

Herodotus Part 1 (Selection from Scroll 1)

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Note: The language of Herodotus in referring to the myths and rituals of the ancient world is exquisitely precise, and we have much to learn from it. Accordingly, the translators have taken special care in tracking key words above and beyond the vocabulary that is tracked in the rest of the Sourcebook.

Scroll 1: Croesus

This is the making public [*apodexis*] of the inquiry [*historiā*] of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, so that what arises from human essence not become faded [*exitēla*] by time, and that great and wondrous deeds, some performed [*apodekh-*] by the Hellenes, some by the barbarians, not lose their *kleos*, including for what cause [*aitiā*] they waged war against each other.

1. The learned men [*logioi*] of the Persians say that the Phoenicians were responsible [*aitioi*] for the quarrel. When these men came from the sea called Red to this sea and settled in the place which they now inhabit,¹ they immediately engaged in long voyages, carrying Egyptian and Assyrian cargoes and reaching, among other places, Argos. At that time Argos in all ways surpassed the people in what is now called Hellas. The Phoenicians arrived at this Argos and laid out their merchandise. On the fifth or sixth day after their arrival, when they had sold almost everything, there came down to the sea many women, including the daughter of the king. Her name was Io, daughter of Inakhos, and the Hellenes say the same thing. As they stood along the stern of the ship buying the merchandise they most desired, the Phoenicians gave the signal and rushed at them. Most of the women got away, but Io was carried off with some others. They put them aboard the ship and sailed away to Egypt.

2. The Persians say that Io came to Egypt in this way—but the Hellenes do not—and that this was the first of the acts without justice [*dikē*]. They say that after this some of the Hellenes—they are unable to relate the names—landed at Tyre in Phoenicia and carried off Europa, the daughter of the king. These would be the Cretans. So they got even with each other, but afterwards the Hellenes were responsible [*aitioi*] for the injustice [action without *dikē*]. They [= Jason and the Argonauts] sailed across to Aia in Colchis and to the river Phasis, and when they had accomplished the other things they had gone there for, they carried off Medea, the daughter of the king. The Colchian king sent a herald to Hellas and requested compensation [*dikai*] for the abduction and demanded back his daughter. The Hellenes answered that they [= the Phoenicians] had not been given compensation [*dikai*] for the abduction of Argive Io, so they themselves would not give it.

3. They [= the Persians] say that, in the second generation after this, Alexander the

son of Priam heard of these things and wished to have a wife from Hellas by way of abduction, supposing that he would not pay compensation [*dikai*], since they had not. So he abducted Helen, and the Hellenes at first saw fit to send messengers and demand the return of Helen and compensation [*dikai*] for the abduction. When they made these demands, they were reproached with the abduction of Medea: that they themselves had neither given compensation [*dikai*] nor returned her when demanded, yet they wished to have compensation [*dikai*] from others.

4. Up to this point there were only thefts of women from each other, but after this the Hellenes were very guilty [*aitioi*], for they invaded Asia before the Persians invaded Europe. The Persians say they consider carrying off women to be the work of unjust [*adikoi*] men, but only foolish men seriously seek vengeance for women who have been carried off. Moderate [*sōphrones*] men, they say, pay no heed at all to the abduction of women, for it is clear that they would not be abducted unless they wanted it. The Persians say that the men from Asia took no account of their women who had been abducted, but the Hellenes, because of a woman of Lacedaemon,² mounted a great expedition, then came to Asia and destroyed the empire of Priam. From then on they have always considered the Hellenes to be their enemy. The Persians claim Asia and the barbarian peoples inhabiting it as their own, but they consider Europe and the Hellenes as separate.

5. This is how the Persians say it was, and they find the conquest of Troy to be the beginning of their hostility [= state of being *ekhthros*] toward the Hellenes. The Phoenicians do not agree with the Persians about Io. They say that they did not resort to abduction when they carried her to Egypt, but that she had sex with the captain of the ship in Argos. When she learned that she was pregnant, out of respect [*aidōs*] for her parents she voluntarily sailed with the Phoenicians so that she not be found out. This is what the Persians and Phoenicians say. ^{1.5.3} Concerning these things, I am not going to say that they were so or otherwise, but I will indicate [*sēmainein*] the one who I myself know [*oida*] first began unjust [*a-dika*] deeds against the Hellenes. I will go on further in my account, treating equally of great and small cities of humankind, ^{1.5.4} for many of those that were great in the past have become small, and those that were great in my day were formerly small. Knowing that human good fortune [*eudaimoniā*] never remains in the same state, I will mention both equally.

6. Croesus was Lydian in lineage [*genos*], the son of Alyattes, and *turannos* of the lands this side of the river Halys, which flows from the south between the Syrians and Paphlagonians and towards the north enters the sea called the Euxine.³ This Croesus was the first of the barbarians we know of [*oida*] to reduce some of the Hellenes to payment of tribute [*phoros*] and to attach others to himself as *philo*i. He subdued the Ionians and Aeolians and Dorians in Asia, and made friends [*philo*i] of the Lacedaemonians. Before the rule of Croesus all Hellenes were free. The expedition of the Kimmerians which reached Ionia before the time of Croesus was not a conquest of the cities, but an expedition to raid and pillage.

7. In the following way the kingship belonging to the Hērakleidai⁴ passed over to the lineage [*genos*] of Croesus, called the Mermnadai. Kandaules, whom the Hellenes call Myrsilos, was the *turannos* of Sardis and the descendant of Alkaios son of Hēraklēs. Agron son of Ninon son of Belos son of Alkaios was the first of the Herakleidai to be king of Sardis, Kandaules son of Myrsos the last. The kings of this land before Agron were descendants of Lydos son of Atys, from whom the entire population is called Lydian; previously it was called Meian. From them the Herakleidai received the kingship and held power due to an oracle. They were the offspring of Hēraklēs and a female slave of Iardanos, and ruled for 22 generations, 505 years, son inheriting rule from his father, up to Kandaules son of Myrsos.

8. This Kandaules was passionately in love with his own wife, and in his passion he considered his wife to be the most beautiful of all women. There was one of his bodyguard he was especially pleased with, Gyges son of Daskylos, and he used to share with this Gyges even his most important affairs, including great praise of the beauty of his wife, since he thought it so. After a little while—for it was fated to go badly [*adv. kakōs*] for Kandaules—he said to Gyges: “I do not think you believe me when I talk of the beauty of my wife, since people trust their ears less than their eyes. Find a way to see her naked.” Gyges cried out loudly and said, “Master, what unsound word do you speak, commanding me to see my queen naked? When a woman takes off her clothes she takes off her shame [*aidōs*] with them. Long ago men discovered many good things, from which it is necessary to learn. Among them is this one: let each look to his own. I believe that she is the most beautiful of all women, and I ask you not to request what is inappropriate according to customary law [*nomos*].”

9. He said this trying to get out of it, fearful that something bad [*kakon*] might happen to him from it. Kandaules answered, “Take heart, Gyges. Do not be afraid of me, that I am making this speech to test you, nor of my wife, that she may harm you in some way. I will work it so that she will not even know that she has been seen by you. In the room in which we sleep, I will place you behind the open door. After I go in, my wife will also come to bed. There is a chair near the entrance, and on it she will put each of her clothes as she takes them off, giving you the opportunity to see her at your leisure. When she walks from the chair to the bed and has her back to you, take care then that she not see you going out the door.”

10. Since he could not get out of it, he was ready. When Kandaules felt it was time [*hōrā*] for bed, he led Gyges into the room. Immediately afterwards his wife came in, and Gyges watched her as she entered and took off her clothes. As she went to the bed, her back was to him and out he crept. But the woman saw him as he was going out. Understanding what her husband had done, she did not cry out, although disgraced, nor did she seem to notice, having it in mind [*noos*] to punish Kandaules. Among the Lydians, as among almost all other barbarians, to be seen naked carries the greatest disgrace, even for a man.

11. She kept quiet revealing nothing then. But as soon as it was day, she made ready those of her servants she considered most faithful to her and summoned Gyges. He did not think she knew anything of what had been done and came when summoned, for it was his custom even before this to attend on the queen whenever she called. When Gyges arrived, the woman said: "Now, Gyges, I offer you the choice of taking one of two roads open to you. Either kill Kandaules and take possession of both me and the kingship of the Lydians, or you yourself must die on the spot, so that you may not in the future obey Kandaules in everything and see what you should not see. Either he who planned this must perish, or you, who saw me naked and acted unlawfully." For a while Gyges was astonished at what she had said, but then he pleaded with her not to bind him by the necessity of making such a decision [*diakrinein*]. But he did not persuade her, and he saw the necessity truly [*alēthēs*, adverb] before him either to kill his master or to himself be killed by others. He chose his own survival. He asked, "Since you compel me to kill my master against my will, come, let me hear in what way we will attack him." She answered, "The onset will be from the same room in which he displayed me naked, and the attack will be in his sleep."

12. They prepared the plot and night came on. Gyges was not released, and there was no escape for him at all: either he or Kandaules must die. He followed the woman into the chamber, and she gave him a dagger and hid him behind the same door. Later, when Kandaules was asleep, Gyges crept out and killed him, taking possession of his wife and his kingship. Archilochus of Paros, who lived at the same time, mentioned Gyges in a composition shaped in iambic trimeter.

13. He took possession of the kingship and was confirmed by the Delphic oracle. The Lydians were indignant at what-was-suffered [*pathos*] by Kandaules and took up arms, but the partisans of Gyges and the rest of the Lydians made an agreement that if the oracle answered that he was king of the Lydians then he would be king, but if not he would give the rule back to the Hērakleidai. The oracle answered yes and in this way Gyges became king. But the Pythia⁵ added that vengeance would come on behalf of the Hērakleidai in the fifth generation after Gyges. The Lydians and their kings took no account of this thing-said [*epos*] until it came to fulfillment [*telos*].

