὲν ἐς τοὺς οἰκηιοτάτους ὁ Καμβύσης ἐξεμάνη (3.33.1) – a further oblique indication of his constant assault on νόμοι.

The most violent act against a woman within the royal household is the vengeance taken by Amastris on Masisites’ wife at 9.112.1: Xerxes has generally been held by scholars as in some way accountable for this, but his fault in this episode is attributable more to weakness than to any violent instincts of his own – thus Dewald rightly notes how the initial description of Amastris’ request at 9.110.3 as δεινόν τε καὶ ἀνάρσιον is presented as Xerxes’ own thought. The request was to lead to some dreadful outcome, as Xerxes was also shown to understand at 9.110.3: Herodotus is not presenting the reader with a king who approved of the violence but one who had

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490 Mantzouranis (2014).
491 See sections 3.3.4.1 and 3.3.4.2 below for the details of these episodes.
492 Noted by, for example, Baragwanath (2008) 275-6 and Thomas (2012) 236, who (rightly in my view) cannot see how Xerxes’ behaviour towards Pythius is worse than that of Darius towards Oeobazus at 4.84.1 (Thomas (2012) 238), though I will argue that Darius’ behaviour is in many ways worse than Xerxes’: see sections 3.3.3.1 and 3.3.4.1 below.
493 The verb βιῶμαι is also used at 4.43.2 of Sataspes’ treatment of Megabazus’ daughter and at 6.137.3 of Pelasgian attacks on young Athenian women.
494 For two even more outmoded views (‘extreme male prejudices’) as to female sexuality, see Walcot (1978) 141.
495 The savage treatment of women at Phocis by the Persian army at 8.33.1 and the behaviour of the seven Persians recounted at 5.18.5 are presented as entirely independent of the Persian kings.
496 For such violence perpetrated by Persians as opposed to Persian kings, see Harrison (1997) 196-7.
497 While it might be argued that Cyrus displayed violence towards Tomyris in attacking the Massagetae, the account lays no emphasis on the target queen’s gender as such.
498 τοὺς τε μαζοὺς ἀποταμοῦσα καὶ προεβαλε καὶ ρῖνα καὶ ἔδινε καὶ χέιλεα καὶ γλῶσσαν ἐκταμοῦσα ἐς οἶκόν μιν ἀποπέμπει διαλελυμασμένην.
499 So Flower and Marincola see his behaviour here as contrasting with that of Pausanias ‘who in victory displays restraint and moderate behaviour towards women” (Flower and Marincola (2002) 292; and Baragwanath notes that Xerxes brought about the woman’s terrible mutilation and death (Baragwanath (2008) 279). Bridges notes how this final Herodotean depiction of Xerxes was responsible for subsequent views of him as “the decadent palace playboy”, though his weakness in this entire episode is in my view presented as pitiable rather than decadent (Bridges (2015) 70).
reached such a state of weakness that he was powerless to prevent the inevitable outcome. How this reflects on Xerxes’ style of leadership is considered in section 3.3.4.1 below.

3.2.2 Uncertainty

Herodotus sometimes shows the various Persian kings experiencing difficulties or even being bewildered at either a strategic or tactical level. How each king behaves in such situations throws into very sharp relief the differences in each’s style of leadership; and the idea of perplexity is particularly useful in this respect because it is so unexpected to find a powerful king in such a situation.\(^{501}\)

The most common word to describe such a state is ἀπορίη (though it does not occur in every case of uncertainty and perplexity).\(^{502}\) I am not suggesting that Herodotus used ἀπορίη and its cognates in some sort of technical sense in relation to kings who were in difficulties in military situations – the differing contexts negate any such possibility (though the range of meanings I have described is not particularly extensive – there is no occasion when it means a simple ‘lack of resources’, for example). But it is noteworthy that there are within the Histories more usages in relation to the Persians, and the Persian kings, than to any other category of people (in particular, the words are very rarely used of Greeks in a military context and on the few occasions where they are, the military context is minor).\(^{503}\) The words suggest difficulties, impossibility, a sense of there being ‘no way through’; perhaps this association of them with the Persians hints at the inevitability of Persian failure. My analysis includes instances of kingly perplexity regardless of the presence of any such language (for instance, the episode involving Cyrus and Croesus in 1.155.2-3 considered in section 3.3.1.2 below).

3.2.3 Fear and Anxiety\(^{504}\)

Herodotus notes, in his account of Persian customs, that bravery in battle was regarded by the Persians as the most important way to prove one’s manliness.\(^{505}\) Any king being shown behaving

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\(^{501}\) For a more metaphorical consideration of ἀπορίη, see Hartog (1988) 57-60.

\(^{502}\) Powell cites a total of nine instances of ἀπορίη, of which seven are used to mean in his terminology “difficulties” and two “unapproachability” – both these latter referring to the Scythians (Powell (1938) 42). Of the former seven, only two refer to Persian kings; including cognate usages – ἄπορος and ἀπορεῖν, adjectival and verbal forms respectively – adds in six instances of ἄπορος, in the sense ‘impossible to deal with’, or just ‘impossible’ or, in the neuter plural, ‘difficulties (none of which relate to Persian kings though two apply to Persians) and twelve instances of ἀπορέω, all in the sense of ‘I am in difficulties’ (four of which relate to Persian kings).

\(^{503}\) Minor in comparison, that is, with Persian expansion: at 6.134.1 Miltiades is unsure how to end his siege of Paros; while at 9.98.1 the Greeks are uncertain as to the wiser course of action to take following the retreating Persians’ flight to the mainland.

\(^{504}\) Unsurprisingly, there is a wide range of words to express the notion of fear in the Histories, including δείδω (41 including a single usage of ὑπερδείσας), φοβέομαι (22), φόβος meaning fear rather than rout/panic (9), ὑπερφοβέω (16), ἀρρωδέω (6), καταρρωδέω (22), ὑπερκαταρρωδέω (1), and περιδεής (2) – the total number of uses for each is shown in brackets after each word (computed from Powell (1938)). I am not suggesting that Herodotus used any of these words in some sort of technical sense in relation to kings who were fearful in military situations.

\(^{505}\) The word Herodotus uses on this occasion is ἀνδραγαθίη (1.136.1). Cf. 1.99.2, where (in relation to a Median king) Herodotus states that one of Deioces’ motives for removing himself from the sight of his peers was that he did not want
in a cowardly fashion, or showing fear or anxiety (even if he felt it), therefore, is likely to be a noteworthy event, as such behaviour, it may be surmised, would have undermined their peers' perception of his worthiness of kingship.

3.3 Styles of leadership and modes of behaviour

In this section I analyse the extent to which the individual kings’ styles of leadership may be discerned in their different approaches to the three modes of behaviour I have identified above.

3.3.1 Cyrus

The style of leadership displayed by Cyrus is now well-established in the narrative of the Histories: a natural king and inspirational leader, adored by the Persians, adaptable, bold, and fiercely protective of the Persians as a whole – until he allowed imperialism to get the better of him (see section 1.3.2 of chapter 1). I analyse from that perspective the presentation of Cyrus within the three modes of behaviour.

3.3.1.1 Violence

The unchallenged premise of the account at 1.114.1-3 of Cyrus beating a boy who refused to obey his orders in their game of kingship was that a king acted rightly when administering severe physical punishment to a disobedient subject. Cyrus is presented as a king who embodies the Persian kingship ideal – and it is noteworthy that, though the boy in this case was the son of a leading Mede, Cyrus felt no compunction in treating him as a subject within the play context: Cyrus is being shown to have, even as a child, an instinctive grasp of what it was to be a king. Astyages at 1.120.2 listed ‘usual’ kingly functions, though physical chastisement by a king was not expressly included, but the use of violence against one’s subjects was accepted as wholly legitimate on the basis of Cyrus’ explanation at 1.115.3, whereupon τὸν Ἀστυάγεα ἐσήιε ἀνάγνωσι (1.116.1): Cyrus came to the king’s notice by boldly asserting the implied kingly right to punish a ‘subject’ (and he would in due course come to the throne because Astyages’ own punishment of Harpagus, which eventually would trigger Harpagus’ plotting with the adult Cyrus, had been too harsh).

Thus the kingly prerogative of violence was expected to be exercised proportionately: in exceeding what was acceptable, Astyages would shatter the king/subject relationship. Once the adult Cyrus

\footnote{Chiasson notes how in this episode Herodotus lays "emphasis on the youngster’s truth-telling", concluding that the episode where Cyrus is interviewed by Astyages shows the future king as the embodiment of Herodotus’ notion of “a fundamental Persian ideal” (Chiasson (2012) 227). This fundamental ideal of Persian kingship is not the only one involved in the episode.}
became king, he is recorded as employing violence against a fellow Persian on one occasion only, at 3.69.5 – and Herodotus, with the words οὐ σμικρῇ, implies that the violence in this case was a proportionate punishment and appropriate response to the original action (cf. the death of Intaphrenes, attributed by Herodotus at 3.118.1 to ὑβρίσαντα τάδε). 507 Cyrus exhibited a controlled and proportionate use of violence in a measured response.

Cyrus is recorded committing against non-Persians just a single act of what is generally regarded as cruel violence, when at 1.86.2 he ordered that Croesus and fourteen Lydian boys be placed on a pyre. While not disagreeing with those who see this as an example of Herodotus’ motif of kings exhibiting intellectual curiosity, 508 or of Herodotus’ puzzlement at this episode (so unlike the rest of the presentation of Cyrus) illustrated by his putting forward three possible reasons as to why Cyrus may have acted in this way, 509 I am not persuaded that Cyrus is to be taken as being excessively cruel or violent: Herodotus is showing that this was the way Persians behaved, despite being himself unsure about the rationale for such behaviour. There is no censure (express or implied) in his account: in terms of Cyrus’ leadership style, the episode tells us simply that he was an exceptionally successful warrior-king. Violence was one tool at his disposal as a leader and he used it appropriately.

3.3.1.2 Uncertainty

At 1.190.2-191.1 Cyrus is described as having no idea how to bring to an end his siege of Babylon, but it is the subsequent comment at 1.191.1 that is particularly striking. 510 As de Jong has pointed out, the Herodotean narrator is not afraid to own up to not being omniscient. 511 Cyrus has so far in the presentation been all-conquering and irresistible. In suddenly presenting him at a loss – and the use of both ἀπορίη and ἀπορέω in such close proximity emphasises this – Herodotus also states plainly his own ignorance of the source of the idea that would rescue the king, even implying his indifference to the issue: it is as if Herodotus had lost his interest in both of the elements identified by de Jong. This unusual attitude on the part of Herodotus in the Histories underlines how strange it was for Cyrus (of all kings) to have been beset by ἀπορίη.

507 This episode is included under Rollinger’s methodology considered above, though I suggest that the words οὐ σμικρῇ also undermine, by qualifying his requirement of “undue cruelty” (my emphasis), Rollinger’s inclusion of this episode in his analysis (see note 486 above). This idea of appropriateness in response – proportionality – is associated conceptually with the pervasive notion of reciprocity, which Gould sees as the key to Herodotus’ narrative and analysis (Gould (1989) 82-5). For a more materialistic analysis of ‘reciprocity’, see Braund (1998)159-80 (the emphasis is on Greek reciprocity in Fisher (2002) 209-12 and, though he touches on the lack of understanding that can occur where the two parties are from different cultures, his focus as to kings is solely on Greek tyrants).

