New England Classical Journal 35.4 (2008) 269-280

Seeing is Believing: Four Women on Display in Herodotus' *Histories*

Emily Katz Anhalt
Sarah Lawrence College

Herodotus' tale of Gyges in the first book of his *Histories* initiates a pattern comprised of four stories[1] in which the display of a woman affects male power relationships. A feature of autocratic rule, these stories associate calculated political theater with the overthrow, assumption, or undermining of political power. The forms and outcomes of these tales are diverse and unpredictable and demonstrate an uncertain relationship between power and the deliberate theatrical display of a woman. Emphasizing the difficulty of interpreting visual evidence correctly, these stories identify the vulnerability of political power to visual deception and add precision to the *Histories'* assessment of the genres of tragedy and historiography. Collectively, the stories affirm the precarious nature of political power, since the theatrical display of a woman has the potential to weaken and even to disempower men, even in the absence of greed, lust or passion. By demonstrating that visual evidence can mislead when misinterpreted, these stories call into question the ability of theatrical display to convey knowledge and, consequently, they validate implicitly the interpretive role of the historian.

The story of Gyges, prominent and primary in the *Histories*, introduces a motif that is recapitulated in three noteworthy later stories. Setting in motion the subsequent hostilities between Greeks and Persians, the Gyges tale is the first story that Herodotus relates on his own authority.[2] The Lydian king, Candaules, convinced that his wife is the most beautiful of all women, arranges for his bodyguard and chief adviser, Gyges, to view the queen naked. Candaules' purposes are not explicit, but if he intends this ploy to strengthen his position or authority in some way, he is seriously disappointed. At the queen's instigation, Gyges murders the king and takes the tyranny and the queen herself for his own (1.8-14). Later in Book 1, Peisistratus reinstates himself as tyrant of Athens by displaying to the

[1] Herodotus regularly uses patterning and repetition to structure his narrative. See H. Immerwahr (1966) 176-177, T. Long (1987) 2-4, D. Lateiner (1989) 165-6, S. Shapiro (2000) 91.

[2] J. Arieti (1995) 16, n. 29, maintains that "Herodotus' principal use of the tale is to explain historical causation."

Athenians a very tall, good-looking woman, Phye, arrayed in hoplite armor in the guise of Athene, and parading her in a chariot. According to Herodotus, the trick completely dupes the Athenians, and they cede exclusive political control to Peisistratus (1.59-60).[3] In Book 5, two Paionian brothers, wishing to rule over the Paionians (τυραννεύειν 5.12.1), attempt to deceive Darius by dressing up their sister and sending her to fetch water while simultaneously leading a horse and spinning (5.12). Whereas Candaules displays his wife as exceptional, the brothers intend to suggest that their sister is a typical Paionian woman, rather than an exceptional one. It is not clear how this deception will advance their goal of ruling, but their display, like Candaules' backfires. It convinces Darius,[4] but he responds by driving out the Paionians and bringing them to Asia (5.13). In Book 8, while watching the battle of Salamis, Xerxes observes the female trierarch Artemisia ram a barbarian (i.e. friendly) ship. The Attic trierarch in pursuit assumes, in consequence, that Artemisia's ship must be Greek or a barbarian deserter, but Xerxes, viewing from afar, assumes that the ship Artemisia sank was a Greek ship (8.87-88). Xerxes' mistakenly admires Artemisia's prowess, but he has, in reality, lost another ship, and the battle is pivotal in destroying Xerxes' power (e.g. 8.89 and 8.97).

In addition to directly affecting autocratic power relationships, all four stories ironically confirm Candaules' belief in the persuasive power

[3] Aristotle's version accords, in essence, with Herodotus' account (*Ath. Pol*. 14.4). The episode might have constituted a ritual re-enactment in which the Athenians symbolically acquiesced to Peisistratus' rule (W. R. Connor [1987] 40-50). But J. S. Blok (2000) notes the absence of other evidence for such a ritual (44).

Peisistratus' procession with Phye does parallel a Libyan custom Herodotus notes at 4.180, in which the Machlyes, in the context of an annual festival of Athene, dress the fairest maiden in a Corinthian helmet and panoply, mount her into a chariot and drive her around the lake (κοινῇ παρθένον τὴν καλλιστεύουσαν ἑκάστοτε κοσμήσαντες κυνέῃ τε Κορινθίῃ καὶ πανοπλίῃ Ἑλληνικῇ καὶ ἐπ᾽ ἅρμα ἀναβιβάσαντες περιάγουσι [τὴν λίμνην] κύκλῳ). All textual citations are from the Oxford Classical Text of C. Hude (1927).