14. In this way the Mermnadai held the power of the *turannos*, taking it from the Hērakleidai. When Gyges became *turannos*, he sent offerings to Delphi, and not just a few. Most of the silver offerings in Delphi are his, and besides the silver he dedicated an immense amount of gold, including the golden bowls dedicated there, six in number, which are very much deserving of mention. These stand in the treasury of the Corinthians and have a weight of 30 talents.⁶ To speak the truth [*alēthēs*], the treasury does not belong to the state of the Corinthians, but to Kypselos son of Eëtion. This Gyges is the first barbarian we know of to make offerings to Delphi after Midas son of Gordias, king of Phrygia. Midas dedicated the royal throne on which he sat when giving judgment, and it is worth seeing. This throne stands in the very same place as the bowls of Gyges. The gold and silver that Gyges dedicated is called Gygian

by the Delphians, named after its dedicator. As soon as Gyges took power, he invaded Miletus and Smyrna and captured the city of Colophon, but there was no other great deed by him. He was king 38 years, and having said this much we will leave him.

15. I will mention Ardys son of Gyges, who was king after Gyges. He captured Priene and invaded Miletus. When he was *turannos* of Sardis, the Kimmerians were driven from their homeland by the Scythians and reached Asia, capturing Sardis except for the acropolis.

16. Ardys was king for 49 years. Sadyattes son of Ardys succeeded him and was king for 12 years. Alyattes son of Sadyattes succeeded him. He waged war with Kyaxares, the descendant of Deiokes, and the Medes, drove the Kimmerians out of Asia, captured Smyrna and its colony Colophon, and invaded Klazomenai. But he did not come off as he wished in this, for he stumbled greatly. During his rule he performed the following deeds most worth telling:

17. He fought with the Milesians, inheriting the war from his father. He marched against Miletus and besieged it in this way: whenever the crops in the land were ripe, he invaded, marching to the syrinx² and the lyre and the bass and treble pipe. Reaching Milesian land, he did not tear down the houses in the fields nor burn them, nor rip off their doors, but left them standing throughout the country. He destroyed the trees and the crops in the land, then departed back again. Since the Milesians controlled the sea, there was no chance for the army in a siege. The Lydian did not tear down the houses so that the Milesians would have a place to set out from to plant and work the land, and so that when he invaded he would have something to plunder after their work.

18. He carried on the war by doing this for eleven years, during which the Milesians suffered two great disasters, fighting in Limeneion in their own country and in the plain of Maeander. For six of these eleven years Sadyattes son of Ardys still ruled the Lydians and invaded the Milesian land, for he was the one who started the war. For the five years following these six, Alyattes son of Sadyattes carried on the war which, as I have shown previously, he had inherited from his father, and conducted it strenuously. None of the Ionians helped lighten this war for the Milesians, except only the Chians. They were repaying an equal service when they gave their help, for the Milesians had earlier helped the Chians wage war against the Erythraeans.

19. In the twelfth year, when the crops were set afire by the army, the following affair happened: As soon as a fire was set in the crops, it was driven by the wind and set on fire the temple of Athena called Assesia. The temple caught fire and burned completely. At the time no one paid any attention, but after the army reached Sardis Alyattes fell sick. His illness became chronic and he sent messengers to Delphi, either because someone advised him to or because it seemed a good idea to him to send and ask the god about his sickness. When they arrived at Delphi, the Pythia said she

would not answer them until they rebuilt the temple of Athena which they had burnt at Assesos in the Milesian land.

20. I know [*oida*] this was so because I heard it from the Delphians. To this the Milesians add that Periander son of Kypselos, who was a very great *xenos* of Thrasyboulos, the *turannos* of Miletus at that time, learned of the answer given to Alyattes and sent a messenger to disclose it, so that Thrasyboulos might be forewarned and make plans for the present circumstances. This is how the Milesians say it was.

21. When this was announced to Alyattes, he immediately sent a herald to Miletus, wishing to make a truce with Thrasyboulos and the Milesians for as long as it took to build the temple. The messenger went to Miletus, but Thrasyboulos knew [*oida*] clearly the whole story beforehand and saw what Alyattes was going to do, so he contrived the following: he piled up in the *agorā* all the grain there was in the city, both his own and private, and proclaimed that when he indicated-by-a-sign [*sēmainein*] everyone should drink and indulge in revelry together.

22. He acted thus and gave this command so that the herald from Sardis might see the great store of grain heaped up and the men in festivity and report it to Alyattes. And that is what happened. The herald saw these things and imparted his instructions from the Lydian to Thrasyboulos, then returned to Sardis. I learn that the reconciliation came about for no other reason. Alyattes had supposed there was great famine in Miletus and the people were worn down to the limit of bad trouble [*kakon*], but he heard from the herald returning [achieving a *nostos*] from Miletus a report opposite to his expectation. Then there was a reconciliation between them, with conditions that they become each other's *xenoi* and allies. Alyattes built two temples to Athena in Assesos instead of one, and he recovered from his sickness. This is how it was for Alyattes concerning his war against the Milesians and Thrasyboulos.

23. Periander, the man who revealed the oracle to Thrasyboulos, was the son of Kypselos. Periander was *turannos* of Corinth. The Corinthians say that the greatest marvel occurred in his lifetime, and the people of Lesbos agree with them. They say that Arion of Methymna was carried ashore at Tainaron on a dolphin. He was a singer second to none in his time, and he is the first man we know of to compose the dithyramb⁸ and name it and teach it in Corinth.

24. They say that this Arion, who spent the greater part of his time with Periander, desired to sail to Italy and Sicily on a tour, and after making a lot of money wished to come back to Corinth. He set out from Tarentum, hiring a ship of Corinthian men since he trusted no one more than the Corinthians. But in the open sea they plotted to throw Arion overboard and take his money. He comprehended the plot and pleaded with them, offering to surrender his money and begging for his life [*psūkhē*]. But he did not persuade them, and the sailors ordered him either to kill himself so that he

could meet with burial on land, or to jump into the sea immediately. He was left helpless by these threats and begged them, since they had so decided, to allow him to stand on deck in full dress and sing. He promised to kill himself after singing. They were pleased at the prospect of hearing the best [*aristos*] singer in the world, so they withdrew from the stern to the middle of the ship. He put on his outfit and took up his lyre, stood on the deck and repeated the 'shrill' song [*nomos*]. When the song [*nomos*] was complete [= brought to *telos*], he threw himself into the sea just as he was, full dress and all, and the men sailed off to Corinth. But they say a dolphin took him on its back and carried him ashore at Tainaron. He climbed off and went to Corinth, still in his outfit, and upon arriving related everything that had happened. Periander in disbelief kept him under guard without release and waited intently for the sailors. After they arrived, they were summoned and questioned whether they had any news of Arion. When they said he was safe in Italy and they had left him doing fine in Tarentum, Arion appeared to them just as he was when he jumped overboard. They were dumbfounded and no longer able to deny it under cross-examination. The people of both Corinth and Lesbos say this, and at Tainaron there is a bronze dedication of Arion, not very big, a man on a dolphin.

25. Alyattes the Lydian waged war against the Milesians and later died after being king for 57 years. When he recovered from his illness, he became the second of his house to make offerings to Delphi: a large silver bowl and a stand of welded iron, worthy of seeing among all the offerings at Delphi, the work of Glaukos of Chios, who alone of all men invented the welding of iron.

26. When Alyattes died, Croesus son of Alyattes inherited the kingship at age 35, and the Ephesians were the first of the Hellenes he attacked. Thereupon the Ephesians under siege by him dedicated the *polis* to Artemis by tying a rope from her temple to the city wall. The distance between the old *polis* which was then besieged and the temple is seven stadium-lengths.⁹ These were the first, but afterwards Croesus attacked each of the Ionians and Aeolians, each in turn, bringing different charges against each. When he was able to find a serious charge he brought it, but against some of them he brought even trivial charges.

27. When the Hellenes in Asia had been reduced to payment of tribute [*phoros*], he then formed a plan to make ships and attack the islanders. When he had everything ready for shipbuilding, some say that Bias of Priene, others Pittakos of Mytilene, arrived at Sardis and stopped the shipbuilding when Croesus asked him if there was any news about Hellas, and he said, "O King, the islanders are buying up 10,000 horses and have in mind [*noos*] to make an expedition against Sardis and against you." Croesus hoped that he was speaking the truth [*alētheia*] and said, "If only the gods would put it into the minds [*noos*] of the islanders to come against the sons of Lydians with horses!" He replied by saying, "O King, you appear to me to pray heartily to capture the islanders on horseback on the mainland, and your hope is reasonable. But what else do you think the islanders are praying for, as soon as they learned that

you were going to build ships against them, than to capture the Lydians on the sea, so that they may punish you on behalf of the Hellenes living on the mainland whom you hold enslaved?" Croesus was mightily pleased by his point and was persuaded by him, for he seemed to speak shrewdly. So he stopped the shipbuilding, and in this way he established reciprocal guest-host relations [*xeniā*] with the Ionians who inhabit the islands.

28. As time passed, almost all the populations living this side of the Halys were subdued. Except for the Cilicians and Lycians, Croesus held all the others in subjection to himself. These are as follows: Lydians, Phrygians, Mysians, Mariandynians, Chalybes, Paphlagonians, Thynian and Bithynian Thracians, Carians, Ionians, Dorians, Aeolians, Pamphylians.

29. Croesus had subdued all these populations and added them to the Lydian empire. His capital Sardis was at the height of its wealth, and to it came, one by one, all the wise [*sophoi*] men of Hellas, including Solon the Athenian. He was spending ten years abroad after having made laws [*nomoi*] for the Athenians at their request. He sailed away on the pretext of taking a sacred voyage [*theōriā*],¹⁰ but the real reason was not to have to repeal any of the laws [*nomoi*] he had made. The Athenians could not do this on their own, having sworn by the strongest oaths to observe for ten years whatever laws [*nomoi*] Solon gave them.