508 So Christ (1994) 199: “Because Herodotus views inquiry as a common kingly activity…it serves not only as a means of characterization, but also as an analytical tool for assessing otherwise inexplicable behaviour. This is most conspicuous in Herodotus’s explanation of why Cyrus, after defeating Croesus, placed him on a pyre…” See too Pelling (2006c) 156 and Baragwanath (2008) 66-7.

509 Mikalson suggests that Herodotus struggles to make sense of Cyrus’ behaviour in a way that fits with Greek religious notions (Mikalson (2003) 159-60).

510 εἴτε δὴ ὦν…ἐποίεε δὴ τοιόνδε.

511 This leads her to the conclusion that the Histories incorporates elements of both epic, such as heroes’ speeches and the narrator’s ability to read their thoughts, and historiography, with its reconstructions and speculations – although she does not regard Herodotus as conscious of this duality (de Jong (2013 [1999]) 261).
But there is also a degree of ambivalence about the episode that suggests another possible interpretation. Herodotus regularly gives kings credit for great engineering feats; so here, in suggesting that the solution – which involved a diversion of the river to make its level as it flowed through Babylon drop – may or may not have been Cyrus’ idea, he implicitly detracts from Cyrus’ majesty. Support for such a negative reading can be gathered from the way that the plan was in the event executed successfully only because of the Babylonians’ own shortcomings (the episode also offers a stark contrast to the decisiveness attributed to Cyrus by Herodotus on an earlier occasion).

Cyrus exhibited a clear sense of uncertainty at 1.155.2 in voicing to Croesus his frustration at the revolt of the Lydians. Croesus’ response at 1.155.3 was to persuade Cyrus that the Lydians were not to blame – originally Croesus had led them into error, while now Pactyes was doing the same thing. While the primary point of this episode is to show the final abandonment of any kingly pretensions by Croesus himself, it also gives insight into Cyrus the king – though angered by the failure of his policy, he was unsure how to respond; and, having said he would reduce the Lydians to servitude, he did not do so but instead voiced his concern to Croesus, constituting an implicit admission of uncertainty – an interpretation reinforced by him being, in the event, easily won round to the different course of action proposed by Croesus (and rapidly adopting the new policy before moving on to his next concern). On the face of it, Cyrus had failed to adopt with the Lydians a policy that Darius was to implement successfully with the Babylonians; but the outcome for Cyrus was hardly a failure. He accepted the pragmatic advice of Croesus (which had been actively sought by Cyrus himself, a significant contrast with Darius who, while being so dependent on advice, was rarely shown seeking it out) and simply moved on. Cyrus’ leadership is shown to be flexible: his approach was not always right, on occasion resulting in different, but not necessarily inferior, outcomes.

### 3.3.1.3 Fear and anxiety

None of the self-doubt attributed to Xerxes is manifested by Cyrus. There were no debates corresponding with that in which Artabanus confronted Xerxes, nor did Cyrus feel the need to share with the leading Persians the burden of being king. It is surprising, therefore, that Cyrus is shown being afraid at all; but at 1.80.2 he is said to have been concerned by (καταρρωδήσας) the Lydian

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512 For example, see Darius (4.83 onwards) and Xerxes (7.33 onwards) having huge bridges constructed to facilitate the invasions of Scythia and Greece respectively; and Egyptian kings such as Moeris (2.101.2) and Cheops (2.125.1-7).

514 1.191.5.

514 1.84 recounts how the Persians took Sardis. The statement at 1.84.3 ἀπότομός τε γὰρ ἐστὶ ταύτῃ ἡ ἀκρόπολις καὶ ἄμαχος (with the repetition later in 1.84.3, κατηλόγησε τοῦτο ὡς ἐὸν ἄμαχόν τε καὶ ἀπότομον) emphasises the sheer impossibility of their task – which was nevertheless achieved through the intelligence of the Mardian Hyroiades, who proved himself a perfect foil for the energy of Cyrus in launching his attack when Croesus had thought the fighting season over.

515 That Cyrus is puzzled may be inferred both from his expression of surprise – his plan had been implemented, but with an unexpected outcome – and the very fact that he voiced this to Croesus, reinforcing the idea that he was unsure what to do next.

516 This is a very clear statement of how despotic leadership works: the people cannot be held accountable for following such a leader, only the leader himself can be. Croesus’ advice to Cyrus is that he should emasculate the Lydians as warriors – hardly a fatherly act, suggesting that only the Persians (not subject peoples) regarded Cyrus as a πατήρ-style leader.

517 Unlike Xerxes at 7. 8α 2.
cavalry. At Harpagus’ suggestion, he employed the (successful) stratagem of confronting Croesus’ horsemen with camels. This passage can be read as another instance of a king at the beginning of his kingly career: the account of how Cyrus came to the throne implied that Cyrus had been ‘born’ to be king. Perhaps this episode (where the way in which Cyrus is shown as being fearful seems strangely out of proportion to the stated reason for his fear) is intended to show a king still in the process of forging himself into the model Persian king through conquest, who was developing his style of leadership but had not quite completed the process.

Cyrus exhibited a different sort of fear when reprieving Croesus from the pyre – Cyrus δείσαντα τὴν τίσιν τιν (1.86.6). This is a striking usage, given the rarity of Cyrus showing fear – Herodotus presents it as underlying Cyrus’ action here rather than a possible explanation, though the nature of such τίσις in the Persian context is unclear.

Despite these episodes, there is no suggestion in the text that Cyrus was cowardly: his courage as a warrior was never in doubt. The incidents add an additional dimension to his style of leadership – even where on occasion his leadership might have failed, it did not do so as his style of leadership was so entrenched among the Persians that they followed him in any event.

3.3.2 Cambyses

Of the four kings Cambyses is the one who, as the account of him progresses, started to exhibit the most extreme behaviour.

3.3.2.1 Violence

Unlike Cyrus, Cambyses carried out a number of acts of violence against a Persian subject, none of which is presented as a proportionate response. Herodotus presents Cambyses’ extreme actions, which he does not hesitate to describe as τὰ κακά, as caused by (as opposed to being evidence for) his madness. The murder of Prexaspes’ son triggered the advice of Croesus at 3.36.1-2: Cambyses was treading the path to disaster previously taken by Astyages (as evidenced by his disproportionate use of violence); and Cyrus’ attempt to pre-empt this by leaving Croesus to advise his son was to prove fruitless. But the portrayal of Cambyses is nuanced: at

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518 See section 1.3.2.1 of chapter 1 as to Cyrus developing a taste for imperial expansion as a result of his conquest of the Lydians.
519 One other possible reading is that by feeling such fear Cyrus maintained his ‘edge’ as a king but that, once he had lost that ability to fear, his ultimate doom was inevitable.
520 The murder of Prexaspes’ son at 3.35.1-4 (intended to demonstrate Cambyses’ sanity – Prexaspes at 3.35.4 ὁρῶντα ἐνδρο [i.e. Cambyses] οὐ φρενήρης); the murder of his own brother Smerdis at 3.30.3; Περσέων ὁμοίους τοῖσι πρώτοισι δύοδεκα being buried alive up to their heads (3.35.5); the murder (3.32.3-4) in a rage of his younger sister (for criticising him for murdering Smerdis, who would, she asserted, have been a valuable supporter of Cambyses).
521 ἐπ᾽ οὐδεμιῇ αἰτίῃ ἀξιοχρέῳ it is stated of the episode at 3.35.5.
522 Brown reaches a similar conclusion (Brown (1982) 398-9). See too 3.25.2, another example of οὐ φρενήρην (words used only of Cambyses save for the usages at 5.42.1 and 9.55.2 – of Cleomenes and of Amompharetos, in Pausanias’ reported speech of him, respectively). Munson has drawn attention to the similar narrative pattern between Cambyses and Cleomenes (Munson (1991) 50).
5.25.1-2, for instance, his treatment of Sisamnes projects the image of a stern king in the Persian tradition, rather than a deranged maniac.

Cambyses is shown inflicting extreme violence on non-Persians on two occasions: at 3.16.1, he ordered Amasis’ corpse to be severely abused, before being set on fire. Herodotus notes at 3.16.3 how such treatment contravened both Persian and Egyptian νόμοι, thereby emphasising both Cambyses’ remoteness from norms of behaviour that crossed two different cultures and that he was a king who saw matters in very personal terms (as opposed to the interests of the Persians as a whole). This provides a clear illustration of the unpredictability and shortcomings of Cambyses’ style of leadership – further illustrated by Herodotus’ judgment on the second episode at 3.29.2 (involving the whipping of Apries’ Egyptian priests and the execution of any Egyptians found celebrating Apries’ return): ὁ Καμβύσης, οἷα ἐὼν ὑπομαργότερος.

3.3.2.2 Uncertainty

When Cambyses is shown in difficulty in a military context, at the outset of his invasion of Egypt (3.4.3), assistance came from Phanes, a Greek mercenary, whose advice Cambyses was subsequently shown to take at 3.7.2 by entering into a formal friendship with an eminently capable non-Persian, the Arabian king. In this single moment of uncertainty, Cambyses has been shown responding as a pragmatic and effective king: he had a problem, but was open-minded enough to accept advice and assistance from two non-Persians without any reluctance to appear to be in need of such advice or concern about his own status. This contrast with the later portrait of Cambyses as the deranged and unpredictable despot is a warning to the reader not to see him in purely negative terms. While Herodotus presents Cambyses as exhibiting in a consistent way a particular style of leadership linked to the prioritisation of his personal interests to the exclusion of the Persians’ interests as a whole, he was within that style unpredictable and even erratic – with, unsurprisingly, poor outcomes for the Persians and the king himself. It was hardly surprising that Otanes was to employ him as his model of the despotic tyrant in the constitutional debate (referring to him by name at 3.80.2).

3.3.2.3 Fear and anxiety

Cambyses was not the sort of leader who had to explain his actions or seek counsel before making a decision. Following his successful invasion of Egypt, he turned to intended invasions of Carthage, Ammonia, and Ethiopia. There was no suggestion of anxiety on his part when it came to such plans – though his lack of preparation for these invasions led to the first case in which he was presented as fearful, at 3.25.7, by the news that his soldiers had become cannibalistic to survive: there were limits even to Cambyses’ disregard of νόμοι.

523 See also note 314 above.
524 3.17.1.
But the two subsequent depictions of Cambyses in a state of fear both emanated from his own mouth (his fear for his life at 3.30.3 after his dream of Smerdis and for his throne at 3.65.3 following his realisation of the mistake about Smerdis), further evidence for the view of Cambyses as emotionally more attuned to his own personal position than to the broader interest of the Persians and their empire as a whole: a Persian king more akin to a Greek tyrant than to Cyrus.