For a discussion of modern interpretations of Peisistratus' motives, Herodotus' purposes, and the historicity of the story of Phye, see J. S. Blok (2000) 18-19. Blok observes that both Herodotus and the author of the *Ath. Pol.* "report something that does not make sense to them at all and hence cannot be trusted to give a fully adequate account" (40). Blok suggests that Peisistratus may have been imitating processions of victorious kings and drawing on epic imagery of divine assistance, even though "the Athenian public—and to all probability Peisistratus himself as well—would understand the event as a *staged* procession of Athena with a hero, fashioned after familiar imagery" (44-48).

[4] M. R. Christ (1994) observes that Herodotus frequently "portrays barbarian kings as inquirers and investigators" (167). Identifying parallels and contrasts between Herodotus' "tales of kingly curiosity and its satisfaction" and the historian's own methods of historical inquiry, Christ argues that Darius' vulnerability to the Paionian brothers' manipulations "raises doubts about his independence as an investigator" (169-71).

of visual evidence. Visual evidence does indeed engender conviction, but rather than predictably strengthening political power, it jeopardizes political supremacy in unanticipated ways. Candaules elects to display his wife because he doubts that Gyges believes his claims of the queen's beauty. He insists that men's ears are ἀπιστότερα "more mistrustful" than their eyes (1.8).[5] Gyges' reaction neither refutes nor confirms this assertion.[6] Herodotus records neither Gyges' prior skepticism nor subsequent conviction.[7] But the queen sees Gyges seeing her, instantly knowing (μαθοῦσα 1.10.2) the truth of what her husband has done. The Athenians' gullibility also attests to the accuracy of Candaules' observation. Believing (πειθόμενοι 1.60.5) the tall woman in hoplite armor to be Athene herself, they instantly accept Peisistratus' visual deception, which Herodotus ridicules as a most simple-minded thing (εὐηθέστατον 1.60.3). Similarly, Darius, marveling (θωμάζων) at what he heard (ἤκουσε) and saw (ὥρα 5.13.1), accepts the Paionian girl's performance at face value. But his reaction, the forcible removal of the Paionians into Asia, can hardly have been what the brothers intended. Artemisia's exploit confirms Candaules' assertion with double irony. The Attic trierarch in pursuit of Artemisia, seeing her ram a barbarian ship, accepts the visual evidence unquestioningly. Believing Artemisia's ship to be, therefore, either Greek or a barbarian deserter, he turns aside from his pursuit of her (8.87). Xerxes, too, believes the testimony of his eyes, for watching (θηεύμενον) he understood (μάθειν) that the ship was hit. Unlike the Attic trierarch, he does not misidentify Artemisia's ship. He and his party, recognizing (ἐπισταμένους) the insignia on her ship, understood (ἠπιστέατο)[8] the destroyed ship to be Greek (8.88). All of these viewers accept without question the veracity of their visual perceptions.

[5] This is the only instance of the comparative of ἄπιστος in the *Histories*. J. E. Powell identifies one additional example of the active meaning "mistrustful (of)" at 9.98.4. Elsewhere, the word has the passive meaning "incredible" (3.80.1; 7.209-5) or "mistrusted" (8.22.3) (Powell [1960] 36). Since eyes and ears themselves neither trust nor mistrust, Candaules appears to employ a form of synecdoche, substituting the body parts for the mental reaction to aural and visual perception respectively. Arguably, the ears are "more mistrustful" than the eyes, since information received aurally seems "less credible" than information perceived visually.

[6] S. Shapiro (2000) argues that "the *gnomai* presented by one side in a Herodotean verbal duel are always proved correct by later events" (102) and identifies this as "an important means of historical explanation" (103). Shapiro contrasts Candaules' claim with Xerxes' faith in evidence heard (7.39.1) to show that Herodotus values, rather, "good judgment" (107-8).

[7] Candaules himself, however, demonstrates the failure of verbal persuasion since he does not believe Gyges when he insists that he accepts Candaules' claim that the queen is the most beautiful of women (1.8.3).

[8] W. W. How and J. Wells (1912) suggest "knowing" for ἐπισταμένους and "they believed" for ἠπιστέατο (265). J. E. Powell (1960) cites fourteen examples in Herodotus in which the word indicates mistaken knowledge and might be rendered "suppose" (137).