30. So for that reason, and to take a sacred voyage [*theōria*], Solon went to visit Amasis in Egypt and then to Croesus in Sardis. When he got there, Croesus entertained him in the palace, and on the third or fourth day Croesus told his servants [*therapontes*] to show Solon around his treasures. After Solon had seen and thought over how great and fortunate [*olbios*] they were, Croesus found the opportunity to say,^{1.30.2} "Athenian guest [*xenos*], we have heard much about your wisdom [*sophiā*] and your wandering [*planē*], how you in your love of wise things [*philosopheîn*] have traveled all over the world for the sake of a sacred journey [*theōriā*], so now I desire to ask you who is the most *olbios* of all men you have ever seen."^{1.30.3} Croesus asked this question expecting the answer to be himself, but Solon, instead of flattering him, told it as it was and said, "O King, it is Tellos the Athenian."^{1.30.4} Croesus marveled at what he had said and replied sharply, "In what way do you judge [*krinein*] Tellos to be the most *olbios*?" Solon said, "Tellos was from a prosperous city [*polis*] and his children were good and noble [*agathoi*]. He saw them all have children of their own, and all of these survived. His life was well off by our standards, and his death was most distinguished:^{1.30.5} when the Athenians were fighting their neighbors in Eleusis, he came to help, routed the enemy, and died most beautifully. The Athenians buried him at public expense on the spot where he fell, and they honored [*tīmazein*] him greatly."

31.^{1.31.1} When Solon had provoked him by referring to the things that happened to Tellos, saying that these things were many and blessed [*olbia*], Croesus asked him [=

Solon] what person he saw as the next one after him [= Tellos], since he [= Croesus] quite expected to win second prize. Solon answered, "Kleobis and Biton. ^{1.31.2} They were Argive by lineage [*genos*], and they made a living that was quite sufficient. And, on top of this, they had such great physical strength! Both were prize-winning athletes [*āthlophoroi*]. Here is the story that is told about them. There was a festival [*heortē*] of Hērā in Argos, and it was absolutely necessary for their mother [= the priestess of Hērā] to be conveyed to the sacred precinct [*hieron*] [of Hērā] by a team of oxen. But their oxen had not come back from the fields in time [*hōrā*], so the youths themselves took the yoke upon their shoulders under constraint of time [*hōrā*] and started pulling the wagon, with their mother riding on top of it, transporting her [their mother] forty-five stadium-lengths until they arrived at the sacred precinct [*hieron*] [of Hērā]. ^{1.31.3} After they [= Kleobis and Biton] had done these things and had been seen [*op-*] doing these things by everyone participating in the festival [*panēguris*], the very best fulfillment [*teleutē*] of life now happened for them. And in all this the god showed that it is better for a man to be in a state of death than in a state of life [*zōein*]. For the men of Argos, standing around the two youths, declared them blessed [*makares*] for having such physical strength, while the women of Argos declared the mother of the youths blessed [*makares*] for having such children as these two. ^{1.31.4} And the mother, overjoyed [*perikharēs*] about what had been accomplished and about what had been said about the things that had been accomplished, stood before the statue [= of Hērā] and prayed on behalf of Kleobis and Biton, her two children, who had so greatly honored [*tīmazein*] her. She prayed that the goddess [= Hērā] should give them [= the two youths] the very best thing that can happen to a mortal. ^{1.31.5} After this prayer, the people sacrificed [*thuein*] and feasted [*eu-ōkheîn*], and the youths went to sleep [*kata-koimâsthai*] right then and there in the sacred precinct [of Hērā]. And they [= the two youths] never got-up [*an-histasthai*] again, but were held-still [*ekhesthai*] in this fulfillment [*telos*]. And the people of Argos made likenesses [*eikōn* plural] of them and dedicated these at Delphi, saying that these were images of men who had become the very best [*aristoi*] of men."

32. Thus Solon granted second place in happiness [*eudaimoniā*] to these men. Croesus got angry and said, "Athenian guest [*xenos*], do you so much despise our *eudaimoniā* that you do not even make us worthy of commoners?" Solon replied, "Croesus, you ask me about human affairs, and I know that the divine is entirely grudging and troublesome to us. In a long span of time it is possible to see many things that you do not want to, and to suffer them, too. I set the limit of a man's life at 70 years; these 70 years have 25,200 days, leaving out the intercalary month. But if you make every other year longer by one month, so that the seasons [*hōrai*] agree opportunely, then there are 35 intercalary months during the 70 years, and from these months there are 1,050 days. Out of all these days in the 70 years, all 26,250 of them, not one brings anything at all like another. So, Croesus, a human life is entirely accident. To me you seem to be very rich and to be king of many people, but I cannot answer your question before I hear that your life came to a good *telos*. The very rich

man is not more *olbios* than the man who has only his daily needs, unless he chances to have his life come to *telos* with everything turning out well. Many very rich men are not *olbioi*, many of moderate means are lucky. The man who is very rich but not *olbios* surpasses the lucky man in only two ways, while the second of the two surpasses the one who is rich but not *olbios* in many ways. The rich man is more capable of fulfilling his appetites and of bearing a great disaster [*atē*] that falls upon him, but the other surpasses him in these ways: he is not so able to bear *atē* or appetite as is the rich man, but his luck keeps these things away from him, and he is free from deformity and disease, has no experience of miseries, and has fine children and good looks. , If, in addition to all these things [= the examples of good fortune that I have listed], someone reaches the end [*teleutân*] of one's life in a good way, then this someone is the person that you [= Croesus] are looking for, that is, the person who deserves to be called *olbios*; but before someone reaches the end [*teleutân*], you should hold off from calling him *olbios*. Rather, just call him fortunate [*eutukhēs*]. It is impossible for one who is only human to get all these things at the same time, just as no land is self-sufficient in what it produces. Each country has one thing but lacks another; whichever has the most is best [*aristē*]. Just so no human being is self-sufficient; each person has one thing but lacks another. Whoever passes through life with most of them and then comes to the *telos* of his life favorably is the one who, in my opinion, O King, deserves to bear this name. It is necessary to see the reaching of *telos* in every affair, for the god promises prosperity [*olbos*] to many people and then utterly ruins them."

33. By saying this, Solon did not at all please Croesus, who sent him away and took no further account of him. He thought Solon a great fool because he disregarded present good things [*agatha*] and advised him to look to the reaching of *telos* in every affair.

34. But after Solon went away, great *nemesis* from a god seized Croesus, I guess because he considered himself to be the most *olbios* of all men. Soon a dream stood over him in his sleep, which revealed to him the truth [*alētheia*] of the bad things [*kaka*] that were going to happen concerning his son. Croesus had two sons, one of whom was disabled, being mute, but the other was by far the first among his peers in all respects. This one's name was Atys. The dream indicated [*sēmainein*] to Croesus that he would lose this Atys when he was struck by an iron spearpoint. When he awoke and thought this over, he took great fright and had his son marry, and although he had been accustomed to lead the Lydian forces he never sent him out to such an event, and he removed from the men's quarters the javelins and spears and all such things which people make use of in war, and piled them in the chambers, so that one hanging above his son might not fall on him.

35. While he had his hands full with his son's marriage, there came to Sardis a man beset by misfortune and with unclean hands, a Phrygian by birth, royal in lineage [*genos*]. This man entered Croesus' house and asked to receive purification according

to the local customs [*nomoi*], and Croesus purified him. There is a similar ritual of purification for the Lydians and the Hellenes. When Croesus had performed the accustomed rites, he asked where he was from and who he was, saying as follows: "My good man, who are you and where in Phrygia do you come from to become my suppliant? What man or woman have you murdered?" He answered, "O King, I am the son of Gordias son of Midas, my name is Adrastos, and I have killed my own brother unintentionally. I have come here exiled by my father and deprived of all my goods." Croesus answered him with these words: "You are the descendant of men who are *philo*i and you have come to *philo*i. You will lack nothing while you remain in our house. By bearing this misfortune as lightly as possible you will derive profit [*kerdos*] best."

36. So he dwelled in Croesus' house, and in this same time a huge monster of a boar appeared on Mount Olympus—the mountain by that name in Mysia. This boar repeatedly rushed down from that mountain and devastated the crops and fields of the Mysians, and often the Mysians marched out against him and caused him no trouble [*kakon*], but instead suffered hurt [*paskhein*] from him. Finally [*telos*] messengers of the Mysians came to Croesus and said, "O King, an enormous monster of a boar has arisen in our land and devastates our crops and fields. We are unable to capture it, for all our eagerness. So now we ask you to send with us your son and carefully chosen young men and dogs, so that we may drive it from our land." They asked for these things, but Croesus remembered the words [*epea*] of the dream and said, "Do not mention my son again. I would never send him with you. He is a newlywed and is busy with that. However, I will send carefully chosen men of the Lydians and a pack of hunting dogs, and I will command those who go to be most eager to work with you to drive the beast from your land."

37. Thus he answered. The Mysians were satisfied with these things, but Croesus' son had heard what the Mysians asked and came in. When Croesus refused to send his son with them, the youth spoke to him as follows: "Father, once it used to be most good and noble for us to go regularly to wars and hunting and enjoy good repute. But now you keep me shut out from both of these, though you have never seen any cowardice or lack of *thūmos* in me. How am I to look now as I go to and from the *agorā*? What sort of person do I seem to the people of the *polis*, what sort to my newly-wedded wife? What sort of husband will she think she lives with? So either let me go to the hunt, or persuade me by word that these things are better for me done in this way."

38. Croesus answered, "Son, I do this not because I have seen any cowardice or anything else displeasing in you, but because a vision of a dream stood over me in my sleep and said that you would be short-lived, and that I would lose you by an iron spearpoint. Because of this vision I hastened your marriage and I do not send you on our undertakings, keeping guard so that I might be able somehow to keep you hidden away in my lifetime. You are my only son. I do not consider the other, disabled one to

be mine.”