3.3.3 Darius

Darius’ handling of the Babylonians after he had (through the guile and courage of Zopyrus) retaken the city exhibited one difference in his leadership style from that of Cyrus: Cyrus had failed to destroy the city walls when he had captured Babylon, Herodotus notes pointedly, with the implication that had Cyrus done so, the second revolt would never have occurred. Herodotus is here illustrating a significant point: styles of leadership are not universally applicable to all situations – the ‘bean-counter’ approach of a Darius in such circumstances, concerned not to destroy the prosperity of Babylon and its contribution to Persian coffers, could produce a better overall outcome than Cyrus’ style of leadership.

As will be seen in section 3.3.3.2 below, Gobryas “saw” things that Darius failed to see on a number of occasions, the implication being that Darius’ style of leadership did not allow for the bigger picture to present itself to him, as he focused on profit in accordance with his κάπηλος style; but Darius did enjoy kingly success when he accepted advice, as a result of that same κάπηλος style of leadership – his dependence on strong advisers has been shown at section 2.2.3 of chapter 2 to have countered his inability to be an effective leader at the strategic level.

This is further illustrated by the incident at 4.123.2. Though not explained by Herodotus, Darius’ action in this episode suggests limitations to his leadership style – an inability to formulate his own strategic vision and respond to new situations, instead simply focusing on material matters (erection of forts) and familiar tactics (cutting off the return of the Scythians he is pursuing) despite their utter irrelevance to the situation he was facing. Darius is being presented as the author of his own uncertainty, as Herodotus makes it clear that Darius was once again floundering; and his style of leadership also contrasts sharply with the presentation of the Scythians as realists who had delivered their own effective tactical response to his invasion: Darius’ uncertainty and lack of understanding had led him to squander time and reserves.

As Herodotus states at 3.30.3, Cambyses δείσας περὶ ἑωυτῳ; and at 3.65.3 δείσας δὲ μὴ ἀπαιρεθέω τὴν ἀρχὴν πρὸς τοῦ ὀδελφοῦ.
3.3.3.1 Violence

Darius is generally shown employing violence against his fellow Persians in response to some perceived threat, while remaining capable of modifying the full rigour of a violent response. So, while at 3.119.7 Intaphrenes was appropriately executed, Darius spared his brother-in-law and oldest son, the king’s response not being excessively violent, and Herodotus makes it clear at 3.118.1 that Intaphrenes was paying the price for his own act of violence detailed at 3.118.2.

But the episode may also suggest that Darius was at this early point in his rule a king who (in spite of the statement at 3.88.3) was insecure in his own position (he had not dared to proceed against Intaphrenes while there was a possibility that he was acting in collusion with the other five conspirators – see 3.119.1-2). This reading receives support from Darius’ next act of violence against another fellow Persian, Oroetes. Herodotus makes clear Darius’ desire to punish Oroetes, but the king was reluctant to move against him openly (3.127.1), the first reason given somewhat undermining the statement at 3.88.3. It is difficult to imagine Herodotus’ Cyrus adopting Darius’ somewhat tentative solution to the problem, and this notion of insecurity on the part of Darius was also noted and used by Democedes in his manipulation of the king by his instrument Atossa at 3.134.1-3.

Another violent episode, at 4.166.2 where Darius had Aryandes put to death for attempting to rival Darius’ legacy as to coinage, again suggests insecurity, for Aryandes’ challenge went to the very root of Darius’ style of leadership and his very perception of himself as a king – a king pre-eminent in the logistical and administrative aspects of ruling.

As I have noted, Darius’ style of leadership as a κάπηλος resulted in a calculating and emotionless response to issues, and these episodes also show a leader making cruel calculations of the acts required to cement his own position. But Herodotus goes further in the next episode involving violence, presenting Darius as a king devoid of normal human feeling performing a casual act of violence that may have been justifiable (though Herodotus makes no effort to present it as such): the treatment of Oeobazus and his sons at 4.84.1-2. I defer full analysis of this until sections 3.3.4.1 and 3.3.4.2 below, when it is considered alongside Xerxes’ treatment of Pythius, but Darius’ cold manipulation of Oebazus’ hopes is difficult to comprehend even by his standards.

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526 Rollinger regards the episode at 3.132.2 as violence on the part of Darius, but the king was dissuaded by Democedes from executing the Egyptian physicians who had failed to cure him and I therefore ignore it. While Herodotus offers no detail, Democedes’ understanding of Darius’ psychology was shortly to be employed in Atossa’s persuasion of Darius at 3.134.1-4, so we may infer that he would have highlighted to Darius how he would profit from reprieving the Egyptian physicians.

527 Cf. “What emerges [from the episode] is the figure of an authoritarian yet humane monarch” (Asheri (2007) 506). Such ‘humanity’ is, of course, relative, given that all Intaphrenes’ other sons and male relatives were executed.

528 Rollinger notes Intaphrenes’ act of violence but not Darius’ response, suggesting that he too considers the latter to be proportionate and not cruel. For my purpose Darius’ act is worthy of note for what it tells us of him as an individual king compared with (for example) Cambyses.

529 ὅλης τῆς πάντας οἱ ἐπιμπλέατο.

530 Flower sees the episode as evidence of Darius’ “ruthlessness in maintaining [power]”, which he sees as “disquieting”: Flower (2006) 282. I see Darius’ reluctance to confront Oroetes openly to be more interesting here, ἅτε οἰδεόντων ἔτι τῶν πρηγμάτων καὶ νεωστὶ ἔχων τὴν ἀρχὴν καὶ τὸν Ὀροίτεα μεγάλην τὴν ἰσχὺν πυνθανόμενος ἔχειν (3.127.1).

531 This is apparent from 3.128.2-6.

532 Aspects of the Democedes episode have been analysed in section 1.3.2.3 of chapter 1 and in section 2.1.3.2 of chapter 2.

533 See section 0.2.5.3 of the Introduction. For violent punishments in the Achaemenid sources, see section 0.4.2.3 of the Introduction.
execution at 3.159.1 of 3,000 of the leading Babylonians after capturing their city, a measured and pragmatic response to the situation and also entirely typical of Darius’ style of leadership. I return to this latter episode at section 3.4.2 below.\footnote{Cf. Cambyses at 3.14.4-5 – though Herodotus presents the decision to execute the 2,000 young Egyptians as that of the royal judges.}

3.3.3.2 Uncertainty

Darius, uniquely, is presented as being in ἀπορίη even before he has become king, when he and one of his fellow conspirators cornered and attacked one of the two surviving Magi usurpers (3.78.4). This is an extremely significant scene for our understanding of Darius’ style of leadership, with Darius literally standing around not knowing what to do (3.78.4-5) until Gobryas advised him. Gobryas himself had no difficulty seeing (ὁρέων, 3.78.5) in the dark but Darius was simply paralysed with inaction.

Where Darius is presented in the same situation that Cyrus had been in (besieging Babylon), Herodotus offers at 3.152.1 a much fuller account of how the matter was resolved, by the end of which the reader is aware that all Darius’ stratagems had failed and that he had even been unable to make use of the ploy that Cyrus had adopted to resolve his own ἀπορίη (Herodotus has already reminded the reader of Cyrus with a more subtle allusion at 3.151.2).\footnote{The besieged Babylonians mocking the Persians from the safety of their walls suggest τότε γὰρ αἱρήσετε ἡμέας, ἐπεὰν ἡμίονοι τέκωσι: an alert reader cannot fail to recall the Delphic oracle to Croesus recorded at 1.55.1 – the “mule” proved to be Cyrus.} While there is no express usage of ἀπορίη vocabulary in the passage, the references to Cyrus’ earlier ἀπορίη encourage the reader to contrast Cyrus’ and Darius’ responses to their similar predicaments, though the circumstances of Darius’ confrontation with the Babylonians were not identical to those surrounding Cyrus’ in that the Babylonians were well-prepared and single-minded. Darius instantly responded, but failed to make any impact on the rebels (and the passing of a year and seven months is hardly an indication that Darius was efficiently suppressing the revolt).\footnote{Cf. how this suppression is presented in the Achaemenid sources – a swift and convincing series of victories (DB 18-20).} Herodotus’ words at 3.88.3 no longer seemed applicable – indeed, the words ἡ στρατιὴ πᾶσα οὐ δυνατὴ ἐοῦσα ἑλεῖν τοὺς Βαβυλωνίους at 3.152.1 seem to be mocking Darius’ alleged power.

Zopyrus came to Darius’ aid, having seen for himself a foal to which a mule had just given birth.\footnote{Cf. Asheri note the motif, going back to epic, of the false deserter’s cunning in getting an enemy to open their gates to the besieger (Asheri (2007) 523), but the emphasis within the account on the sheer horror of Zopyrus’ stratagem mirrors (and thereby suggests that it was necessary for overcoming) the initial hard-headedness of the Babylonians in killing most of their own women (3.150.2).}

His extreme plan (3.154.2) horrified Darius (though the king was unmoved by the part of the plan requiring the deliberate sacrifice of seven thousand Persian troops).\footnote{He interpreted this, in the light of the comment quoted at note 535, as a divine omen that the walls of Babylon could be taken. The imagery suggests a link between the mule Cyrus and the foal Darius.} Herodotus shows far more interest in the ‘how’ of Darius’ successful capture of the besieged city than he did in the case of Cyrus, knowing the name of Darius’ adviser and giving a full account of how the idea occurred to him and was successfully executed. Upon capturing the city, Darius demolished the city wall and gates (3.159.1), ensuring in this way the continuing prosperity of Babylon to Persia’s benefit, and
also being contrasted with Cyrus’s failed attempt to do the same with Lydia (considered in section 3.3.1.2 above). Darius has been presented as reactive rather than proactive, but ultimately he had benefited from Zopyrus’ ability to concoct a successful strategy as well as his loyalty and total commitment. In a sense, therefore, the triumph was that of Zopyrus, achieved in spite of Darius himself: Darius’ reaction to Zopyrus’ self-disfigurement at 3.155.3 had been a mix of scorn for doing it and scepticism as to the stratagem’s likely success – and as a king Darius had not at this point appreciated what the outcome would be, calling into question (not for the first time) his tactical awareness and reinforcing the idea of a king whose leadership style was limited by his personal qualities.

The successful outcome ultimately achieved by a cold calculation – Zopyrus’ extreme actions and Darius’ willingness to sacrifice thousands of his men – nevertheless illustrates the nature of Darius’ style of leadership as a κάπηλος; and more examples of Darius’ ability to make cold-blooded calculations (at the same time as he is regularly shown as incapable of being successfully proactive) appear (e.g. 3.159.2). Darius handed the city back to the remaining inhabitants and arranged for women to be brought in to help repopulate it, a perfect illustration of the priorities as perceived by Darius, asserting his power while ensuring that Babylon’s productivity as a major tribute-provider was rapidly restored. As for Zopyrus, Darius spoke warmly of him at 3.160.1-2 (in contrast with his customary lack of emotion); and at 3.160.2 he rewarded Zopyrus in the manner he himself regarded so highly – with material gifts.