Demonstrating that visual evidence may be credible but not necessarily reliable, all four stories evince overtly theatrical elements. Candaules, Peisistratus, the Paionian brothers, and Xerxes all serve as directors and choreographers of their respective displays. Candaules gives stage directions to Gyges, explaining, ἐγὼ μηχανήσομαι οὕτω ὥστε μηδὲ μαθεῖν μιν ὀφθεῖσαν ὑπὸ σεῦ "I will contrive it so that she will not learn that she has been seen by you" (1.9.1) and insisting, σε . . . στήσω "I will place you" behind the opened door (1.9.2). He choreographs the Queen's movements in advance (1.9.2-3) and advises Gyges to be careful not to be seen by the Queen (1.9.3).[9] Peisistratus similarly stages the display of Phye. He and Megacles contrive (μηχανῶνται) the deception (1.60.3) and the verb is repeated a second time following Herodotus' interjection regarding the Athenians' reputation for cleverness. They costume Phye with a panoply (πανοπλίῃ), mounting her into a chariot (ἐς ἅρμα ἐσβιβάσαντες), and arranging her form (προδέξαντες σχῆμα) so as for it to appear (φανέεσθαι) most striking (εὐπρεπέστατον 1.60.4). In the same way, the Paionian brothers fashioned (ἐποίησαν) their display, σκευάσαντες τὴν ἀδελφεὴν ὡς εἶχον ἄριστα "dressing up their sister as well as they could" and sending her out to play her role (5.12.2). The brothers then view their own production φυλάξαντες "watching" from a hiding place (5.12.2) and observing its effects (σκοπιὴν ἔχοντες 5.13.1). Xerxes also serves as producer-director and audience for his own production (although the combined role fails to prevent him from misunderstanding the ensuing scene). He orders a viewing platform to be made beforehand on which he sits (ἵζετο) and views (κατορῶν, ἐθηεῖτο, θηεύμενος 7.44). He thinks that his men will fight better at Salamis than they did at Euboea when he was not present, and now he is prepared to spectate (θεήσασθαι 8.69).

The theatricality of these stories reflects an autocratic penchant for visual display[10] and a consequent vulnerability to the unpredictable outcome of such displays. Although the verb θεάομαι does not occur in the story of Peisistratus or the tale of the Paionian brothers, Herodotus uses it to denote Gyges' viewing (θεήσεαι, θεήσασθαι 1.8.2, θεήσασθαι 1.9.2, ἐθηεῖτο 1.10.1, θεησάμενον 1.11.3) but not the Queen's (ὄψεται 1.9.3, ἐπορᾷ 1.10.2),

[9] The queen subsequently assumes the directorial role, staging the attack (1.11.5), supplying Gyges with the weapon and positioning him behind the door (1.12.1).

[10] D. Konstan (1987) demonstrates that Asian monarchs, in particular, seem to have a passion for quantifying and objectifying value, for deriving pleasure and self-affirmation from gazing at their possessions. He argues that "the idea of the objectification or reification of value among the Persians, and particularly in the case of Xerxes himself, lies behind their peculiar passion, as Herodotus describes it, for looking things over" (62-63). The verb θεάομαι expresses this interest and activity. It "specifically captures this disposition to gaze upon the outward signs of one's substance or situation" (63), and it is "fairly regularly associated with a word denoting an urge or passion" (65). Moreover, "the passion to gaze upon quantifiable things" is "the negation of human excellence or *aretē*" (67).

Xerxes' viewing (ἐθηεῖτο, θηεύμενος 7.44, θεήσασθαι 8.69.2, θηεύμενον 8.88) but not the Attic trierarch's (εἶδέ 8.87.4). The use of θεάομαι for Gyges' and Xerxes' viewing underscores the contribution of visual display to the precariousness of autocratic power,[11] but even in the absence of the verb, theatrical display jeopardizes political power in all four stories. Gyges' spectating has dire consequences not only for Candaules, who instigated it, but also for Gyges' fifth-generation descendant, Croesus (1.13 and 1.91). Xerxes' spectating causes the Persian ships to foul one another as the Persians try to impress the watching king (8.89). Candaules loses power as a result of his theatrical display. The Paionian brothers' theatrical production fails to achieve the tyranny they desire, and Xerxes' serves only to weaken his forces and contributes to his loss of the battle. Peisistratus regains tyrannical power but only because, according to Herodotus, the Athenians' gullibility is extreme and they succumb to the visual deception.