39. The youth answered, “I forgive you, father, for keeping me under guard, since you saw such a vision. But the dream has escaped you, and it is right [*dikaion*] for me to show you what you do not understand. You say that the dream said I would die [= reach a *telos*] by an iron spearpoint. What kind of hands does a boar have, what iron spearpoint which you fear? If the dream had said to you that I would die [= reach a *telos*] by a tusk or by anything else that resembles a boar, you would have to do as you are doing. But it said by a spearpoint. Since our battle is not against men, let me go.”

40. Croesus answered, “Son, you win by declaring your interpretation of the dream. So, since I have been persuaded by you, I change my mind and allow you to go to the hunt.”

41. After saying this, Croesus summoned the Phrygian Adrastos, and said to him when he arrived: “Adrastos, I purified you when you were struck by a dreadful misfortune, and I did not blame you for it. I have entertained you in my house [*oikos*] and provided all your expenses. Since I have done you all this good, you ought to repay me with good deeds. So now I request you to be the guard of my son as he sets out for the hunt, in case any evil-doing robbers appear to you on the road bent on mischief. In addition, you ought to go where you may shine forth by your deeds. This is your heritage, and you are strong enough besides.”

42. Adrastos answered, “O King, I would not otherwise have gone to this contest [*āthlos*]. It is unseemly for a man involved in such a misfortune to go among his comrades who fare well, nor is the desire present, and for many reasons I would have restrained myself. But now, since you are insistent and it is necessary to show you *kharis*—for I ought to repay you with good deeds—I am ready to do this. Expect your son, whom you bid me to guard, to return home [*apo-nosteîn*] to you unharmed [without *pēma*], so far as it concerns his guard.”

43. After he answered Croesus with these words, they then went out furnished with both carefully chosen young men and dogs. They reached Mount Olympus and searched for the beast, and when they found it they stood around it in a circle and threw their javelins at it. Then the *xenos*, the one purified of manslaughter, whose name was Adrastos, threw his javelin at the boar and missed it, but hit Croesus’ son. So he was struck by a spearpoint and fulfilled the prophecy of the dream. A messenger ran to announce to Croesus what had happened, and when he reached Sardis he told [*sēmainein*] him of the battle with the boar and of the death of his son.

44. Croesus was greatly distressed at the death of his son, and considered it all the more terrible because the man he himself had purified of manslaughter had killed him. Terribly incensed by the misfortune, he invoked Zeus the god of purification, calling to

witness what he had suffered [*paskhein*] at the hands of his *xenos*, and he invoked Zeus the god-of-the-hearth [*ep-histios*] and the god-of-comrades [*hetairēios*], calling the same god by these appellations. He invoked Zeus-of-the-hearth [*ep-histios*] because he had entertained the guest [*xenos*] in his house [*oikos*] without knowing he was keeping his son's killer, and Zeus-of-comrades [*hetairēios*] because he had sent him as a guard but had found him to be his greatest enemy.

45. Then the Lydians arrived bearing the corpse, and his killer followed behind. This one [= Adrastos] stood before the corpse and surrendered himself to Croesus, stretching out his hands and bidding him slit his throat over the corpse. He mentioned his own earlier misfortune and said that on top of that he had destroyed his purifier and that life was not worth living. Croesus heard this and had pity on Adrastos, even though he was in so much misery [*kakon*] of his own, and said to him, "xenos, I have full compensation [*dikē*] from you, since you sentence yourself to death. It is not you who are responsible [*aitios*] for this evil [*kakon*] to me, except so far as you did it unintentionally. I suppose it is one of the gods, who long ago indicated [*sēmainein*] to me what was going to be." Croesus then buried his own son as was fitting. But Adrastos, son of Gordias son of Midas, the one who became the killer of his own brother, the killer of his purifier, when there was a quieting-down [*hēsukhiā*] around the *sēma*, recognizing that he was the most gravely unfortunate man that he knew of, slit his own throat over the tomb.

46. Croesus, bereft of his son, sat in great sorrow [*penthos*] for two years. But later the empire of Astyages son of Kyaxares was destroyed by Cyrus son of Cambyses, and the affairs of the Persians were on the rise, making Croesus lay aside his *penthos*. He deliberated how it might be possible to destroy their increasing power before the Persians became great. After forming this intention, he immediately tested the oracles in Hellas and the one in Libya, sending separate messengers to each, some going to Delphi, some to Abai in Phocis, some to Dodona. Others were sent to the oracles of Amphiaraos and of Trophonios, still others to the Brankhidai in the region of Miletus. These are the Hellenic oracles Croesus sent to for consultation; he sent other messengers to Ammon in Libya to make inquiry. He sent all these messengers to test what the oracles thought, so that if they were discovered to think the truth [*alētheia*], he would next send messengers and ask if he should attempt an expedition against the Persians.

47. He gave the Lydians these orders when he sent them to test the oracles: They should count the days for all the time from the day they set out from Sardis, and on the hundredth day make inquiry of the oracles, asking what Croesus son of Alyattes, king of the Lydians, happened to be doing. They should write down whatever each of the oracles responded and report it to him. No one says what the rest of the oracles responded, but at Delphi, as soon as the Lydians entered the hall to make inquiry of the god and asked what they had been ordered, the Pythia spoke thus in hexameter:

I know [*oida*] the number of the grains of sand and the measure of the sea.
I understand the mute and I hear the one who does not speak.
The smell has come to my senses of a hard-shelled tortoise,
boiling with meat of lamb,
where bronze is spread below, bronze set above.

48. The Pythia gave this response and the Lydians wrote it down and went away to Sardis. When the other messengers who had been sent around were present with their oracles, then Croesus unrolled each of them [= the scrolls] and read what was written. None of them pleased him, but when he heard the one from Delphi he immediately accepted it with a prayer, considering the only true oracle to be the one in Delphi, because it had discovered what he had been doing. For when he sent the messengers around to the oracles, he watched for the right day and contrived the following: devising something that would be impossible to discover or guess, he cut up a tortoise and a lamb and boiled them together himself in a bronze cauldron and put a bronze lid on it.

49. This was the answer Croesus received from Delphi. Concerning the answer of the oracle of Amphiaraos, I am not able to say what answer was given to the Lydians as they performed the accustomed rites of the sacred [*hieros*] precinct, for this is not reported, except that he believed that he also possessed this response that was not false.

50. Then he tried to propitiate the god in Delphi with great sacrifices. He sacrificed 3,000 of all kinds of sacrificial beasts, and he heaped up gilded and silver-plated couches, golden bowls, purple cloaks and tunics, and burned them on a great pyre, hoping to win the god over even more with these things, and he commanded all the Lydians to sacrifice everything of these that each one could. After the sacrifice, he melted down an immense amount of gold and made bricks of it, making them six hands in length, three hands in width, and one hand in height, 117 in number, four of them of refined gold, each weighing two and a half talents, the rest of white gold, two talents in weight. He also had fashioned the statue of a lion, of refined gold, with a weight of ten talents. When the temple in Delphi burned, this lion fell off the bricks—for it stood upon these—and now lies in the treasury of the Corinthians, weighing six and a half talents, for three and a half talents melted off.

51. Croesus followed through on these things and sent them to Delphi, along with many others: two bowls great in size, gold and silver; the golden one lies on your right as you enter the temple, the silver one on your left. These were also moved at the time of the temple's burning, and the golden one lies in the treasury of the Klazomenians, weighing eight and a half talents, and twelve minae besides, while the silver one lies in the corner of the forecourt, holding 600 amphorae. The Delphians mix wine in it at the Feast of Theophania [= epiphany of the god (Apollo)]. The Delphians say it is the work of Theodoros of Samos, and I think so, for it does not

seem to me to be an everyday work. He also sent four jars which stand in the treasury of the Corinthians, and he dedicated two sprinklers, gold and silver. On the golden one "from the Lacedaemonians" is written, claiming that it is their offering, but they do not speak correctly; this too is from Croesus, and one of the Delphians wrote the inscription wishing to please the Lacedaemonians. I know his name but will not mention it. The boy through whose hand water flows is from the Lacedaemonians, but neither of the sprinklers is. Along with these Croesus sent many other remarkable offerings, and circular silver basins, and also the golden statue of a woman, three cubits tall, which the Delphians say is a statue of Croesus' baker-woman. In addition, Croesus dedicated his own wife's necklaces and cinctures.

52. That is what he sent to Delphi. To Amphiaraios, learning of his achievement [*aretē*] and what-he-experienced [*pathos*]¹¹, he offered a shield of gold all over and a spear of solid gold, the shaft and the point equally of gold. Both of these down to my day had a place in Thebes, in the temple of Ismenian Apollo of the Thebans.

53. Croesus instructed those of the Lydians who were going to bring these gifts to the sacred precincts [*hiera*] to ask the oracles if he should march against the Persians and if he should attach any army of men to himself as *philoī*. Arriving where they had been sent, the Lydians made the offerings and inquired of the oracles by saying, "Croesus, king of the Lydians and other nations, has decided that these oracles are the only ones among men, and has given you gifts worthy of your findings. Now he asks if he should march against the Persians and if he should attach any army of men to himself as allies." So they asked, and the responses of both oracles agreed, prophesying to Croesus that if he marched against the Persians he would destroy a great empire. They advised him to find out who were the most powerful of the Hellenes and acquire them as *philoī*.

54. When Croesus heard the reported oracles, he was overjoyed by the responses. Completely expecting to destroy the empire of Cyrus, he sent again to Pytho¹² and, after learning their number, made a gift to the Delphians of two staters of gold for each man. The Delphians in turn granted to Croesus and the Lydians first consultation, exemption from fees, front-row seats, and the right for anyone who wished to become a Delphian for all time.