The Scythian logos as presented in Book 4 shows a king completely lacking the tactical ability required to achieve the strategic objectives of his expedition; and he is regularly presented as ‘in difficulties’ during the logos, and even oblivious to the reality of the campaign. The contrast between Darius and the Scythians is clear from 4.102.1 and 4.118.1: the Scythians are shown to have fully understood the challenge they were about to face and accurately predicted how the campaign would unfold.

Darius’ own response, ordering eight large fortifications over an extensive area to be built in the desert region reached by his army, was an action of little apparent military value, for ἡ δὲ ἔρημος αὐτῆς ὑπὸ οὐδαμῶν νέμεται ἀνδρῶν (4.123.2), as evidenced by his subsequent decision, ὡς οὐκέτι ἔφαντάζετο (4.124.2), to abandon these same forts half-built. Here was a king who had both failed to understand the nature of the campaign he had undertaken and had then blundered on, condemned by his style of leadership to perform ineffectively.

The limitations of Darius’ particular style of leadership are brought out again at 4.130.1, where Herodotus describes a Scythian ploy which regularly tricked the Persians, before noting, at 4.131.1, that τέλος Δαρέιος τε ἐν ἀπορίαις εἶχε. Darius considered the Scythian king’s gifts to be tokens of

\[^{539}\text{3.159.2.}^{\text{540}}\text{Darius’ response is also proportionate.}^{\text{541}}\text{Cf. Darius’ praise for Megabazus at 4.143.1.}\]
surrender (4.132.1), his optimism triumphing over any kind of realistic assessment of his position.\footnote{542}

When Gobryas offered his alternative (and correct) reading, Darius was still not persuaded (4.133.1).\footnote{543} It is only after the king had realised at 4.134.1-2 that the Scythians had no fear of the Persians that he accepted the correctness of the interpretation of Gobryas (the same Gobryas, of course, who, through his ability to ‘see’ while Darius was ‘in the dark’ (see section 3.3.3.1 above), had managed to shake Darius from his indecisiveness at 3.78.4-5). Gobryas’ response at 4.134.2 had not only emphasised to the king the importance of conducting advance research as well as personal inspection,\footnote{544} it had also highlighted a number of recurring points about Darius’ leadership style. Gobryas had stated in very clear terms that his experiences and observations on the expedition – all, of course, shared by Darius himself – had led him to his correct assessment of the Scythians.

So, while Darius immediately took Gobryas’ advice (having learned from the episode with the Magus at 3.78 that Gobryas could see when he himself could not), the clear implication of Gobryas’ words was that the king should have been capable of seeing this for himself\footnote{545} – an implication strengthened by the use at 4.134.2 of τούτων τῶν ἀνδρῶν τὴν ἀπορίην, recalling Artabanus’ original advice to Darius at 4.83.1 not to mount the expedition in the first place.\footnote{546} Thus Herodotus subtly reminds the reader that the initial failure of Darius as leader was a result of him at first ignoring good advice as to the meaning of the Scythians’ gifts; while his retrieval of the situation was attributable to his belated acceptance of it.

3.3.3.3 Fear and anxiety

Darius is described as fearful or anxious on two occasions. The first, at 1.183.2-3, involved him as afraid to steal the statue of Zeus at Babylon (though Xerxes was subsequently not too timid to remove it). This contrast is striking because it suggests a Darius so concerned about the gods (which is nowhere else apparent in the Herodotean portrayal of him) that he was prepared to pass up the opportunity to acquire something (and a Xerxes who would ignore the gods in the interests of material acquisitiveness).\footnote{547} The second instance, at 3.119.1, recounts Darius’ fear that the six co-conspirators may here have been acting with Intaphrenes against him – a sensible concern, but

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{542}{Darius’ optimism may be contrasted with Xerxes’ pessimism – further illustrations of how character may have influenced leadership styles.}
\footnote{543}{Cf. Hollmann’s discussion of the gifts Cambyses had sent to the Ethiopian king, who “decodes from the gifts a message which Cambyses did not intend to encode...The Ethiopian’s interpretation nevertheless strikes at the truth: Cambyses simply wishes to take their land” (Hollmann (2011) 179).}
\footnote{544}{The words ὁρῶν αὐτοὺς ἐμπαίζοντας ἡμῖν contrast with how Darius had learned of the Scythians’ excited pursuit of a rabbit – εἴρετο ὁ Δαρεῖος τῶν ἀντιπολέμων τὸν θόρυβον· πυθόμενος δὲ σφέας τὸν λαγὸν διώκοντας (4.134.1): he is not stated to have seen it.}
\footnote{545}{Cf. too what the Scythian herald had said at 4.131.2 when delivering the gifts – αὐτοὺς δὲ τοὺς Πέρσας ἐκέλευε, εἰ σοφοὶ εἰσι, γνῶναι τὸ θέλει τὰ δῶρα λέγειν.}
\footnote{546}{These are the only passages in the Histories to use ἀπορίη in this sense, on both occasions of the Scythians.}
\footnote{547}{This ‘taster’ of each king is highly misleading as to how they will subsequently be presented. Herodotean manipulation of the reader’s expectations, or an anecdote originating in the early stages of composition before Herodotus had worked up his kingly portrayals?}
\end{footnotes}
indicative again of Darius’ insecurity. I have shown in section 3.3.3.2 above how Darius’ fear on this occasion led to violence – but proportionate violence: Darius’ leadership style required him to weigh pros and cons before acting.

Awareness of the failure of Darius’ invasion of Scythia was at the heart of Xerxes’ attitude when it came to his own invasion of Greece. The contrast with Xerxes’ later preparations is apparent: Darius had proceeded against the Scythians after the taking of Babylon, and the reader is shown little in the way of preparation on the part of Darius – he had simply turned immediately to Scythia (an expedition which ended, of course, in disaster), just as Cambyses and Cyrus had done before him. Indeed, the account of the Scythian expedition is no advertisement for Darius’ “efficiency and organisation” – one recalls the almost improvisatory way in which he had announced to Atossa that he had decided to invade Scythia (see section 1.3.2.3 of chapter 1). The administrative skills Darius brought to bear on the running of the empire apparently disappeared when he was involved in military campaigns.

Here we see the absence of fear and anxiety not as an advantage but as a further indication of Darius’ lack of emotional engagement with his own rule: a positive contrast with Cambyses’ obsessiveness with his own personal position, but also suggesting that Darius’ style of leadership could be inadequate when it went beyond the realm of organisation and logistics.

3.3.4 Xerxes

3.3.4.1 Violence

As stated above, the episode involving Darius and Oebazus at 4.84.1-2 is often linked with Xerxes’ treatment of Pythius (7.27-9 and 38-40). While some scholars have expressed outrage at Xerxes’ behaviour, Baragwanath has shown how Xerxes’ treatment of Pythius (a non-Persian) was not as extreme as Darius’ treatment of Oeobazus (a Persian). In terms of differentiation between the two kings, it is noteworthy that Darius acted in cold blood, deliberately encouraging Oebazus to believe his request had been granted, while Xerxes at 7.39.1 was provoked to fury by Pythius’ request, to him an abuse of their guest-friendship; yet even in his anger Xerxes mitigated the punishment in his own recognition of that relationship. The contrasting styles of leadership

548 Cf. 7.21.1 – the size of Xerxes’ expeditionary force exceeded the combined size of Darius’ army sent against the Scythians, the Scythian army that had before then invaded Media, the Achaean army sent against Troy, and the army raised by the Mysians and Teucrians (before the Trojan War).
549 4.1. 1, though the actual invasion by Darius is not recorded until 4.83.
551 Note too how Darius’ invasion of Greece was by proxy.
553 For example, Waters (1971) 75, Lateiner (1989) 154, and Dewald (1998) 698 (the last quoted in Baragwanath (2008) 275 who, in a particularly rich discussion, concludes, ‘Herodotus’ narrative at times evokes the tyrant template, only to show that it is not quite so simple as that’ (Baragwanath (2008) 278’)). I leave to one side the possible ritualistic/human sacrifice connotations of the punishment meted out by Xerxes, a full discussion of which can be found at Thomas (2012) 236-44.
555 σὲ μὲν γὰρ καὶ τοὺς τέσσερας τῶν παίδων ῥύεται τὰ ξείνια (7.39.2).
exhibited by Darius and Xerxes are again evident in these episodes: Darius had behaved with calculated, almost clinical, callousness towards a fellow-Persian, while Xerxes had vented his anger at the impertinence of a non-Persian insufficiently appreciative of the great honour of guest-friendship. Darius, as ever, is presented as a calculating leader who functioned without emotion (Herodotus offers no explanation for his behaviour – a case of pour encourager les autres, perhaps), while Xerxes felt let down by people whom he had taken into his inner circle (by guest-friendship in this case). Xerxes is shown on a number of other occasions being angered by a perceived disregard of his status or actions, such as his angry response at 7.11.1 to Artabanus’ failure to appreciate Xerxes’ consultative style (that this propensity for anger when he felt that people he was wishing to honour had given too little weight to that honour was a core part of him is shown in another, but purely personal, context: his fury with Masistes at 9.111.5, when Xerxes’ first words in response to Masistes’ plea not to be forced to give up his wife and marry Xerxes’ daughter – οὔτε γὰρ τοι δοίην θυγατέρα τὴν ἐμὴν γῆμαι – put the emphasis on Masistes’ rejection of Xerxes’ daughter as the trigger for the king’s anger, rather than on Masistes’ refusal to give up his wife).

The treatment meted out by Xerxes to Leonidas at 7.238.1-2 after the battle of Thermopylae is prefigured by Cambyses’ abuse of Amasis’ corpse at 3.16.1-2. Most scholars see a distinction between the anger of Cambyses and that of Xerxes – the former a symptom of madness, the latter of anger and frustration. But these emotions on Xerxes’ part again illustrate the shortcomings of his style of leadership – the echoes in Herodotus’ presentation of Xerxes with the Achilles of the Iliad have been noted by others, but his consultative style had failed in all important respects to allow him to emulate Achilles as a king and leader: his Achillean mistreatment of Leonidas’ corpse reversed both the Greek/non-Greek interaction of Achilles/Hector and the relative qualities of each. The difference between Leonidas as a leader in the thick of the fray and Xerxes ‘leading’ as a distant spectator is underlined by the emphasis in the Iliad having been on Achilles’ own return to battle: Xerxes, on the other hand, remained remote from his own army’s battles – and thus his association with Achilles could not be sustained.

3.3.4.2 Uncertainty

Xerxes is presented as uncertain at 8.52.2 during the assault on Athens and Herodotus is vague at 8.53.1 as to how the situation was resolved, just as he had been in the case of Cyrus at Babylon.

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556 Whether a contemporary reader would have viewed Darius’ action in this way is not beyond the realms of possibility, in view of Cleon’s conclusion to his speech during the Mytilenean debate – κολάσατε δὲ ἀξίως τούτους τε καί τοῖς ἄλλοις ξυμμάχοις παράδειγμα σαφὲς καταστήσατε, ὃς ἀν ἀφίστηνται, θανάτῳ ζημιωςόμενον (Thuc. 3.40.8); and cf. the notion of deterrence in Athenian court cases (Allen (2000) 192-3).