In their use of theatrical display to underscore the vulnerability of political supremacy, these episodes hint at Greek tragic theater. The associations between Herodotus and Attic tragedy have been closely examined,[12] and the story of Gyges in particular and of Xerxes' in general provide evidence for the historian's shared interest in the moral concerns of tragedy and particularly in "fearful moral choices" and "the interplay of free will and compulsion."[13] Gyges' tale can be read as parallel to Herodotus' presentation of the lurid and sexually laden tale of Xerxes and Masistes' wife (9. 108-113), and together the two stories can be seen to bracket the *Histories* as a whole.[14]

[11] Both the queen and the Attic trierarch see the events correctly (although the Attic trierarch misinterprets what he sees), and neither loses power as a result of having seen.

[12] For a recent discussion, see S. Saïd (2002).

[13] J. Griffin (2006) 46-50. Griffin examines the relationship between Herodotus and Attic tragedy and comments, further, that "one of Herodotus' great leitmotifs is the mutability of fortune and the fragility of human life" (53 and n. 52). For parallels between Gyges' story and Attic tragedy, see also D. Grene (1961) 477-488, K. H. Waters (1985) 21 and 47, and S. Saïd (2002) 132-134. But see C. Dewald (1981) regarding Herodotus' divergence from the conventions of Attic tragedy in his depiction of women (91-93 and 106-107).

[14] J. Griffin (2006) observes that the tale of Xerxes and Masistes' wife "centers on the strong and hate-filled figure of Xerxes' queen, who forces her wretched husband to choose between public disgrace and giving her his paramour's mother, perfectly innocent in the affair, to mutilate; her action precipitates further destruction within the royal family. It echoes the opening story of Book 1, in which the strong and angry queen of King Candaules forces the unhappy Gyges to choose between murdering his master and dying himself (1.8-11). In each the man finds himself impaled on the horns of a dilemma" (50). For consideration of Xerxes' depravity as an eastern tyrant and discussion of the parallels between the story of Xerxes and Masistes' wife and the story of Gyges in Book I, see E. Wolff (1964) 51-58, D. Lateiner (1989) 141ff., J. L. Moles (1996) 272, C. B. R. Pelling (1997) *http://www.dur.ac.uk/classics/histos/1997/pelling.html*, and C. Dewald (1997) 66-69.

And yet, Herodotus strikingly denies Gyges any initiative beyond opting for his own survival (1.11.4) and elides any hint of attraction or sexual relationship between Gyges and the queen. Unlike Gyges, Candaules does fit the pattern of the sexually unrestrained Eastern autocrat.[15] And indeed his description of the anticipated viewing event is more detailed than Herodotus' description of the event itself. Addressing Gyges, Candaules envisions the scene in his mind's eye, insisting κεῖται δὲ ἀγχοῦ τῆς ἐσόδου θρόνος· ἐπὶ τοῦτον τῶν ἱματίων κατὰ ἓν ἕκαστον ἐκδύνουσα θήσει καὶ κατ᾽ ἡσυχίην πολλὴν παρέξει τοι θεήσασθαι "a chair is situated near the entrance. Upon this she will place her clothes, taking them off one by one, and she will provide you much leisure for viewing" (1.9.2). The description is lascivious and sexually charged. Candaules envisions the scene as if the queen were performing a strip tease. In contrast, Herodotus' description of the actual moment lacks detail or any elaboration at all. Herodotus says simply ἐσελθοῦσαν δὲ καὶ τιθεῖσαν τὰ εἵματα ἐθηεῖτο "he [Gyges] viewed her coming in and taking off her clothes" (1.10.2). Gyges' reaction to the sight of the naked queen goes unreported. We never learn what he told the king the next morning. We learn only of his subsequent interview with the queen and his ensuing murder of the king (1.10-12). Herodotus may even have suppressed an earlier tradition that presented Gyges as not merely a faithful bodyguard but rather the queen's active lover.[16]

This suppression seems not unlikely, especially since Herodotus' version of the episode differs markedly from the oracle he reports later in Book 1, an oracle delivered five generations later. Explaining Croesus' downfall, the oracle maintains that Κροῖσος δὲ πέμπτου γονέος ἁμαρτάδα ἐξέπλησε, ὅς ἐὼν δορυφόρος Ἡρακλειδέων δόλῳ γυναικηίῳ ἐπισπόμενος ἐφόνευσε τὸν δεσπότεα καὶ ἔσχε τὴν ἐκείνου τιμὴν οὐδέν οἱ προσήκουσαν

[15] Speaking in favor of democracy in the famous Persian debate on forms of government, Otanes argues that the tyrant νόμαιά τε κινέει πάτρια καὶ βιᾶται γυναῖκας κτείνει τε ἀκρίτους "meddles with hereditary customs, violates women, and puts men to death without trial" (3.80.4). Concerning the questionable historicity of the debate and Herodotus' methodological and didactic aims, see D. Asheri et al. (2007) 471-473.