55. After making this gift to the Delphians, Croesus consulted the oracle a third time. Since he had received the truth [*alētheia*] from the oracle, he used it to the full. He made this inquiry of the oracle: whether his monarchy would last a long time. The Pythia responded to him as follows:

When a mule becomes king of the Medes,
then you, Lydian, with the graceful stride, flee along the [river] Hermos with its many pebbles,
do not stay, do not feel any shame [*aidōs*] about being *kakos*.

56. Croesus was pleased most of all by the coming of this utterance [*epos*], for he supposed that a mule would never become king of the Medes instead of a man, and that he and his offspring would never cease from rule. Then he deliberated and made inquiry whom he should acquire as *philo*i as being the most powerful of the Hellenes. He discovered by inquiry that the Lacedaemonians excelled in the Dorian lineage [*genos*] and the Athenians in the Ionian lineage. These were the foremost populations, the Ionian being originally Pelasgian, while the Dorian were a Hellenic people. The Pelasgian people have never yet been forced out of their homeland, while the Hellenic have wandered greatly, for in the time of King Deukalion they inhabited [*oikeîn*] the land of Phthia, but in the time of Doros son of Hellen they lived in the land that has the mountains Ossa and Olympus overlooking it, called Histiaia. When they were driven from Histiaia by the Kadmeians, they dwelled in Pindos in the land called Makednia. From there they migrated again into Dryopis, and from Dryopis they came into the Peloponnese and were called Dorians.

57. I cannot say exactly what language the Pelasgians spoke. But if I must make an inference from the Pelasgians who still exist, those who inhabit [*oikeîn*] the *polis* of Kreston beyond the Tyrrhenoi and once bordered the people now called Dorian, at that time inhabiting [*oikeîn*] the land now called Thessalian; from the Pelasgians who lived [verb from *oikos*] in Plakia and Skylake on the Hellespont and came to live with the Athenians; and from all the other Pelasgian cities which changed their names—if I must make an inference from these, the Pelasgians were speakers of a barbarian language. If all the Pelasgian people were such, then the Athenian people, since they were Pelasgian, besides changing their name to Hellenes also learned a new language. For the Krestonians do not speak the same language as any of the people who now dwell [*oikeîn*] around them, nor do the Plakienoi, but they do speak the same language as each other, making clear that they maintain the dialect which they brought with them when they migrated to these territories.

58. It seems clear to me that the Hellenic populations have always used the same language since they came into existence. But they were weak when they were separate from the Pelasgians. Starting from a small beginning they have increased into a multitude of populations, as they were joined chiefly by the Pelasgians, and also by numerous other barbarian populations. Furthermore, it seems to me that the Pelasgian people never greatly increased when they were barbarian.

59. Of these populations Croesus learned that the Attic¹³ was repressed and divided by Peisistratos son of Hippokrates, who at that time was *turannos* of the Athenians. When Hippokrates as a private citizen was observing [verb of *theōriā*] the Olympics, a great portent appeared to him: as he was performing the sacrifices, the cauldrons standing full of meat and water boiled up and started to overflow without fire. Khilon the Lacedaemonian was there and saw the portent, and advised Hippokrates: first, not to bring a wife of child-bearing years into his household; second, if he had a wife, to divorce her; and if he had a son, to disown him. Khilon gave this advice [*par-aineîn*],

but Hippokrates refused to be persuaded by it. Afterwards was born to him Peisistratos, the one who aimed at the tyranny and instituted a third faction [*stasis*], when the coast people and the plain people of the Athenians were at strife [= verb of *stasis*]. Megakles son of Alkmaion was chief of the coast people; Lycurgus son of Aristolaides was chief of the plain. Peisistratos collected partisans [= members of a *stasis*], claiming to be chief of the hill people, then contrived as follows: he wounded himself and his mules and then drove his team into the *agorā* as if escaping from his personal enemies [*ekhthroi*], who wished to kill him as he rode into the country. He asked for a guard from the people [*dēmos*], since he had gained a good reputation in the expedition against Megara by capturing Nisaia and performing other great deeds. The *dēmos* of the Athenians was deceived and they ordained that he select men from the townspeople, who became not the spear-bearers¹⁴ of Peisistratos but his club-bearers, for they followed behind him holding wooden clubs.¹⁵ They set in motion a revolution, with Peisistratos as leader, and took possession of the acropolis. Then Peisistratos ruled the Athenians without disturbing the existing *tīmai* or changing the laws [*thesmia*]. He governed the *polis* according to the established ways, making-order [= verb of *kosmos*] for it in a good manner.

60. Not much later the partisans [= members of a *stasis*] of Megakles and Lycurgus came to an agreement and drove him out. In this way had Peisistratos taken possession of Athens for the first time, gaining the tyranny and losing it, since it was not yet strongly rooted. Those who drove out Peisistratos quarreled [= verb of *stasis*] with each other all over again. Megakles was hard pressed by the strife [*stasis*] and sent a message to Peisistratos to ask if he wished take Megakles' daughter as his wife in return for the tyranny. Peisistratos consented to the offer and agreed on those terms. For his return they devised by far the most simpleminded thing I have ever found—since from olden days the Hellenic people have been distinguished from the barbarian for being more clever and further removed from foolish simplemindedness—especially if they devised such things among the Athenians, who are said to be the first among the Hellenes in being *sophoi*. In the district [*dēmos*] of Paiania was a woman whose name was Phye,¹⁶ who was three fingers short of being four cubits tall, and beautiful besides. They fitted this woman in full armor, positioned her on a chariot, showed her the bearing she should assume to look most becoming, and rode into town, sending heralds on ahead who spoke as instructed when they arrived in town, saying, "Athenians, receive with good intention [*noos*] Peisistratos to whom Athena herself has given most *tīmē* among men. She is bringing him back to her own acropolis." They went around saying this, and immediately the rumor reached the people [*dēmos*] that Athena was bringing back Peisistratos. The people in the city believed the woman to be the goddess herself and worshipped her, though human, and accepted Peisistratos.

61. Peisistratos regained the tyranny in the way I have told and married Megakles' daughter according to the agreement made with Megakles. Since he already had grown-up sons and the Alkmaionidai were said to be under a curse,¹⁷ he was unwilling

to have children from his new bride and had sex with her in an unaccustomed¹⁸ [= contrary to *nomos*] manner. The woman kept this hidden at first, but later she told her mother—I do not know whether she asked—who told her husband. Megakles was indignant at being treated without *tīmē* by Peisistratos. All in a huff he reconciled his hostility with the factions [= members of a *stasis*]. Peisistratos learned what was being done against him and got entirely out of the territory, and, reaching Eretria, he took counsel with his sons. The opinion of Hippias to take back possession of the tyranny prevailed, and then they collected gifts from the cities [= plural of *polis*] which were under some obligation to them. Many offered a large sum, but the Thebans surpassed all in giving money. Later, to speak briefly, time passed and everything was ready for their return. Argive mercenaries arrived from the Peloponnese, and a man of Naxos whose name was Lygdamis came as a volunteer, offering the greatest eagerness and bringing money and men.

62. In the eleventh year they set out from Eretria and made their comeback. The first place in Attica¹⁹ they took was Marathon. While they were encamped in this place, partisans [= members of a *stasis*] from the city came to them, and from the districts [= plural of *dēmos*] trickled in others who found tyranny more welcome than freedom. These were mustered. For as long as Peisistratos was collecting money, and later when he held Marathon, the Athenians of the city took no account of him, but when they learned that he was marching from Marathon toward the city, then they marched out against him. They went in full force against the returning exiles, and since the men with Peisistratos started from Marathon and went toward the city, they made contact when they reached the sacred precinct of Athena of Pallene, taking up opposite positions. At that point, Amphilytos the Akarnanian, an interpreter of oracles, who was engaged in a mission brought on by a divine trance, positioned himself next to Peisistratos and, coming up close to him, he gave him the following oracle in hexameter verse:

The throw is made, the net is spread,
the tuna-fish will dart in the moonlit night.

63. He was in a state of being possessed by the gods as he delivered this oracular utterance for him. Peisistratos understood the oracle, said that he accepted the prophecy, and led out his army. The Athenians from the city were then having breakfast, and after breakfast some of them were playing dice, some were sleeping. The men with Peisistratos burst upon the Athenians and routed them. As they were fleeing, Peisistratos then devised a very clever [*sophē*] plan to prevent the Athenians from regrouping and to keep them scattered. He mounted his sons on horseback and sent them ahead. They caught up with the fleeing men and spoke as instructed by Peisistratos, bidding each to take heart and to go off to his own home.

64. The Athenians complied, and in this way Peisistratos got possession of Athens for the third time. He rooted his tyranny with many mercenaries and with revenues of

money, some domestic, some coming in from the river Strymon. He took as hostages the sons of the Athenians who had stayed behind and not gone immediately into exile and placed them in Naxos, for he had conquered it, too, by war and handed it over to Lygdamis. In addition to these things, he purified the island of Delos according to the oracles. He purified it in this way: he dug up the corpses from all the territory within sight of the sacred precinct and transferred them to another territory of Delos. And Peisistratos was *turannos* of Athens, while some of the Athenians had fallen in the battle, and others were exiles from their homeland along with the Alkmaionidai.

65. So, Croesus learned that at that time such problems were oppressing the Athenians, but that the Lacedaemonians had escaped from the greatest evils [*kaka*] and had mastered the Tegeans in war. During the kingship of Leon and Hegesikles at Sparta, the Lacedaemonians had been successful in all their other wars but had met disaster only against the Tegeans. Even before this they had been the worst-governed of nearly all the Hellenes and used to have had no dealings with *xenoi*, but they had changed to a government-with-good-laws [*eunomiā*] in this way: Lycurgus, a man of reputation among the Spartans, went to the oracle at Delphi. As soon as he entered the hall, the priestess said in hexameter:

You have come to my rich temple, Lycurgus,
philos to Zeus and to all who have Olympian homes.
I am in doubt whether to pronounce [= address in an oracular way; verb of *mantis*]
you human or god,
but I expect, the more I think about it, that you are a god, Lycurgus.