557 Xerxes’ fury is again illustrated by his ordering the punishment of the Hellespont at 7.35.1-2, which is followed by the beheading of the supervisors at 7.35.3.

558 For example, ‘The Cambyses (‘tyrant’) template is certainly significant – in that it serves as a foil for what is a more subtle picture in Xerxes’ case: for we are expecting reasons, rational ones, for this King’s behaviour’ (Baragwanath (2008) 278).

559 Xerxes’ sentiments at 7.50.1-3 “would not be out of place in the mouth of a Homeric hero” (Bowie (2007) 10).

560 Herodotus does not know precisely how the discovery was made, but since the gods had decreed Athens’ destruction, it was inevitable it would come about” (Bowie (2007) 140).
But there is a difference between the two passages: here, the oracle was said to have been fulfilled because the Persians – not Xerxes – had resolved their difficulty (contrasting with their inability to do so at Thermopylae and suggesting that they were now beginning to understand their king’s style of leadership); but the incident also reflects the regular sense in this part of the narrative of Xerxes’ remoteness (see section 3.3.4.1 above). Herodotus is also, in allocating neither praise nor blame to Xerxes or the Persians for taking Athens in spite of their having been in difficulties, illustrating one problem with consultative leadership – who deserves praise for a successful outcome where such leadership is operating?

In the immediate aftermath of this episode Xerxes is shown at 8.54.1 sending a messenger to Artabanus in Susa with the good news about the victory with a very pointed message: use of the word εὐπρηξίην deliberately recalled the time the same word had been employed by Artabanus in his attempt to talk Xerxes out of the Greek invasion (at 7.49.4), while from Herodotus’ (and the reader’s) perspective this recollection of 7.49.4 should have warned Xerxes (Artabanus had argued that εὐπρηξίης γὰρ οὐκ ἔστι ἀνθρώποισι οὐδεμία πληθώρη). This point is being reiterated at the culmination of Xerxes’ success in the invasion – when, ironically, his εὐπρηξίη had already attained its πληθώρη so far as this campaign was concerned.

In a similar situation, the immediate aftermath of the disastrous Persian defeat at Salamis, Xerxes is a king who had failed beyond all his imaginings – the Greeks had not fled at the sight of his force, instead they had overcome it. Mardonius, the one person to see through Xerxes (8.100.1), at 8.100.5 offered the king a way out – and the king’s response illustrated again the limitations of his consultative leadership style.

3.3.4.3 Fear and anxiety

Xerxes and Artabanus both voiced the possibility of fear on a number of occasions – indeed, it seems that Xerxes and Artabanus were drawn together when Xerxes was afraid (e.g. 7.50-1) – did Artabanus’ timidity actually serve to encourage boldness in Xerxes? Certainly Xerxes explained to Artabanus at 7.50.1 that he should not fear everything (and, at 7.52.2, he should not fear that the Ionians were part of the expedition against fellow Greeks). This was in response to Artabanus telling Xerxes at 7.49.5 ἀνὴρ δὲ οὕτω ἂν εἴη ἄριστος, εἰ βουλευόμενος μὲν ἀρρωδέοι – perhaps not the best way of bringing a Persian king round to your point of view.

But the interpretation of Xerxes’ tardiness in preparing the Greek invasion force as being prudent and showing how he had learned from his predecessor’s mistakes is subtly undermined by the episode at 7.212.1. This vignette of a king watching his army in battle and being shown δείσαντα...
περὶ τῇ στρατῇ is unprecedented in Herodotus’ portraits of the other Persian kings. It also indicates Xerxes’ military impotence when battle commenced: all he could do was exhibit anxiety, unable to play any part in affecting the outcome of the battle.\(^{565}\) Waters suggests that the incident shows that Xerxes was more humane and sympathetic than his predecessors,\(^ {566}\) but in terms of leadership this must surely be perceived as a shortcoming on Xerxes’ part: the point is that, when a Persian king was sending his army into battle, he needed to be victorious, not compassionate.\(^ {567}\) Positioning Xerxes in this way acts as a contrast with the style of ‘Homer’ic’ leadership about to be demonstrated by Leonidas at Thermopylae; but this feature of Persian kingly behaviour (anxious, impotent spectatorship) was unique to Xerxes in the context of Persian kings exhibiting fear – and thus obliquely suggests further shortcomings in a monarchical context of a consultative style of leadership. All the kings failed in their different ways, but Xerxes was the one who failed most heavily in the military context – even Cyrus, who died on the battlefield, is presented as having salvaged something of his kingship by arranging the succession to Cambyses.

Xerxes is again shown being fearful and after the battle of Salamis, which he had been watching as, according to Herodotus at 8.69.2, he had believed that his presence would inspire his fleet to fight more effectively. The verb used here, ἐθελοκακέειν, is striking; its use in the Histories elsewhere is associated exclusively with men fighting for a cause they knew to be doomed (it is not used otherwise in the context of the Persian kings, though it is used at 1.127.3 of the Medes who had fought for Astyages against Cyrus). That Xerxes is shown as aware of this sense of doom in his army is therefore very striking,\(^ {568}\) and his anxiety in relation to it is underlined by his decision to watch over the naval battle. Herodotus states explicitly at 8.86.1 that Xerxes’ fleet did indeed fight better under his gaze, because he inspired and terrified them (Herodotus states that the men responded to the king’s presence in both these ways and that each felt the king’s eye on him); but his men still failed to perform sufficiently well to achieve victory and Xerxes’ response was bitter.\(^ {569}\)

The situation after the battle was perilous, with Xerxes described at 8.97.1 as fearful (δείσας) that the Greeks would cut off his escape route across the Hellespont. The notion of a Persian king being fearful of an adverse military outcome was not unprecedented,\(^ {570}\) though it was highly unusual. But while Herodotus presents him as fearful, he also shows at 8.97.1 how Xerxes kept his head, deliberating, issuing orders, and ensuring that, with a single exception, none understood his true feelings.\(^ {571}\) Xerxes wanted to be perceived as acting decisively, untroubled by defeat, and Herodotus makes clear at 8.97.2 that he succeeded – Xerxes again showing his appreciation that,

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\(^{565}\) Cf. the suggestion that this remoteness may in fact reveal something of the role a Persian king was expected to perform (Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1989) 584).

\(^{566}\) Waters (1971) 77.

\(^{567}\) Cf. how ruthlessly Darius sacrificed Persian troops whenever necessary (as at 3.157.2 and 4.135.1-2): on each occasion the idea was put forward by an adviser (as so often the case with Darius) – and he did not hesitate to adopt it.

\(^{568}\) The infinitive form ἐθελοκακέειν follows καταδόξας, the construction being used to indicate that these were Xerxes’ thoughts.

\(^{569}\) Although, contrary to what he is reported to have said at 8.88.3, I can trace no obvious signs of the Persian forces behaving like women in the battle. See Harrell (2003) for a discussion of this episode from a gender perspective. The echo of Croesus’ statement to Cyrus at 1.155.4 is striking: Croesus was a defeated king, yielding his people’s self-respect to his Persian conqueror, while the presentation at 8.88.3 obliquely suggests that Xerxes faces a similar situation and impliedly contrasts him with the great Cyrus.

\(^{570}\) Although Herodotus records a single other instance only: Cyrus himself feared the Lydian cavalry (1.80.2), considered at section 3.3.1.3 above.

\(^{571}\) The adviser aspect of the episode is analysed at section 2.2.4.2 of chapter 2.
as king, he had to be visible to all. But Xerxes was here deceiving his men: not (as Darius at 4.135.2) for the greater good, but for his own preservation. The episode demonstrates another significant limitation of consultative leadership – a king may find it difficult to keep secrets, when that style of leadership requires a king to have high-profile visibility.

The final account of Xerxes being fearful, at 9.109.3, presents the king as afraid that his wife would have her suspicions about his affair confirmed. The contrast with his apparent sang froid when taking the Babylonian statue of Zeus (compared with Darius not doing so out of fear rather than reverence) underlines the message of this entire episode: at this stage of his reign he was unable to dominate even his own family, as a result of a consultative style of leadership that had ultimately served to undermine his authority. By the time Xerxes had attempted to respond to the defeat at Salamis he was reduced to mere pragmatism, as befitted a king who, unlike Cyrus and Darius, had seen his style of leadership (developed in the light of what I read as his wrongful attribution of a Persian νόμος coupled with his own sense of inadequacy) come to nothing. He had not only embraced Mardonius’ advice to retreat, he had done so, as Artemisia had spelt out, in the full knowledge that he was thereby divesting himself of his responsibilities as a Persian king as he himself perceived them.

### 3.4 Aspects of leadership and modes of behaviour

I now analyse the extent to which the differences between the kings I have set out above in respect of violence, uncertainty, and fear illuminate those aspects of leadership identified in section 0.2.4 of the Introduction.

#### 3.4.1 Strategic issues/risk

Both Cyrus and Cambyses are shown on occasion as uncertain before heeding the advice of others to resolve their difficulties, but subsequent accounts (particularly their military failures) highlight differences between them. Cambyses’ violent treatment of the Egyptians and his disregard of both Persian and Egyptian νόμοι resulted in his fatal wound, with his death-bed speech at 3.65.1-7 contrasting with the end of Cyrus: as we have seen, he had exhorted Cambyses not to be violent towards Croesus if the latter’s advice turned out badly, as Croesus would be of value as an adviser. Cyrus had been thinking ahead even when aware that he might fail – an illustration of his concern for the Persians as a whole (I consider this in the context of succession planning in section 3.4.2 below); while Cambyses’ focus was his own personal position. Similarly, when Cyrus is shown as fearful it was on his army’s behalf; while Cambyses was afraid for his own position.

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572 Bowie is unduly generous in attributing Xerxes’ deception to a desire to avoid panic among the army (Bowie (2007) 185).
Darius’ lack of comprehension of military tactics during the Scythian campaign has been noted in section 3.3.3.2, as has his ability to survive by taking advice. His successful overcoming of perplexity at the walls of Babylon is also presented by Herodotus as arising through taking good advice despite his own shortcomings. There is no suggestion of fear in Darius in the military context, even when at a loss in Scythia, but his constant dependence on others for guidance again illustrates both the limitations of his leadership style and ways those limitations could be overcome.

Xerxes ordered violence at 8.90.3 as a way of reinforcing the military message in the context of the imperialist drive: the Phoenicians were beheaded for slandering the Ionians when the fault was clearly their own (a violent response that seemed entirely acceptable to Herodotus). The sense of a king trying a little too hard to lead was apparent in the aftermath of Salamis: and Xerxes is regularly shown as fearful for his army, in a way that contrasted with Darius’ easy sacrifice of thousands of his own troops when militarily required.

There are no instances of risk assessment beyond the obvious in the contexts of these modes of behaviour in the cases of Cyrus and Cambyses. The way Darius treated Babylon after re-taking it suggests an awareness of the risk of future revolts (demolishing the walls), which Herodotus implies was something that Cyrus (failing to assess risk) had overlooked, though the primary emphasis of Darius’ calculation here (and this was entirely consistent with his style of leadership as a κάπηλος) was the restoration of income-production.