[16] The point is controversial. E. Lobel (1950) published a papyrus fragment which could have been Herodotus' source, although Herodotus' account may equally have been prior. The fragment contains pieces of a speech in which Candaules' wife describes the event of Gyges entering her room. See Page (1951) vs. Lesky (1953), H. P. Stahl (1968) *passim*, and R. Rieks (1975) 32. S. Saïd (2002) offers a good overview and concludes that the dating still remains uncertain (133-134). For further discussion and bibliography, see D. Asheri et al. (2007) 81.

Regarding various versions of the story of Gyges, see J. Griffin (2006) 50-51. See also K.F. Smith (1902), 261-82, 362-87 and (1920), 1-37, and A.E. Raubitschek (1955) 48-51. W. W. How and J. Wells (1912) note that "it is quite in accordance with Eastern usage that the usurper should take the wife of his predecessor. Cf. 2 Sam. xvi. 21-2 (Absalom and David), and iii. 68. 3" (59).

"Croesus has paid for the wrongdoing of his fifth-generation ancestor, who, being a spear-bearer of the Heraclidai, following a woman's cunning/ treachery, killed his master and held that man's honor in no way befitting to himself" (1.91.1). Here the assessment attributes full responsibility to Gyges and the queen (and in the process exonerates Candaules). In contrast, Herodotus' account earlier in Book 1 emphasizes instead Candaules' unrestrained and immoral desire to compel Gyges to view the queen naked and Gyges' reluctance and passivity in doing so. The oracle may reflect the earlier tradition.[17]

Minimizing Gyges' autonomy and excluding any suggestion of an attraction or sexual relationship between Gyges and the queen, Herodotus' version also thwarts expectations formed by other mythical tales (e.g. the triangles of Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, Aigisthos or of Menelaos, Helen, Paris, or of Odysseus, Penelope, the suitors, or even of Laius, Iocasta, Oedipus). Gyges' reluctance and passivity contrast markedly with the active, grasping, even passionate or lustful depredations typical of the usurper in this context. As Herodotus presents him, he desires no glimpse of the naked queen and gets no enjoyment from it. Unlike a typical Eastern monarch, he does not ascribe value by viewing. He does not need the testimony of his eyes and does not value this over the testimony of his ears.[18] He protests to Candaules beforehand ἐγὼ δὲ πείθομαι ἐκείνην εἶναι πασέων γυναικῶν καλλίστην "But I am persuaded that she is the most beautiful of all women" (1.8.4). He acquires wealth and sovereignty not out of greed or passion but with the simple aim of self-preservation. Minimizing the difficulty of Gyges' "tragic choice," Herodotus says only (and perhaps with dry humor) αἱρέεται αὐτὸς περιεῖναι "he chose to survive" (1.11.4). There is no implication that Gyges struggled to decide between the two options offered. Gyges is scarcely even the author of his own deeds. He acquiesces to the wishes of others in order to do things that he recognizes as unhealthy and lawless (οὐκ ὑγιέα, ἀνόμων 1.8.4), obeying first Candaules' injunctions, then the queen's.[19]

As in the depiction of Gyges, the other three tales of a woman on display do not evoke active "tragic choices," or even suggest sexual themes. Like Gyges, none of the viewers in these stories feels sexual attraction upon viewing, despite the fact that Phye and the Paionian girl, at least, are tall and good looking. Phye is just three fingers less than four cubits tall[20] and ἄλλως εὐειδής "otherwise well-formed" (1.60. 4), and the Paionian girl

[17] Plato's version also stresses Gyges' willing, deliberate seduction of the queen, murder of the king, and usurpation of the Lydian throne (*Rep.* 359d-360d).

[18] Gyges' attitude contrasts with the claim in Herakl. F101 DK asserting the greater reliability of visual perception over aural perception and with Herodotus' own emphasis on the value of autopsy for corroborating hearsay (e.g. 2.99).

[19] But cf. S. Saïd (2002), who identifies similarities between Gyges' "tragic choice" and the predicaments of Aeschylean heroes (132-133).