Some say that the Pythia also declared to him the constitution [*kosmos*] that now exists at Sparta, but the Lacedaemonians themselves say that Lycurgus brought it from Crete when he was guardian of his nephew Leobotes, the Spartan king. Once he became guardian he changed all the laws [*nomima*] and took care that no one transgressed the new ones. Lycurgus afterwards established their affairs of war: the sworn divisions [*enōmotiai*], the bands of 30, the common meals; also the ephors and the council of elders.

66. Thus they changed around, switching to a government-by-way-of-good-laws [*eunomiā*], and when Lycurgus reached his end they established a sacred precinct [*hieron*] for him and now worship [*sebesthai*] him in a grand way. Since they had good [*agathē*] land and many men, they immediately flourished [= shot up like a sprout; *ana-trekhein*] and prospered. They were not content to live in peace, but, confident that they were stronger than the Arcadians, they asked the oracle at Delphi about capturing all the Arcadian territory. She replied in hexameter:

You ask me for Arcadia? You ask too much; I grant it not.
There are many men in Arcadia, eaters of acorns,
who will hinder you. But there is one thing I will not begrudge you.

I will give you Tegea to stomp at with your feet in dancing,
and to measure its beautiful plain with a rope.

When the Lacedaemonians heard the oracle reported, they left the other Arcadians alone and marched on Tegea carrying chains, relying on the deceptive oracle. They were confident they would enslave the Tegeans, but they were defeated in battle. Those taken alive were bound in the very chains they had brought with them, and they measured the Tegean plain with a rope by working the fields. The chains in which they were bound were still preserved in my day, hanging around the temple of Athena Alea.

67. In the previous war the Lacedaemonians were continually being outdone in battle by the Tegeans, but in the time of Croesus and the kingship of Anaxandrides and Ariston in Lacedaemon the Spartans had gained the upper hand. This is how: When they kept being defeated by the Tegeans, they sent ambassadors to Delphi to ask which god they should propitiate to prevail against the Tegeans in war. The Pythia responded that they should bring back the bones of Orestes son of Agamemnon. When they were unable to discover Orestes' tomb, they sent once more to the god to ask where he was buried. The Pythia responded in hexameter to the messengers:

There is a place named Tegea in the smooth plain of Arcadia,
where two winds blow under strong compulsion.

Blow lies upon blow, woe upon woe.

There the life-giving [*phusi-zoos*] earth covers over the son of Agamemnon.

Bring him back [*komizein*] and you will be the masters of Tegea.

When the Lacedaemonians heard this, they were no closer to discovery, though they looked everywhere. Finally it was found by Likhes, who was one of the Spartans who are called "doers of good things done [*agatho-ergoi*]." These men are those citizens who retire from the knights, the five oldest each year. They have to spend the year in which they retire from the class of horsemen [*hippeis*] being sent here and there by the Spartan state, never resting in their efforts.

68. It was Likhes, one of these men, who found the tomb in Tegea by a combination of luck and being *sophos*. At that time there was free access to Tegea, so he went into a workshop and watched iron being forged, standing there in amazement at what he saw being done. The smith perceived that he was amazed, so he stopped what he was doing and said, "Laconian *xenos*, if you had seen what I saw, then you would really be amazed, since you marvel so at ironworking. I wanted to dig a well in the courtyard here, and in my digging I came upon a coffin seven cubits long. I could not believe that there had ever been men taller than now, so I opened it and saw that the corpse was just as long as the coffin. I measured it and then reburied it." So the smith told what he had seen, and Likhes thought over what was said and reckoned that this was Orestes, according to the oracle. In the smith's two bellows he found the winds,

hammer and anvil were blow upon blow, and the forging of iron was woe upon woe, since he figured that iron was discovered as an evil [*kakon*] for humankind. After reasoning this out, he went back to Sparta and told the Lacedaemonians everything. They invented some counterfeit charge against him and sent him into exile. Coming to Tegea, he explained his misfortune to the smith and tried to rent the courtyard, but the smith did not want to lease it. Finally he persuaded him and set up residence [= verb of *oikos*] there. He dug up the grave and collected the bones, then hurried off to Sparta with them. Ever since then, whenever they [= the people of Sparta and Arcadia] encountered each other in war, the Lacedaemonians were far superior, and they had already subdued most of the Peloponnese.

69. Croesus learned all this and sent messengers bearing gifts to Sparta to request an alliance, ordering what they must say. They arrived and said, "We have been sent by Croesus, king of the Lydians and other populations, who says, 'Lacedaemonians, the god delivered an oracle that I should gain the Hellene as *philos*, and I learn that you are chief of Hellas. So I invite you according to the oracle, wishing to become *philos* and allied without trick or deceit.'" Croesus made this proclamation through messengers, and the Lacedaemonians, who had themselves heard the oracle that Croesus had received, were pleased by the arrival of the Lydians and swore oaths of reciprocal guest-host relations [*xeniā*] and alliance. They had already received some benefits from Croesus previously: the Lacedaemonians had sent men to Sardis to buy gold, wanting to use it for the statue of Apollo that now stands in Thornax in Laconia; when they tried to buy it, Croesus gave it to them as a present.

70. For this reason the Lacedaemonians accepted the alliance, and because he had selected [= verb from *krinein*] them out of all the Hellenes and chosen them as *philoī*. They were ready to accede to his offer. They also made a bronze bowl containing 300 amphorae, filling the outside around the lip with pictures, and conveyed it to him, wishing to give a gift to Croesus in turn. This bowl never reached Sardis, for two conflicting reasons related as follows: The Lacedaemonians say that when the bowl was being transported offshore from Samos on its way to Sardis, the Samians learned of it, sailed out in their long ships, and stole it. But the Samians say that when the Lacedaemonians conveying the bowl were too late and learned that Sardis and Croesus had been captured, they sold the bowl in Samos; some private citizens bought it and dedicated it in the sacred precinct of Hera. Perhaps those who sold it would say when they arrived in Sparta that they had been robbed by the Samians.

71. So it was concerning the bowl. Croesus misinterpreted the oracle and invaded Cappadocia, expecting to destroy Cyrus and the empire of the Persians. While Croesus was making his preparations to attack the Persians, one of the Lydians, who even before this was considered *sophos*, and after this pronouncement had the greatest name among the Lydians, gave Croesus this advice—his name was Sandanis: "O King, you are preparing to march against men who wear leather trousers, and the rest of their clothes are leather. They eat not as much as they want, but as much as they

have, for they possess a rugged territory. Furthermore, they do not use wine, they drink water; and they do not have figs to eat, or anything else that is good. So if you conquer them, what will you rob from people who have nothing? But if you are conquered, understand how many good things [*agatha*] you will throw away. Once they have had a taste of our good things [*agatha*], they will cling to them and it will be impossible to drive them away. I thank [= offer *kharis* to] the gods that they do not put it into the Persians' thoughts to attack the Lydians." So he spoke, but he did not persuade Croesus. Before conquering the Lydians, the Persians had no luxury or anything good [*agathon*] at all.

72. The Cappadocians are called Syrians by the Hellenes. These Syrians were subject to the Medes before the Persians ruled, and then to Cyrus. The boundary of the Median empire and the Lydian was the Halys river, which flows from the Armenian range through Cilicia. Then it flows keeping the Matienoi on its right and the Phrygians on the other side. Passing by these, it flows up toward the north where it skirts the Cappadocian Syrians and on the left the Paphlagonians. Thus the Halys river cuts off nearly all the lower part of Asia, from the sea opposite Cyprus to the Euxine sea [= the Black Sea]. This is the neck of this whole territory; a man traveling light uses five days on the journey across.

73. Croesus marched into Cappadocia for the following reasons: out of desire for land he wished to add to his own portion [*moira*], but chiefly he trusted in the oracle and wanted vengeance on Cyrus for Astyages. Astyages son of Kyaxares was Croesus' brother-in-law and king of the Medes, but Cyrus son of Cambyses held him in subjection. He became Croesus' brother-in-law in this way: A band of Scythian nomads who were involved in a dispute [= verb of *stasis*] retreated into Median land. At that time Kyaxares son of Phraortes son of Deiokes was *turannos* of the Medes. At first he treated these Scythians well, since they were suppliants, and he thought so much of them that he handed over his sons to them to learn their language and their art of archery. As time passed the Scythians continually went out hunting and always brought something back, but once it happened that they did not catch anything. They came home [= verb of *nostos*] empty-handed and Kyaxares treated them very roughly and insultingly, for he was sharp-tempered, as he showed. When they were treated by Cyaxares this way, they considered it undeserved, so they planned to cut to pieces one of his sons who was being taught among them and to prepare him as they usually prepared the meat of animals, then bring him in and give him to Kyaxares as game, and once they had done it to travel as fast as possible to Alyattes son of Sadyattes in Sardis. So it happened. Kyaxares and the guests who were present ate the meat, and the Scythians after doing this became suppliants of Alyattes.

74. After this, since Alyattes would not surrender the Scythians to Cyrus when he demanded them back, there was war between the Lydians and the Medes for five years, during which the Medes many times defeated the Lydians and the Lydians

many times defeated the Medes. They even fought a night-battle: They were waging war equally when during a battle in the sixth year it happened that, while the battle was raging, day suddenly became night. Thales of Miletus had predicted to the Ionians that this eclipse would occur, setting as the date the year in which the eclipse indeed happened. When the Lydians and the Medes saw it become night instead of day, they ceased from battle and both were more anxious to have peace. The ones who reconciled them were Syennesis the Cilician and Labynetos the Babylonian. They were the ones who insisted there be oaths between them and had them make an exchange of marriages. They decided that Alyattes should give his daughter Aryenis to Astyages, the son of Kyaxares, for treaties are unlikely to remain firm without firm necessity. These nations swear the same oaths as the Hellenes, and in addition they cut their arms at the surface and lick each other's blood.