The references to fear in Xerxes’ encounter with Artabanus (7.47.1-52.2) are, of course, fundamental to the concept of risk that Xerxes was there developing, a concept that became reality in the presentation of him in the immediate aftermath of Salamis. In a real sense risk can be said to be grounded in fear (see section 0.2.4.1 of the Introduction); but it also required a degree of imagination that could be either self-focused or Persian-focused. That Xerxes is shown exhibiting this in both its aspects could be taken to indicate that it was his imagination (fed by the sense of his own inferiority compared with his successors – see section 1.3.2.4 of chapter 1) that underpinned his style of leadership and its ultimate failure (see section 4.2.4 of the Conclusion).

### 3.4.2 Succession planning

Few instances of violence, uncertainty or fear involving the Persian kings are directly relevant to this aspect of leadership. Cyrus was perhaps uncertain about Cambyses as successor (which would account for his attempt to leave Croesus as his primary adviser), and this concern may have anticipated how Cambyses’ sole interest proved to be his own personal position. But the same could also be said of Xerxes after Salamis – though both Mardonius (8.100.4) and Artemisia (8.102.2) dressed up their advice as being in the wider interests of Persia, the king was clearly thinking of his personal position only (see section 2.3.1.4 of chapter 2).

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573 Although Artemisia immediately went on to observe that Xerxes’ personal position would not be prejudiced by her recommended course of action (8.102.3).
3.5 Conclusion

The analysis of the performance of each of the four Persian kings in the contexts of the modes of
behaviour identified at section 3.1 has not only accumulated further evidence for each king’s
distinctive style of leadership, it has added real weight at a very specific level to the readings of
each, moving well beyond the aspects identified in chapters 1 and 2.

In his proportionate use of violence, his ability to negotiate uncertainty on the rare occasions when
he experienced it, and his rare moments of fear, Cyrus has continued to be the benchmark of what
a leader should be, commanding unquestioning respect from his subjects.

Cambyses, unsurprisingly, has been shown to behave in all three contexts in a far more extreme
manner than any other king. While Herodotus portrays a more nuanced figure than is generally
accepted, Cambyses’ isolation from the Persian elite typified his obsession with his own personal
situation rather than the interests of the Persians as a whole, symbolised by his descent into
madness.

Darius had proved himself yet again a calculating and at times emotionless leader, who had
overcome both uncertainty and anxiety at the beginning of his rule to establish his pre-eminence
among the leading Persians, though his leadership limitations meant that his need for them and
their help was essential for his success.

Finally, with Xerxes, Herodotus has presented a king who eventually was overcome (despite his
good intentions) by the fear and uncertainty in which he had been enveloped upon becoming king,
his ultimate failure symbolised by a sickening act of violence perpetrated not by himself but which
he found himself powerless to prevent – a damning verdict on the effectiveness of his consultative
style of leadership and its utter inappropriateness for a monarchy.
CONCLUSION

4.1 Introduction

I set out at the beginning of this thesis to analyse variations in Herodotus’ accounts of the four Persian kings in a range of specific contexts in order to establish whether each exhibited a distinct style of leadership as compared with the others. The analysis showed that the kings did perform or respond differently as leaders in similar situations, supporting the idea that the kings are presented as exhibiting, with a reasonable degree of consistency, individual styles of leadership (which in some cases could change slightly, as when Cyrus became committed to expansionism following his conversation with Croesus (analysed at section 1.2.3.1 of chapter 1), before which he had been presented as concerned with defence rather than offence), suggesting an awareness on the part of Herodotus that styles of leadership within a monarchical state could influence outcomes. In section 4.2 I summarise the individual kings’ leadership styles.

In section 4.3 I return to modern leadership theory and assess each king’s style of leadership against the modern leadership theories identified in section 0.2.1 of the Introduction, before offering in section 4.4 my conclusion as to Herodotus and leadership.

4.2 The kings’ styles of leadership

In section 0.2.5 of the Introduction I set out my approach to the Persian kings’ styles of leadership, based on the Persians’ own designations (according to Herodotus at 3.89.3) for Cyrus, Cambyses and Darius and, in the case of Xerxes, the consultative approach that I had identified as permeating Herodotus’ account of him (which I explained in section 0.2.5.4 of the Introduction). I summarise below the distinctive aspects of each king’s leadership style that have been identified through my analysis.

4.2.1 Cyrus

Cyrus was described as a πατήρ, because ὁ δὲ ὅτι ἤπιός τε καὶ ἀγαθά σφι πάντα ἐμηχανήσατο (3.89.3). I have shown at section 0.2.5.5 of the Introduction how the paternal relationship stemmed from a pact between king and subjects which gave the Persians their freedom from others’ control in return for accepting that Cyrus had a god-given vision to be an all-powerful king, a pact which eventually included the acquisition of other lands by conquest as a result of Cyrus having acquired a taste for expansion after his defeat of Croesus – see section 1.3.2.1 of chapter 1. Cyrus was also in effect the father of Persian kingship, in the sense that all three subsequent kings considered
him the benchmark against which they would be measured (see note 117 above – as Darius is said at 3.160.1 to have asserted, no Persian would ever compare himself with Cyrus). But, as I also showed at section 1.3.2.1 of chapter 1, the Persians chose to remember Cyrus’ leadership as great because they had to, as it were, airbrush his final campaign out of their collective memory of him – achieved by instantly ‘forgetting’ (in the sense that avenging Cyrus and punishing the Massagetae are never subsequently mentioned directly or indirectly in the narrative as desirable or even possible) how his career had ended: an ironic outcome in view of the role Cyrus had played as the instrument of Croesus’ downfall which reinforces the wisdom of Solon’s words at 1.33.1 (σκοπέειν δὲ χρὴ παντὸς χρήματος τὴν τελευτὴν κῇ ἀποβήσεται).

4.2.2 Cambyses

What Cambyses as δεσπότης (3.89.3) meant in Herodotus’ account, as I have shown in section 0.2.5.2 of the Introduction, was a style of leadership that rejected the idea of Cyrus’ pact (as evidenced by Cambyses’ rejection of Croesus) and focused exclusively on Cambyses’ personal interests as king. His drive for expansion was also seen very much in personal terms (section 1.3.2.2 of chapter 1); and his relationships with advisers were similarly grounded exclusively in his own individual concerns (section 2.2.2 of chapter 2). In short, Cambyses adopted a self-absorbed style of leadership that was ineffective and, in allowing the usurpation by the Magi, left Persian interests as a whole at grave risk.

4.2.3 Darius

Darius’ κάπηλος-style of leadership (3.89.3) reflected a trader mentality in practice (examples may be found in sections 1.3.2.3 and 2.2.3.3 of chapters 1 and 2 respectively). His initial period of rule was marked by his sense of insecurity (section 3.3.3.1 of chapter 3), but as he eliminated potential opponents he became comfortable enough to rely on the advice from others that was so vital for the prevention of a complete failure of his leadership. As I have explained in section 2.2.3.5 of chapter 2, he inspired a degree of exasperated loyalty as a leader (as a result of his advisers regularly ‘seeing’ problems that he failed himself to perceive), which contrasted with his frequent lack of emotion when making his clinical assessments. In short, his leadership style was effective in terms of administration and logistics and less so in relation to the more strategic and tactical aspects of kingship, though with them he was pragmatic (and lucky) enough, as I have shown in section 2.2.3 of chapter 2, to have received crucial guidance from his mainly Persian advisers.
This was not, however, a case of a king establishing a regular assembly of counsellors for the airing of all sides of an arguments before reaching a decision; rather, it was a king being rescued by an individual adviser’s often impatient intervention during a course of action decided unilaterally by Darius that would otherwise have turned out badly, because Darius’ style of leadership (and ability as a leader at a strategic level) were inadequate for strategic matters (though it was very
different when it came to logistics and administration, as has been seen in section 2.3.1.3 of chapter 2).

4.2.4 Xerxes

With Xerxes, Herodotus provides the most detailed account of any Persian king's style of leadership. At section 0.2.5.4 of the Introduction I identified his style of leadership as primarily consultative, particularly apparent from the way he regularly sought advice from Persians and non-Persians (see section 2.2.4.4 of chapter 2). While all the kings' styles – even Cyrus' – have been shown to fail in some way, Xerxes' failure was the most overt – because, as I have argued at section 2.3.1.4 of chapter 2, he completely misunderstood not only what was expected of a Persian king but how a Persian king should behave in relation to his subjects: his was an utter failure of leadership. I argued in section 1.3.2.4 of chapter 1 that Xerxes chose his consultative style in order to, as it were, spread the risks inherent in a leadership requiring him to comply with his mistaken belief in a Persian νόμος of expansionism, while failing to appreciate that, unless he was prepared ultimately to take risk-accepting decisions, this approach would fail as it effectively surrendered leadership: the Persians, unable to respond in any meaningful way to the consultative style, were simply not ready for it, as I showed in section 2.2.4.3 of chapter 2; and while non-Persians offered possibilities in this regard, Xerxes could not bring himself to take the step of acting on non-Persian advice until it was too late.

Xerxes had insisted on complete acceptance by those close to him of his project (see section 3.3.4.1 of chapter 3); but his own indecisiveness at the beginning of Book 7 infected those around him as the campaign unfolded. In short, Xerxes offered a cautious style of leadership focused on a wholly misconceived consultative approach to the responsibility of being a Persian king – with an ultimately disastrous outcome.

4.3 The Persian kings' leadership styles and modern leadership theories

In section 0.2.1 of the Introduction I identified three modern leadership theories, to which I now turn.

4.3.1 “Eventful and event-making” leaders and the Persian kings

Herodotus used Astyages’ observation that Harpagus must be σκαιότατόν τε καὶ ἀδικώτατον...πάντων ἀνθρώπων (1.129.3) to show both that Harpagus, unlike Gyges, knew and

574 See section 0.2.1.1 of the Introduction for Hook's classification – an “eventful” man may have been instrumental in some great historical change by happening to be on hand to carry out what tended to be a very simple act which did not call for a that man to have special qualities, while an “event-making” man seized “the machine” and took over all military and social function to deliver some great historical change as a result of his special qualities (Hook (1945) 117-8).
accepted his limitations and that he and the other leading Medes had recognised in Cyrus a natural leader/ruler who could engineer the revolt they needed. In Hook’s terms, Harpagus was an eventful man and Cyrus event-making man.\textsuperscript{575}

Cambyses, on the other hand, was neither eventful nor event-making: his failings as a leader, as we have seen in section 4.2.2 above, resulted in the usurpation of the Persian throne. In no sense can he be regarded as a hero.\textsuperscript{576}

The position of Darius is more nuanced, though, in Hook’s terms, he was at best an eventful man. As I have shown at section 0.2.4.1 of the Introduction and section 2.2.3.2 of chapter 2, while he is shown driving forward the ousting of the Magus and being clever enough to take the throne, it is difficult to see his performance in those contexts as particularly novel (particularly as at 3.78.5 he needed Gobryas’ advice in the fight with the Magus). His subsequent rule is never shown in any sort of heroic light and Herodotus never suggests that Darius had left his stamp on Persia after his death (as had Cyrus).