[20] Very tall by ancient Greek standards, but only about 5′10″ tall (W. W. How and J. Wells [1912] 83).

is also μεγάλην τε καὶ εὐειδέα "tall and well-formed" (5.12.1). The stories do not imply that the women's sexuality needs to be restrained or that the viewers are overpowered or even influenced by their own passion.[21] All four stories stress, instead, the viewers' passive, uncritical acceptance of the sight viewed. Forced to spectate against his own wishes, Gyges becomes a passive pawn in subsequent events. Insufficiently discriminating as viewers, the Athenians succumb to a simplistic visual deception. Accepting visual evidence unquestioningly, Darius acts decisively but, like the Athenians, having fallen prey to a visual deception. Xerxes, too, fails to interpret visual evidence accurately and mistakenly assumes that the theatrical display has benefited his interests.

In the absence of sexual attraction, the viewers' inadequacy in each instance derives from intellectual not emotional weakness, and the theatrical display confers no real advantage to any of them. Gyges' fails to persuade or outwit either Candaules or the queen, and his accession to power culminates in the disaster that befalls his descendant Croesus. By labeling Peisistratus' trick εὐηθέστατον "a most simple-minded thing" (1.60.3), Herodotus ridicules the Athenians' lack of discernment and mocks their decision to cede political control to the tyrant. Similarly, Darius and Xerxes evince intellectual deficiencies. Herodotus' account of the Paionian brothers' deception emphasizes Darius' gullibility, and the description of the Artemisia incident reveals Xerxes' failure to consider alternative interpretive possibilities.

[21] Consider, for contrast, Livy's stories of Lucretia (1.57-60) and Verginia (3.44-58) in which the woman functions as an object of desire. S. Joshel (1992) argues that at issue in Livy's two stories is the "association of male honor and female chastity" and the "control of female sexuality" (121). Moreover, "the connection between the rape of an individual woman and the overthrow of monarchy and decemvirate finds its model in the Greek stereotype of the tyrant whose part Tarquin and Appius Claudius play (Ogilvie [1965] 195-197, 218-19, 453, 477, and Dunkle [1971] 16): they are violent and rape other's men's women" (123). The rape of a woman "threatens male bodies . . . and becomes a *casus belli*" (123). In contrast, in his four stories of a woman on display, Herodotus does not sound this theme. He does tell stories of rapes initially (1.1-5) but, by humorously recounting the Persian logographers' versions, Herodotus downplays their significance for his own work. The experience of Candaules' wife has some parallels with Lucretia's: in both tales the husband is eager to display his wife. Lucretia is literally raped; arguably, the queen experiences a sort of visual rape. But instead of knifing herself, as Lucretia does, she supplies the knife with which Gyges murders the king. Lucretia's industry, her spinning, helps to kindle Tarquin's passion; the Paionian girl's spinning contributes to no such effect in Darius. Note the non-sexual language expressing Darius' reaction to viewing her: ἐπιμελὲς τῷ Δαρείῳ ἐγένετο "she was an object of care to Darius" and ἐπιμελὲς ὥς οἱ ἐγένετο "since she was an object of care to him" (5.12.3). J. E. Powell (1960) cites four additional instances of ἐπιμελὲς, suggesting "engaging attention" as an English equivalent (136). Three of the four other examples refer to autocrats troubled by new information (Cyrus at 1.89.1) or by a puzzling occurrence (Amasis at 3.40.1 and Xerxes at 7.37.2). The fourth instance refers to Herodotus' own curiosity (2.150.2). The word never suggests sexual curiosity, interest, or attraction.

Because they emphasize, collectively, the unreliability of visual perception and the consequent necessity for accurate interpretation, the four tales address a tension in Herodotus' own methodology between the use of visual evidence to corroborate historiographical assertions and the difficulty of interpreting such evidence correctly. Herodotus' method includes oral accounts (*akoē*) and eyewitness evidence (*opsis*) as well as his own reasoning (*gnōmē*).[22] Often appearing to value first-hand knowledge over stories heard (e.g. 1.5, 1.140, 3.115-116, 4.16, 4.24-27, 4.134), Herodotus implicitly corroborates Candaules' claim that the ears are ἀπιστότερα "more mistrustful" (1.8.2) than the eyes (e.g. 1.193, 2.5) and regularly uses visual evidence to confirm or refute an assertion (e.g. 1.93, 2.12, 2.29, 2.99, 2.131, 2.147-148, 4.58, 4.124, 5.59, 6.47, 8.39).[23] But Herodotus also acknowledges that visual evidence can be deceptive and can lead to incorrect belief rather than accurate knowledge (e.g. 1.22, 3.123, 3.157, 4.139, 7.194, 7. 211, 8.10, 8.24-25, 8.107, 8.108).