75. So Cyrus held this Astyages in subjection, his own mother's father, for a reason [*aitiā*] that I will indicate [*sēmainein*] in a later account. Having this complaint against Cyrus, Croesus sent to the oracles asking if he should attack the Persians. When an ambiguous oracle arrived, he thought that the oracle was on his side and marched against the territory [*moira*] of the Persians. When Croesus reached the Halys river, he then transported his army across the existing bridges. So I report, but the more common story among the Hellenes is that Thales of Miletus got them across. It is said that Croesus was at a loss as to how the army would cross the river, for at that time these bridges did not exist. Thales was present in the camp and devised a way to make the river, which was flowing on the army's left side, also to flow on its right. He did this in the following way: starting above the camp, he arranged for the digging of a deep trench, making it crescent-shaped, so that in this way the river, turned from its former channel, might take the encamped army from the back, then pass the camp and flow back into its former course. The result was that as soon as the river was split it became fordable on both sides. Some people say that the former channel was completely dried up, but I do not agree. How in that case could they have crossed it on their way back?

76. Croesus crossed with this army and reached the place called Pteria in Cappadocia. Pteria is the strongest place in that territory and lies approximately in a line with the *polis* of Sinope on the Euxine sea. He camped there and devastated the farm lands of the Syrians. He captured the *polis* of the Pterians and enslaved them, and he captured all its outlying towns and drove the people from their homes, though they had in no way wronged him [*aitios*]. Cyrus collected his own army and took along all the people who dwell [*oikeîn*] between as he went to encounter Croesus. But before he rushed to lead out his army, he sent heralds to the Ionians trying to get them to revolt from Croesus, but the Ionians were not persuaded. Cyrus arrived and camped opposite Croesus, and they made trials of each other's strength in the Pterian territory. A fierce battle took place and many fell on both sides, but in the end [*telos*] neither prevailed and they parted when night came on. In this way both armies contended.

77. Croesus found fault with his own army on account of its number, for the army he had in battle was much smaller than that of Cyrus. Finding this fault, he marched away to Sardis when Cyrus did not attempt an advance on the next day. He had in mind [*noos*] to summon the Egyptians according to their oath, for he had made an alliance with Amasis, king of Egypt, even before he had with the Lacedaemonians; also to summon the Babylonians, with whom an alliance had been made—at that time Labynetos was *turannos* of the Babylonians; and to instruct the Lacedaemonians to be present at the appointed time. After he had collected these and assembled his own army, he intended to pass the winter and to march against the Persians at the break of spring. With this in mind [= verb of *phrēn*] he reached Sardis and sent heralds to instruct that according to the terms of alliance they should gather in Sardis on the fifth month. From his present army that had fought with the Persians, he released and scattered all that were his *xenoi*, for he never expected that after such evenly-matched fighting Cyrus would march on Sardis.

78. While Croesus was considering these things, the environs of the city became filled with snakes. At their appearance [= verb *phainesthai*] the horses regularly left off feeding in their usual pastures and devoured them. When Croesus saw this, he thought it was a portent, as indeed it was. He immediately sent messengers to the territory of the Telmessian interpreters. They reached the place and learned from the Telmessians what the portent intended to mean [*sēmainein*], but they did not succeed in announcing it to Croesus, for before they sailed back to Sardis Croesus had been captured. The Telmessians interpreted it in this way: Croesus must expect a foreign army to come against the territory, and at its arrival it would conquer the native inhabitants [*epi-khōrioi*]. They said that the snake was a child of the earth, but the horse was an enemy and a newcomer. The Telmessians gave this answer to Croesus when he had already been captured, but they did not yet know anything concerning Sardis and Croesus himself.

79. As soon as Croesus marched away after the battle that had taken place in Pteria, Cyrus learned that he had gone and that he was going to disband his army. He took counsel and found it his business to march on Sardis as quickly as he could, before the forces of the Lydians were gathered a second time. When he had so resolved, he acted with speed: he marched his army into Lydia and came to Croesus as his own messenger. Then Croesus fell into great despair, since his affairs had turned out contrary to the expectation he had firmly held. Nevertheless, he led the Lydians into battle. At that time there was no population [*ethnos*] in Asia more manly or more valiant than the Lydian. Their method of battle was on horseback: they carried long spears and were good [*agathoi*] at riding.

80. They met on the plain in front of the city of Sardis. It is large and bare, and through it flow many rivers, including the Hyllus. These flow together into the largest, called the Hermos, which flows from the sacred mountain of Mother Dindyme and enters the sea near the *polis* of Phocaea. When Cyrus saw the Lydians marshaled for

battle, he dreaded their cavalry and did as follows by the advice of Harpagos, a man of Media: he gathered all the camels that followed his own army carrying provisions and baggage, removed their loads, and mounted on them men who had been equipped in the outfit of cavalry. After equipping them, he commanded them to go in advance of the rest of the army against Croesus' cavalry. He ordered the infantry to follow the camel-corps and arranged all his cavalry behind the footsoldiers. When all his men were drawn up, he ordered them to kill unsparingly every one of the other Lydians who came in the way, but not to kill Croesus, even if he defended himself when caught. He gave these orders and stationed the camels opposite the cavalry for this reason: the horse is afraid of the camel and cannot bear either to see the look of it or to smell its odor. He thus devised [verb of *sophos*] for this very reason: so that Croesus would have no use of the cavalry by which the Lydian was intending to distinguish himself. When they met in battle, as soon as the horses smelled the camels and saw them, they wheeled back, and Croesus' hope was destroyed. But even then the Lydians were not cowards: when they understood what was happening, they jumped from the horses and fought the Persians on foot. In time, after many men fell on both sides, the Lydians were routed. They were trapped inside the wall and besieged by the Persians.

81. They were in a state of siege. Croesus expected that the siege would last a long time and sent out from the wall other messengers to the allied states. The earlier ones had been sent to instruct them to gather at Sardis on the fifth month, but he sent these out to ask them to come and help as quickly as possible since Croesus was under siege.

82. He sent to the other allied states and to the Lacedaemonians. At this very time strife [*eris*] had befallen the Spartans themselves, with the Argives over the territory called Thyrea. The Lacedaemonians held possession of this Thyrea after cutting it off from the territory [*moira*] of the Argolid. The territory as far as Malea toward the west belonged to the Argives, both the land on the mainland and the island of Kythera and the rest of the islands. When the Argives marched out to their land that was being cut off, they negotiated and agreed that 300 of each side would do battle and that the territory would belong to the side that won. The majority of each army withdrew to its own land and did not remain while they fought, so that, if the armies were present, the others would not help their own men if they saw them being defeated. They made this agreement and departed. Specially chosen men from each side were left behind and started fighting. They were evenly matched and fought until out of 600 men three were left, Alkenor and Khromios of the Argives and Orthyades of the Lacedaemonians. These men were left when night came on. The two of the Argives ran to Argos as victors, but Orthyades of the Lacedaemonians stripped the corpses of the Argives, carried their weapons to his own camp, and kept his post. On the next day both sides arrived and learned what had happened. For a while each side claimed that they were the winners, one side saying that more of their men had survived, the other side declaring they had fled and that their own man had remained and stripped the corpses

of the other side. Finally [*telos*] from this conflict [*eris*] they came to blows and did battle, and after many men fell on both sides the Lacedaemonians prevailed. Ever since this time the Argives cut their hair short, previously wearing it long under compulsion, and they made a law [*nomos*] and pronounced a curse that no Argive man could let his hair grow, nor their wives wear gold, until they win back Thyrea. The Lacedaemonians made a law [*nomos*] opposite to this, to wear their hair long after this time, though before this they had not worn long hair. They say that the one who survived from the 300, Orthyades, felt disgraced to return home to Sparta when all the men in his company had perished, and killed himself there in Thyrea.

83. While these affairs prevailed among the Spartans, the herald from Sardis came and asked them to aid Croesus who was under siege. Still, when they heard the herald, they were eager to help. They had already made their preparations, and their ships were ready, when there came another message that the wall of the Lydians was captured and that Croesus was taken prisoner. So, considering it a great misfortune, they stopped their preparations.

84. In this way Sardis was captured: On the fourteenth day that Croesus was under siege, Cyrus sent horsemen through his army proclaiming that he would give gifts to the first man to mount the wall. Afterwards the army made the attempt without success. Then, after the others had stopped, a man of Mardia tried to climb up—his name was Hyroiades—on that part of the acropolis where no guard had been posted. There was no fear that it ever be taken from that part, for there the acropolis is an impregnable precipice. This was the only place where Meles, the former king of Sardis, did not carry around the lion which his concubine gave birth to. The Telmessians had determined that Sardis would be impossible to capture if this lion was carried around the wall. Meles had carried the lion around the rest of the wall in the vulnerable part of the acropolis, but he had ignored this part as being an impregnable precipice. It is located in the part of the *polis* that faces Tmolos. This Hyroaides of Mardia on the previous day had seen one of the Lydians climb down this part of the acropolis after his helmet that had rolled down from above and retrieve it. He observed this and put it in his *thūmos*. Then he himself climbed up, and other Persians climbed up after him. Many of them mounted the wall, and in this way Sardis was captured and the whole city was captured.

85. This is what happened to Croesus himself: He had a son, whom I mentioned previously, sound of body in other respects, but mute. In his by-gone prosperity [not *olbos*] Croesus had done everything for him, thinking up many things and even sending to Delphi to consult the oracle about him. The Pythia said to him the following:

Lydian in lineage [*genos*], king of many, very disconnected [*nēpios*] Croesus, do not wish to hear in your palace the voice, so much prayed for, of your son speaking. It would be much better for you otherwise.

He will first speak on a day that is not *olbios*.