Xerxes is shown as almost the polar opposite of Hook’s event-making man. He is regularly presented making decisions, changing his mind, changing it again, and taking actions which led to complete failure (for example, the invasion of Greece: the decision as to whether implement it was the subject of 7.5.1-7.19.2 before it had even begun – see sections 1.3.2.4 and 1.4.2.4 of chapter 1). His final portrayal as a king who could not even manage his own family (see section 3.2.1 of chapter 3) is the antithesis of an event-making man.

The application of Hook’s classification shows that only Cyrus may be regarded, in the manifestation of his style of leadership, as an event-making man; but the limitations of Hook’s approach are clear from the way that his classification, in grouping Cambyses, Darius and Xerxes together as leaders, misses all the nuance and subtlety in Herodotus’ accounts of their respective styles and performances as leaders. The classification is helpful in so far as it underlines the specialness of Cyrus, but it fails to offer any insights into the other three kings.

\subsection*{4.3.2 Charismatic leadership and the Persian kings}

In this section I consider the presentations of the kings in the context of both Weber’s theory of charismatic leadership and the developed theory I identified in section 0.2.1.2 of the Introduction.

\textsuperscript{575} Hook goes on to state that the event-making man (Hook (1945)) must “bind himself to it with hoops stronger than steel” – which Cyrus accomplished by his pact with the Persians considered in section 0.2.5.5 of the Introduction (Hook (1945) 117-8).

\textsuperscript{576} For the term ‘hero’ in this context, see note 26 above.
4.3.2.1 Weber’s theory of charismatic leadership

The basic elements making up Weber’s theory of charismatic leadership have been explained in section 0.2.1.1 of the Introduction: a charismatic leader is a person with extraordinary (even god-given) gifts (section 4.3.2.1.1 below) who materialises in a crisis (section 4.3.2.1.2 below) to offer a radical solution bolstered by a strong sense of mission, again often divine (section 4.3.2.1.3 below) and who inspires absolute commitment in his followers, who accept him as extraordinary entirely on his own terms (section 4.3.2.1.4 below), for as long as he delivers success (section 4.3.2.1.5 below). In this section I assess the Persian kings’ individual leadership styles as summarised in section 4.2 above in the light of (and to gauge the applicability of) these aspects of Weber’s theory.

4.3.2.1.1 A person with extraordinary gifts

Neither Cambyses nor Darius is presented as being endowed with exceptional gifts: Cambyses is shown to have led in a way that sharply contrasted with the effectiveness of his father, while Darius had logistical talents that were impressive but hardly extraordinary.

Cyrus, however, is described at 1.123.1 as τῶν ἡλίκων ἀνδρηιοτάτῳ καὶ προσφιλεστάτῳ. Xerxes is never shown as exceptional in any way as a king or leader – though the episode at 7.56.2 and Herodotus’ comments at 7.187.2 (both noted at note 113 above) suggest that outwardly at least he appeared exceptional.

4.3.2.1.2 Crisis

Cyrus became the Persian king because he was perceived as the only man capable of solving the underlying problems of Median monarchy symptomised by the harshness of Astyages and the festering resentment of the Medes, as I showed in section 0.2.5.1 of the Introduction.

Cambyses too faced a crisis – one entirely of his own making. As I have shown in section 2.2.2 of chapter 2, his incompetence led to his army being reduced to cannibalism (3.25.6): his solution to this self-inflicted crisis was at 3.25.7 to abandon the expedition and withdraw.

Darius was faced with two crises: the first when he became involved in the conspiracy against the Magus, the second a crisis he also precipitated himself, when he found himself unable to progress his campaign against the Scythians. As I have shown in section 0.2.4.1 of the Introduction and section 3.3.3.2 of chapter 3, in each case the crisis would not have been resolved if Darius had not received necessary advice on how to act.

Xerxes’ crisis occurred at the defeat at Salamis. As I have shown at section 2.3.1.4 of chapter 2, in that situation he deployed his consultative style not in the interests of the Persians as a whole, but as a way of justifying his abandonment of the invasion of Greece altogether.
4.3.2.1.3 Radical solution and divine purpose

Cyrus did not come up with a radical solution to the crisis, he was the radical solution, as I have shown in section 0.2.5.5 of the Introduction; and at 1.126.1 he stated his view that he was not only born to lead, but would also be directed by a god.

Cambyses, when facing his crisis at 3.25.7, simply withdrew – hardly a radical solution. His sense of self was always to the fore, but never extended to seeing himself helped by a god: his appeal to royal gods at 3.65.6 to support his death-bed commands to the Persians was entirely out of character with how he had previously performed as a leader.

Darius was part of the radical solution to his first crisis, but not the vital part, having to be guided by Gobryas as to completion of the task (see section 2.2.3.2 of chapter 2); and the second crisis was resolved in spite of (rather than because of) his actions (see section 3.3.3.2 of chapter 3). Darius as presented had the least involvement of any king in divine matters (his obsession with things material was his religion).

Xerxes did adopt a solution of his own to the crisis facing him after Salamis – Herodotus makes it clear that the plan had occurred to him even before he consulted Mardonius and Artemisia and purported to be guided by them – but putting a gloss on what was essentially a shameful withdrawal was hardly a radical solution (see section 2.3.1.4 of chapter 2). As I have explained in section 1.3.2.4 of chapter 1, Xerxes believed that a god had been guiding Persians since the days of Cyrus (7.8α 1), but he rarely referred to this (and never in the midst of his crisis).

4.3.2.1.4 Committed followers

The only suggestions in the Histories that the Persians were not wholly committed to their king arose in the case of Darius, whose own insecurity led him to have doubts about their loyalty (see section 3.3.3.1 of chapter 3). But commitment in the charismatic context means more than blind loyalty – followers have to believe that there was a special link between them and their leader.

There was clearly such a link in the case of Cyrus: the pact he entered into with the Persians, discussed at section 0.2.5.5 of the Introduction, which the Persians associated with their freedom (this perception survived his own death, as evidenced at 3.89.3). Such a link is not apparent in the case of Cambyses who, as we have seen in section 1.3.2.2 of chapter 1, section 2.2.2 of chapter 2, and section 3.2.2 of chapter 3, focused exclusively on the personal aspects of kingship.

Nor did Darius attract this special sort of loyalty, no doubt on account of his narrow leadership style as established in section 1.3.2.3 of chapter 1, section 2.2.3 of chapter 2, and section 3.2.3 of chapter 3. In the case of Xerxes, any suggestions of a special link in the narrative are invariably subverted by Herodotus (for instance, see section 2.2.4.2 of chapter 2 as to Mardonius’ relationship with the king), notwithstanding his attempts to implement a consultative style of leadership (see
section 2.4 of chapter 2 for the extent to which it failed as a result of Xerxes’ inadequate relationship with the leading Persians).

4.3.2.1.5 Continuing success

As we have seen at section 1.3.2.1 of chapter 1, this was a hallmark of Cyrus’ career as king and leader (until the end). None of the other three kings, however, is presented as having achieved continuing success.

4.3.2.1.6 The Persian kings as charismatic leaders

There is no evidence of Weber’s charismatic leadership in the presentations of Cambyses, Darius or Xerxes: all are shown as either coping in a crisis through good fortune (usually taking the form of good advisers, such as in the case of Darius) rather than their own responses, or failing to cope at all. Neither Darius nor Cambyses ever appeared to consider themselves as participating in a divine mission; while Xerxes’ belief in such was presented at 7.8α 1 without any great conviction (and was not to be borne out by events).

Cyrus, however, is shown manifesting many of Weber’s features of a charismatic leader: his entire career within the Histories (save for his death) is bookended by overt references to his belief that he had been born as a special man and was guided by the gods to win military victories for the Persians (see 1.111.1 and 1.204.2); and this sense of Cyrus’ divine mission was, as I have shown at section 0.2.5.5 of the Introduction, accepted and embraced by the Persians as a whole without hesitation (and was one of the clearest differences between Cyrus and the other Persian kings). His birth and the way he ultimately came to the throne had also been presented as special; and his own and future generations regarded him as the father of the nation and empire (see section 0.2.5.5 of the Introduction and 3.89.3).

But the portrait of Cyrus is not that of a king and leader wholly without blemish. As I have shown at section 1.3.2.1 of chapter 1, his first impulses to expand Persian territory occurred some way into his reign. By acting on them he significantly expanded the Persian empire, but those same promptings led to his failure and death in the campaign against the Massagetae. As we have seen, however, this did not lead to any revision of the Persian opinion of him as a leader: instead, the Persians simply chose to ignore the disastrous end, disregarding the Solonian wisdom that had been explained to Cyrus by Croesus (1.86.5). Of course, followers of charismatic leaders may be blind to their leader’s inadequacies; but the Persians continued this long after Cyrus’ ultimate failure (not only as an expansionist but also as a king who needed to secure a successful succession).

This raises in the reader’s mind questions about both the ultimate value of this Persian reading of Cyrus (distorting as it did the reality as Herodotus had presented it) and also Cyrus’ own qualities
as a leader (his hunger for expansion having driven the lesson learned at 1.86.6 from his calculations entirely). I return to this below.

It remains correct to observe that all the attributes of Weberian charismatic leadership identified at section 0.2.1.2 of the Introduction are evidenced in Herodotus’ portrayal of Cyrus; and indeed, as I show in the next section, Cyrus’ leadership style moved beyond the charismatic model to exhibit some of the characteristics of the more sophisticated transformational leadership model (which I explained in section 0.2.1.3 and which is assessed against the Persian kings’ leadership styles in section 4.3.3 below).

4.3.2.2 The developed theory of charismatic leadership

When Cambyses, Darius and Xerxes are considered in terms of the developed theory of charismatic leadership, however, the position is more complex. Within a generation the status of the Persian king had itself drawn to it some of the aspects of charismatic leadership – the Persians treated Cyrus’ successors, even Cambyses, with the same reverence (or obsequiousness as the Greeks saw it) they had shown Cyrus; and they accepted wholeheartedly each king’s version (which I established in section 1.3.2 of chapter 1) of imperial expansionism, culminating in the Persian elite’s attitude of unquestioning subservience to Xerxes, whose swift changes of mind when planning the campaign against Greece (7.5.1-7.19.2) were greeted with equal rapture (the irony being that such a follower mind-set doomed Xerxes’ consultative style of leadership to failure).

But the developed theory of charismatic leadership has identified how it tends to be deployed most successfully in initiating a movement, often at a moment of crisis (a revolution). This is clearly evident in the account of Cyrus and especially his pact with the Persians discussed in section 0.2.5.5 of the Introduction; but such a theory suggests that Xerxes – who neither faced nor needed any such revolution – made a sensible decision in seeking to move Persian kings away even from developed charismatic leadership. His failure lay in choosing the wrong style of leadership, as a result of misjudging how difficult the Persian elite would find moving on from a subject relationship with a charismatic leader.