Since visual evidence is not in and of itself sufficient for accurate knowledge, all four instances of the calculated theatrical display of a woman implicitly validate the interpretive role of the historian.[24] In each tale, Herodotus knows the truth of the event and reveals it to the reader.[25] From the start of the story of Gyges, Herodotus calls into question Candaules' assessment of the queen's beauty by insisting that the king's judgment is distorted by his own passion, for ἐρασθεὶς δὲ ἐνόμιζε οἱ εἶναι γυναῖκα πολλὸν πασέων καλλίστην "being in love, he thought that his wife was by far the most beautiful of all women" (1.8.1). In the story of Peisistratus, Herodotus lays the deception bare before his audience. Phye is no goddess, just a tall, well-formed woman, and yet, believing her to be τὴν θεὸν "the goddess," the Athenians προσεύχοντο τε τὴν ἄνθρωπον "prayed to the female human being" and accepted Peisistratus (1.60.5). Similarly,

[22] N. Luraghi (2006) 77. Luraghi assesses the uniqueness of the "meta-*historiē*" suffusing Herodotus' *Histories*, examining his first-person statements concerning his own historical method. Luraghi notes that "the relationship between *opsis*, *gnōmē* and *historiē*" is not always "completely straightforward" (77) and argues, further, that "meta-*historiē* can be seen as a way to mark the differences towards other genres and carve out a niche for the *Histories*" (87). F. Hartog (2000) identifies Herodotus' originality in asserting the narrative authority of the historian (393), and J. S. Clay (2007) notes the fundamental connection in Greek thought between seeing and knowing (236).

[23] He also frequently comments that knowledge is unavailable in the absence of eye-witnesses (e.g. 3.115-116, 4.16, 4.25). For a discussion of *opsis* and its limits, see C. Darbo-Peschanski (1987) 84-90.

[24] M. R. Christ (1994) argues that in examining kings' methods of inquiry, Herodotus assumes a "privileged position," for his *historiē* is "not only an inquiry itself, but also an investigation of inquiry." This "lends a certain credibility to the inferences that the historian draws in the course of his investigation" (200).

[25] Luraghi (2001) 142-143 maintains that Herodotus effectively considers *gnōmē* more potent than *akoē*.

because Herodotus has taken us "backstage," as it were, revealing the Paionian brothers' intentions and preparations, we know that the Paionian girl's performance is a sham. And in the case of Artemisia, Herodotus leaves us in no doubt as to the true identity of the ship Artemisia rammed[26] or, for that matter, of Artemisia's allegiance to the barbarian cause. Having essential knowledge that the viewers within each scene lack, the historian brings his audience to an understanding of the truth that visual observation alone can never convey.

In presenting these four stories of the calculated, theatrical display of a woman, Herodotus acknowledges an association between political power and the potentially destructive effects of spectating. Given the unreliability of visual perception, these tales suggest a departure from Greek tragedy and even subtly call into question the genre's ability to convey accurate or precise knowledge. If the intellectual limitations inherent in viewing compromise the didactic role of Greek tragedy, historiography suffers from no such weakness. Unlike the tragedian, the historian mediates between the theatrical display and the visual experience of his readers, accurately interpreting the staged event for his audience. In addition to providing dramatic irony, as readers of the *Histories* understand more than the internal audiences in the scenes comprehend, these stories enable Herodotus to suggest that historiography triumphs over tragedy in its ability to transmit truth.

[26] Herodotus does acknowledge that he cannot say whether Artemisia rammed the friendly ship deliberately or accidentally (8.87.3).

Works Cited

Arieti, J. A. (1995) *Discourses on the First Book of Herodotus.* Lanham, Maryland.

Asheri, D. et al. (2007) *A Commentary on Herodotus Books I–IV*. Oxford.

Blok, J. S. (2000) "Phye's Procession: Culture, Politics and Peisistratid Rule" in H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, ed. *Peisistratos and the Tyranny: A Reappraisal*, 17-48. Amsterdam.

Christ, M. R. (1994) "Herodotean Kings and Historical Inquiry," *Classical Antiquity* 13, 167-202.

Clay, J. S. (2007) "Homer's Trojan Theater," *TAPA* 137, 233-252.