When the wall had been taken, one of the Persians went ahead to kill Croesus without recognizing him. Croesus saw him coming but paid no heed under his present misfortune [unrelated to *olbos*], for it made no difference to him to die by the blow. But when this mute son saw the Persian coming on, from fear and trouble [*kakon*] he burst into speech, saying, "My good man, do not kill Croesus." This was the first utterance he ever made, and afterwards he spoke for the rest of his life.

86. The Persians occupied Sardis and took Croesus prisoner. Croesus had ruled 14 years and been besieged 14 days. According to the oracle, he had destroyed his own great empire. The Persians took him and brought him to Cyrus, who erected a pyre and mounted Croesus atop it, bound in chains, with twice seven sons of the Lydians beside him. Cyrus may have intended [= to have in *noos*] to sacrifice him as a victory-offering to some god, or he may have wished to fulfill a vow [*eukhē*], or perhaps he had heard that Croesus was god-fearing [*theo-sebēs*] and put him atop the pyre to find out if some *daimōn* would deliver him from being burned alive. So Cyrus did this. As Croesus stood on the pyre, although he was in such great trouble [*kakon*], it occurred to him that Solon had spoken with a god's help when he said that no one among the living is *olbios*. When this occurred to him, he heaved a deep sigh and groaned aloud after a long moment of calmness [*hēsukhiā*], calling out three times the name Solon. Cyrus heard and ordered the interpreters to ask Croesus whom he was invoking. They approached and asked, but Croesus was silent at their questioning, until finally they forced him and he said, "I would prefer to great wealth his coming into discourse with all *turanoi*." Since what he said was unintelligible, they again asked what he had said, persistently importuning him. He explained that first Solon the Athenian had come and seen all his fortune [*olbos*] and spoken as if he despised it. Now everything had turned out for him as Solon had said, speaking no more of himself than of every human being, especially those who think themselves *olbioi*. While Croesus was relating all this, the pyre had been lit and the edges were on fire. When Cyrus heard from the interpreters what Croesus said, he changed his mind and considered that he, a human [*anthrōpos*], was burning alive another human being, one not inferior to himself in good fortune [*eudaimoniā*]. In addition, he feared retribution, reflecting how there is nothing stable in human affairs. He ordered that the blazing fire be extinguished as quickly as possible, and that Croesus and those with him be taken down, but despite their efforts they could not master the fire.

87. Then the Lydians say that Croesus understood Cyrus' change of mind, and when he saw everyone trying to extinguish the fire but unable to check it, he invoked Apollo, crying out that if Apollo had ever been given by him any gift with *kharis*, let him offer help and deliver him from the present evil [*kakon*]. Thus he in tears invoked the god, and suddenly out of a clear and windless sky clouds came together, a storm broke, and it rained violently, extinguishing the pyre. Thus Cyrus perceived that Croesus was *philos* to a god and an *agathos* man. He had him brought down from the

pyre and asked, "Croesus, who on earth persuaded you to wage war against my land and become my enemy instead of my *philos*?" He replied, "O King, I acted thus for your good fortune [*eudaimoniā*], but for my own misfortune [*kakodaimoniā*]. The god of the Hellenes is responsible [*aitios*] for this by inciting me to wage war. No one is so senseless as to choose war over peace. In peace, sons bury their fathers; in war, fathers bury their sons. I suppose it was *philon* to a *daimōn* that this be so."

88. Thus he spoke, and Cyrus freed him and seated him next to himself, treating him with much care. Cyrus and all around marveled greatly at Croesus. He was sunk in reflection and remained serene [*hēsukhos*]. Then he turned and saw the Persians plundering the city of the Lydians and said, "O King, should I at present tell you what I really think or be silent?" Cyrus bade him take courage and say whatever he wished. He answered him by saying, "What is it that this great massing of people is doing with great eagerness?" Cyrus said, "They are occupying your *polis* and plundering your property." Croesus answered, "It is neither my *polis* nor my property that they are occupying. I no longer have any share in these things. What they are robbing and plundering is yours."

89. Cyrus thought over what Croesus had said, dismissed the others, and asked Croesus what he foresaw for him in what was being done. Croesus said, "Since the gods have given me to you as your slave, I think it right for me to indicate [*sēmainein*] to you if I see anything further. The Persians have *hubris* by nature and lack wealth. So if you allow them to pillage and gain great wealth, this is what you may expect from them: expect that whoever of them acquires the most will rise in rebellion against you. Now if what I say pleases you, do this: place guards from your bodyguard at all the gates, who will take the goods from those who are carrying them out, by saying that it is necessary for them to give a tithe to Zeus. You will not be hated by them for taking their things by force [*biā*], and they will admit that you are acting justly [= doing what is *dikaion*] and willingly surrender it."

90. Cyrus heard this and was exceedingly pleased, since it seemed like good advice. He praised [= verb of *ainos*] him greatly and instructed his bodyguards to perform what Croesus had advised. He said to Croesus: "Since you, a king, are ready to perform useful deeds and words [*epea*], ask for whatever gift you wish to be yours on the spot." Croesus said, "Master, you will give me the greatest *kharis* if you allow me to send these fetters to the god of the Hellenes, to whom I gave most *tīmē* among the gods, and ask if it is his custom [*nomos*] to deceive those who treat him well." Cyrus asked what he was pleading for with this request. Croesus told again his whole intention and the answers of the oracles and especially his offerings, saying that he had marched against the Persians incited by the oracle [= noun related to *mantis*]. He said this and ended by again pleading to be allowed to reproach the god for it. Cyrus laughed and said, "You shall get this from me, Croesus, and everything else you ask for on every occasion." When Croesus heard this, he sent some Lydians to Delphi, instructing them to place the fetters on the threshold of the temple and then to ask

the god if he was not ashamed of inciting Croesus by the oracles to march against the Persians to put down the power of Cyrus, from which these were the victory-offerings, and to display the fetters at this point. He instructed them to ask these things, and also whether it was the custom [*nomos*] for Hellenic gods to be without *kharis*.

91. It is said that after the Lydians had arrived and spoken their instructions, the Pythia said to them, "It is impossible even for a god to avoid fate [*moira*] as it is allotted [*pe-prō-sthai*]. Croesus has expiated the crime of his ancestor five generations previous, who was the bodyguard of the Hērakleidai but obeyed a woman's trick, murdered his master, and then took his master's *tīmē*, though it did not at all belong to him. Loxias²⁰ was eager that the suffering [*pathos*] of Sardis happen in the time of Croesus' children and not in that of Croesus himself, but he could not divert the Fates [*moirai*], though he did give *kharis* to him and accomplish as much as they would concede. He was able to put off the capture of Sardis for three years; let Croesus know that he is captured this many years later than was fated. Second, he [= the god] helped him when he was about to be burned. Concerning the oracle [= noun related to *mantis*] that was given, Croesus is not correct [*orthos*] in complaining. Loxias foretold to him that if he marched against the Persians he would destroy a great empire. Thereupon, if he was going to take counsel carefully, he should have sent and asked whether his own or Cyrus' empire was meant. Since he neither understood what was said nor asked again, let him declare himself to be responsible [*aitios*]. When he consulted the oracle for the final time, he also did not understand the answer that Loxias gave him about the mule. Cyrus was this mule, for he was born of parents from two different populations and not from a single population [*ethnos*]. His mother was more superior [*agathē*] in lineage, his father inferior: she was a Mede and the daughter of Astyages, the king of the Medes, while he was a Persian and under their rule [= the rule of the Medes], beneath them in all respects, and lived with [= verb related to *oikeîn*] a woman who was his superior." The Pythia gave this answer to the Lydians, which they carried back to Sardis and announced to Croesus. When he heard it, he confessed that the mistake [*hamartad-*] was his own and not the god's.

Notes

[[back](#)] **1.** Herodotus means that the Phoenicians came from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea and settled in the area of modern Lebanon.

[[back](#)] **2.** Herodotus uses 'Spartans' and 'Lacedaemonians' almost interchangeably. Sparta is the leading city of Lacedaemonia. Lacedaemonia and Laconia are alternate names for the same region in the Peloponnese.

[[back](#)] **3.** The basic idea is 'friendly to *xenoi*'. The Black Sea was given that name by

the Hellenes in an effort to be euphemistic about this naturally hostile region. Compare the myth of the Symplegades, the crashing rocks at its entrance, in Euripides' *Medea*.

[[back](#)] **4.** Hērakleidai means literally 'sons of Hērakles'.

[[back](#)] **5.** The name Pythia is the official title of the Priestess of Apollo at Delphi.

[[back](#)] **6.** One talent weighs approximately 57 pounds.

[[back](#)] **7.** Shepherd's pipe.

[[back](#)] **8.** A special form of song and dance performed by a *choros*.

[[back](#)] **9.** One stadion equals 600 feet (the foot in this case is notionally the size of the foot of Hēraklēs as reckoned at Olympia).

[[back](#)] **10.** The word translated as 'taking a sacred voyage' is *theōriā*. The word denotes the type of journey that leads to the achievement of a mystical vision.

[[back](#)] **11.** The oracle of Amphiaraos was thought to issue pronouncements by way of the spirit of the hero Amphiaraos, one of the Seven against Thebes. The term pathos here refers to the larger-than-life 'experience' or 'passion' of the hero as commemorated in hero cult.

[[back](#)] **12.** That is, the holy of holies at Delphi.

[[back](#)] **13.** The adjective 'Attic' and the place-name 'Attica' refer to the territory of Athens.

[[back](#)] **14.** The usual word for bodyguards.

[[back](#)] **15.** The hero Hēraklēs was traditionally pictured as brandishing a wooden club.

[[back](#)] **16.** The noun *puē* can be translated as something like 'Natural Grandeur/Beauty'.

[[back](#)] **17.** Megakles belonged to the lineage of the Alkmaionidai.

[[back](#)] **18.** That is, contrary to *nomos*.

[[back](#)] **19.** The name Attica defines the territory of Athens.

[[back](#)] **20.** The title of Apollo at Delphi.

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