4.3.2.3 Conclusion

In terms of Weberian charismatic leadership, only Cyrus can be accounted as such: he meets all the criteria detailed above. Indeed, reading Cyrus in these terms reinforces the general perception among both ancients and moderns that he was a supremely exceptional leader.

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577 See note 40 above.
The only other king who meets some of the criteria was Xerxes, but too few to allow the conclusion that he was in any sense a charismatic leader. Neither Cambyses nor Darius was a charismatic leader in any sense.\textsuperscript{578}

\textbf{4.3.3 Transformational leadership and the Persian kings}\textsuperscript{579}

The versions of charismatic leadership considered in section 4.3.2 above share two theoretical elements with transformational leadership – charisma and inspiration. Having assessed these in section 4.3.2 above, I turn now to the third, and most distinctive, element of transformational leadership: the relationships between leader and followers, together and at an individual level – the transformational leader is one who fosters the growth and development of the followers as well as of himself. Thus the theory focuses in far richer detail than charismatic leadership on the quantity and quality of relationships with subjects formed by leaders, leading me to contextualise the theory within the interactions between Persian kings and subjects in the \textit{Histories}.

Perhaps the most significant relationship Cyrus is presented as having in the \textit{Histories} is that with the Persians, commencing with the pact described in section 0.2.5.5 of the Introduction. Cyrus did not always simply impose his views, as can be seen in the episode at 9.122.2 (considered in section 1.3.1 of chapter 1) – an approach highly suggestive of transformational leadership in “fostering the necessary mood changes in followers to make them willingly make the necessary efforts to achieve success” (as I put it in section 0.2.1.3 of the Introduction). Similarly, Cyrus’ attempts (as outlined in section 2.3.2 of chapter 2) to resolve the succession differ from most experiences of charismatic leaders\textsuperscript{580} as I have shown at section 2.3.2 of chapter 2, he employed the same style of transformational leadership to try (albeit unsuccessfully – see section 2.2.2 of chapter 2) to instil change in Cambyses as his heir.

Cambyses’ erratic behaviour in relationships extended even to his own family (two of whom were killed by him or on his orders – see note 520 above); and we have seen in section 2.2.2 of chapter 2 how his principal adviser relationship failed completely. His solipsistic style of leadership was wholly inconsistent with this element of transformational leadership.

Most of Darius’ relationships were with advisers. As we have seen in section 2.2.3 of chapter 2, the portrayals of the relationships between Darius and his advisers are particularly insightful. Darius never responded angrily to an adviser and usually took their advice, expressing his gratitude to the likes of Zopyrus and Megabazus on separate occasions (see section 3.3.3.2 of chapter 3). He also remained distant from the Persians to whom he delegated command, as we have seen at section

\textsuperscript{578} Again I emphasise that these judgments are based on Herodotus’ portrayals rather than the historical figures of the kings.

\textsuperscript{579} I have explained this concept in section 0.2.1.3 of the Introduction.

\textsuperscript{580} Modern leadership theorists (for example, Peters (2001) 72-3) regularly observe that one fundamental weakness of charismatic leaders is that, once they leave the scene, the empire/organisation they have established ceases to be sustainable.
1.4.2.3 of chapter 1. This could be regarded as reluctance on his part to take responsibility; but it might also be read as the behaviour of a leader who, in allowing his underlings to perform and develop in their own right, was exhibiting the third feature of transformational leadership. In the light of Darius’ usual lack of emotional involvement with his subjects identified at section 2.2.3.5 of chapter 2, however, I am unable to give this latter possibility any weight.

Xerxes, on the other hand, sought to give his advisers too much responsibility and as a result did not lead them at all (see section 2.3.1.4 of chapter 2) – possibly an attempt to perform the third element of transformational leadership, but one that failed. It is clear too that his goodwill could dissipate in an instant if he considered his favour was being exploited (see section 3.3.4 of chapter 3) – ultimately, followers’ interests were always secondary to his own.

To summarise, Cyrus’ style of leadership went beyond the charismatic leader of Weber: he can be seen in modern leadership terms as having been not merely a charismatic leader but also a transformational one. The wider range of subject relationships contained in the accounts of Darius and Xerxes, however, underlines how neither of them (even when, as in Xerxes’ case, adopting a consultative style of leadership) reached the level of performance expected of a transformational leader. But it is surprising that the theory can be seen to have application even to Cyrus alone, in view of its development as a theory applicable to modern democratic states: perhaps, for Herodotus, a monarchy led by a transformational king did have the potential to be superior to most democracies.581 On the other hand, Herodotus’ presentation of Cyrus shows his uniqueness as a Persian king in the Histories; and a constitution that flourished under such leadership was hardly likely to be sustainable if it required a succession of such leaders (I have noted in section 2.3.2 of chapter 2 Cyrus’ own failure to secure an adequate succession to his own rule).

4.4 Herodotus and leadership

As I have applied them, the modern theories identified in section 0.2.1 of the Introduction underline the unique greatness of Cyrus as a Persian leader within the Histories, for, as I anticipated in section 0.2.1 of the Introduction, these theories are capable of yielding insightful results when applied to ‘great’ leaders. But, as I have shown at section 1.3.2.1 of chapter 1 and section 2.5.2 of chapter two, even Cyrus is not presented by Herodotus as a completely successful leader. The modern theories cannot accommodate the notion of a ‘great’ but flawed leader (one of the strongest arguments against their theoretical validity) – a criticism that becomes even more pointed in view of their apparent irrelevance to leaders who, while not great, may nevertheless be effective (as we have seen Darius to be in Herodotus’ account): in short, the modern theories not only fail to allow for shortcomings in a great leader, but also offer correspondingly little insight into leaders who are not ‘great’.

581 Of course, Herodotus would not have couched it in these terms himself: rather, he was portraying Cyrus as a king exhibiting qualities that the modern theory identifies as the basis for its formulation.
Herodotus, however, also presents within the accounts of Cyrus’ successors the need of the Persians at some level to regard their first king as an unquestionably great leader, which led to their disregard of his failures, much as the modern theories themselves focus on the ‘great’ aspects as if they were the only relevant elements in the case of a ‘great’ leader. So Cyrus was, in modern terms, a ‘Great Man’ or charismatic leader, albeit that appellation is too unsubtle to fully reflect the richness of Herodotus’ portrayal.

Yet it is clear that, for Herodotus, leaders who were not ‘great’ in the way of Cyrus (Cambyses, Darius and Xerxes in the Persian context) were as interesting as Cyrus himself (Herodotus appreciated that ‘great’ leaders were rare in practice); and I suggest that this stemmed from Herodotus’ interest in outcomes – and the extent to which individual actions or inactions could have influenced them. This accounts for his consideration of the different styles of leadership exhibited at the micro-level by these three kings – by no means ‘great’ in the manner of Cyrus, but suggesting nonetheless possibilities for leadership that could be effective (or not). I have established how consistently Herodotus presents each of them with a distinctive style of leadership applicable to each: while Cambyses was effective within the parameters of his own personal interest but fell short in the broader responsibilities of a Persian king (to lead a great empire in its broader interests), Darius appreciated his wider role and, though he lacked the natural ability to fulfil it, was saved by necessary guidance from other leading Persians at appropriate moments (which, as a reflection of his computational nature, he was able to assess objectively and act upon without any sense of resentment); and Xerxes adopted the most collective approach to leadership – with disastrous results. Herodotus makes it clear that a collective leader has to be a strong leader in terms of risk management and being receptive to all arguments – but also, like Darius, should be capable of assessing situations objectively and acting without any suggestion of amour propre.

In short, it can be concluded from Herodotus’ accounts that a leader could be effective even where he was not a ‘great’ leader: Darius, for all his shortcomings, was able to lead in a way that shows how Herodotus understood that different leadership styles could be more effective in different situations – hence the explanation at the beginning of his account of Darius as king (at 3.89.1-96.2) of how Darius organised revenue streams and put them on a proper footing. This was the κάπηλος leader carrying out essential reforms for the ongoing survival of the empire, reforms beyond the abilities, it may be inferred, not only of Cambyses but also of the ‘great’ Cyrus. But in his account of Xerxes and his ultimate failure Herodotus illustrates how misunderstanding your role could make a leader adopt the wrong style of leadership entirely, with inevitable consequences.

I have in this thesis taken the view that Herodotus cannot be taken either to have automatically favoured democracy over monarchy or to have unquestioningly associated Persian kingship with tyranny. My readings of the Persian kings and their leadership styles amply illustrate how Herodotus was engaged with the question of leadership within an autocratic constitution – whether it could be effective, whether it needed to be modified to reflect different circumstances, and even whether leaders were born or could be made. In that context I am unable to read Herodotus’ accounts as entirely dismissive of an autocratic constitution: as we have seen at section 1.2.2 of
chapter 1, Herodotus not only differentiated the Persian concept of monarchy from those of the Medes and others, but also implied that the Spartan constitution was not too far removed in essence from the Persian, with each giving emphasis to their own different (but for each ‘legitimate’) notions of ‘freedom’. This underlay the success of the Persian monarchy as an institution compared with other monarchies, though the successful grounding of it in the leadership of Cyrus eventually proved unsustainable when subsequent leaders proved incapable of implementing an appropriate leadership style.

This leads to one further tentative conclusion. In view of my approach, explained at section 0.5.3 of the Introduction, not to read the *Histories* solely from the “warning to Athens” perspective, I hesitate to put forward this further suggestion, but consider it worthy of inclusion with other elements from that perspective. Herodotus’ presentation of the ineffectual consultative style of Xerxes’ leadership offered, in its efforts to be collective, further indications to Athens of the potential risks for an empire that a democratic constitution and its collective approach could present, in the absence of a Cyrus-like king/leader to harness the people.

The performance of Themistocles prior to Salamis (persuading the Athenians to invest their silver windfall in building a fleet, 7.144.1-2, and subsequently persuading them that fighting at Salamis would have a good outcome, 7.143.1-3 – on each occasion coming up with an ingenious reading of an oracle) envisaged him as a similarly effective leader to Cyrus (in contrast with Xerxes' performance in the same context, confident – rash – enough to allow the Greek spies captured in Sardis to return to Greece after being given an extensive tour of Xerxes' forces, 7.1461-3), in that Themistocles used the full range of his personal qualities to bring the followers (the Athenians at 7.143-144 as seen above, and subsequently the other Greek commanders – by judicious bribery at 8.5.1-2, by persuasive speeches at 8.58.2 and 8.60-62, and by deception of the Persians at 8.75.1-3) to implement his favoured cause of action, with victorious results; but a democracy that sought also to be an imperial power might find itself facing the same succession challenges as a monarchy – such ‘great’ leaders are rare. Perhaps Athens would be better off with a Darius-type leader – one with no great strategic abilities, yet open to advice from good advisers; but in any event Athens needed to be alert to the risk of ending up with the worst outcome, where a Xerxes replaced its lost Cyrus. That is the single most important lesson to be learned from the consideration at the micro-level of the Persian kings in the *Histories*: the constitution any state adopts is not as important as the calibre of its leader at any given time, whether a formal leader in the case of a monarchy, or a leader by natural influence and authority in the case of a democracy.
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