Connor, W. R. (1987) "Tribes, Festivals and Processions: Civic Ceremonial and Political Manipulation in Archaic Greece," *JHS* 107, 40-50.

Darbo-Peschanski, C. (1987) *Le discourse du particulier: essai sur l'enquête hérodetéenne*. Paris.

Dewald, C. (1981) "Women and Culture in Herodotus' *Histories*" in H. P. Foley, ed. *Reflections of Women in Antiquity*, 91-125. New York.

———. (1997) "Wanton Kings, Pickled Heroes, and Gnomic Founding Fathers: Strategies of Meaning at the End of Herodotus' *Histories*" in D. H. Roberts, F. M. Dunn, D. Fowler, edd. *Classical Closure: Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature*, 62-82. Princeton.

Dewald, C. and J. Marincola, edd. (2006) *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus.* Cambridge.

Dunkle, J. R. (1971) "The Rhetorical Tyrant in Roman Historiography: Sallust, Livy and Tacitus," *CW* 65, 12-20.

Grene, D. (1961) "Herodotus: the Historian as Dramatist," *The Journal of Philosophy* 58, 477-488.

Griffin, J. (2006) "Herodotus and Tragedy" in C. Dewald, and J. Marincola, edd. *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, 46-59. Cambridge.

Hartog, F. (2000) "The Invention of History: the Pre-History of a Concept from Homer to Herodotus," *History and Theory* 39, 384-395.

How, W. W. and J. Wells (1912) *A Commentary on Herodotus*. 2 vols. Oxford.

Hude, C. (1927) *Herodoti Historiae*. Oxford.

Immerwahr, H. R. (1966) *Form and Thought in Herodotus*. Cleveland.

Joshel, S. (1992) "The Body Female and the Body Politic: Livy's Lucretia and Verginia," in A. Richlin, ed. *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome*, 112-130. Oxford.

Konstan, D. (1987) "Persians, Greeks and Empire," in "Herodotus and the Invention of History," *Arethusa* 20, 59-73.

Lateiner, D. (1989) *The Historical Method of Herodotus*. Toronto.

Lesky, A. (1953) "Das hellenistische Gyges-Drama," *Hermes* 81, 357-70 = A. Lesky (1966) *Gesammelte Schriften* , 204-212. Bern.

Lobel, E. (1950) "A Greek Historical Drama," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 35, 1-12.

Long, T. (1987) *Repetition and Variation in the Short Stories of Herodotus*. Frankfurt.

Luraghi, N. (2001) "Local Knowledge in Herodotus' *Histories*" in N. Luraghi, ed. *The Historian's Craft in the Age of Herodotus*, 138-160. Oxford.
———. (2006) "Meta-*historiē*: Method and genre in the Histories," in C. Dewald, and J. Marincola, edd. *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, 76-91. Cambridge.
Moles, J. L. (1996) "Herodotus Warns the Athenians." *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar*, 9th vol., 259-284.
Ogilvie, R. M. (1965) *A Commentary on Livy*, Books 1-5. Oxford.
Page, D. L. (1951) *A New Chapter in the History of Greek Tragedy*. Cambridge.
Pelling, C. B. R. (1997) "East is East and West is West—or Are they? National Stereotypes in Herodotus," *Histos* 1 (*http://www.dur.ac.uk/classics/histos/1997/pelling.html*)
Powell, J. E. (1960) *A Lexicon to Herodotus*, 2nd edn. Hildesheim.
Raubitschek, A. E. (1955) "Gyges in Herodotus," *The Classical Weekly* 48, 48-51.
Rieks, R. (1975) "Eine tragische Erzählung bei Herodot (*Hist*. 1, 34-35)," *Poetica* 7, 23-44.
Saïd, S. (2002) "Herodotus and Tragedy" in E. J. Bakker, I. J. F. de Jong, H. Van Wees, edd. *Brill's Companion to Herodotus*, 117-147. Leiden.
Shapiro, S. O. (2000) "Proverbial Wisdom in Herodotus," *TAPA* 130, 89-118.
Smith, K. F. (1902) "The Tale of Gyges and the King of Lydia I-II," *AJP* 23, 261-82, 362-87.
———. (1920) "The Literary tradition of Gyges and Candaules," *AJP* 41, 1-37.
Stahl, H. P. (1968) "Herodots Gyges-Trägodie," *Hermes* 96, 385-400.
Waters, K. H. (1985) *Herodotus the Historian.* Norman, Oklahoma.
Wolff, E. (1964) "Das Weib des Masistes," *Hermes* 92, 51-58.