

Scholion auf V. 12 bezieht, erst an dritter Stelle nach der Ergänzung des Prädikats zu αἱ κατὰ λεπτόν und dem Hinweis auf Μίμνερος ὅτι γλυκύς als Objektsatz zu ἐδίδαξαν / ἐδίδαξε erklärt wird, entspricht der logischen Abfolge der Exegese.

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## HERODOTOS AND THE TYRANT-SLAYERS

The most significant feature of Herodotos' treatment of the tyrannicide at Athens is its brevity. In sharp contrast to Thukydides' vivid and lengthy account (VI. 54–59), Herodotos disposes of the murder of Hipparchos in only one sentence (V. 56.2): "After he had spoken of the dream, he dispatched the procession, during which he died"<sup>1</sup>). Herodotos attempts neither to explain the motives of the tyrannicides nor to relate the events surrounding the murder itself; he contents himself instead with recounting Hipparchos' premonitive dream on the night before his death (V. 56.1)<sup>2</sup> and with explaining his own theory about the origins of the Gephyraioi, the clan of the murderers (V. 57–61)<sup>3</sup>. These two subjects are of course irrelevant to the matter at hand, the liberation of Athens (V. 55–65), but discussion of the tyrannicide, which was popularly linked with that liberation, is absolutely minimal. Why

1) μετὰ δὲ ἀπειπάμενος τὴν ὄψιν ἔπεμπε τὴν πομπήν, ἐν τῇ δὴ τελευτᾷ.

2) See R. W. Macan, *Herodotus, The Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Books*, I (London 1895) 196; also W. W. How and J. Wells, *A Commentary on Herodotus, II* (Oxford 1912) 25; G. W. Dyson, *AEONTA TEKEIN*, CQ 23 (1929) 188, n. 3, finds an Orphic connection possible here, an idea particularly appealing in view of Hipparchos' association with the Orphic chresmologue Onomakritos (see Hdt. VII. 6.3; Paus. I.22.7; also Jutta Kirchberg, *Die Funktion der Orakel im Werke Herodots* [Hypomnemata 11, Göttingen 1965] 89).

3) Cf. How and Wells (above, n. 2); on the Gephyraioi see U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Oropos und die Graier*, *Hermes* 21 (1886) 91–115, especially 106–7 concerning the tyrannicides; J. Toepffer, *Attische Genealogie* (Berlin 1889) 293–300, and J. K. Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families, 600–300 B. C.* (Oxford 1971) 472–79.

Herodotos should have passed up a really good chance to elaborate upon such an interesting subject has always been puzzling<sup>4</sup>).

One answer is that Herodotos did not want to elaborate on the tyrannicide, but wished instead to say little. It is possible that Herodotos' plan was to minimize the significance of the act by downplaying it as much as he could in order to maximize the part of the Alkmaionidai in the liberation of Athens<sup>5</sup>). By saying very little about the tyrannicide (V. 56.2), but very much about the role of the Alkmaionidai (V. 62–65), Herodotos could diminish the importance of the murder for his readers. The beneficiaries of this type of reporting were the Alkmaionidai, who were thus cast in a vastly more favourable light by Herodotos than ever they were popularly. There are reasons to believe that such was Herodotos' aim.

Herodotos' efforts to promote the Alkmaionidai as unflawed liberators and freedom-fighters are apparent elsewhere in his history. The clearest instance of this occurs at VI. 121 ff. where Herodotos combats the charge that the Alkmaionidai were responsible for the treasonous shield-signal of Marathon which implicated the family as fifth columnists for the Persians and for Hippias and which was popularly attributed to them<sup>6</sup>). In defense of the Alkmaionidai, Herodotos says that they were *μισοτύραννοι* who fled the Peisistratid tyranny *τὸν πάντα χρόνον*<sup>7</sup>). This defence is contra-

4) Cf. Macan (above, n. 2) II, 124–25; also F. Jacoby, *Atthis: The Local Chronicles of Ancient Athens* (Oxford 1949) 335, n. 25, and C. Fornara, *The 'Tradition' about the Murder of Hipparchus*, *Historia* 17 (1968) 405.

5) K. Kinzl, *Herodotos-Interpretations*, *RhM* 118 (1975), 193, n. 3, states that Herodotos dealt with the tyrannicide outside of the account of how Athens was freed to make clear that it was to him a circumstantial happening, but even that is an admission that Herodotos abridged what he had heard in transmitting it; cf. Fornara (above, n. 4) 406 and n. 23.

6) How and Wells (above, n. 2) 115; *contra* G. M. E. Williams, *The Image of the Alkmaionidai between 490 and 487/6 B. C.*, *Historia* 29 (1980) 108, who argues valiantly but unconvincingly on behalf of the family: rightly or wrongly the shield-signal of Marathon was charged to some (not all) of the Alkmaionidai and that attribution along with the subsequent ostracisms of the 480s cannot have been fortuitous, especially since the Athenians classed some of the Alkmaionidai as traitors on ostraka and – it must follow even from an allegation of medism – “friends of the tyrants”: see Williams, 108, n. 16; see also P. Karavites, *Realities and Appearances, 490–480 B. C.*, *Historia* 26 (1977) 129–49. F. Jacoby, *RE Suppl.* II 413.53 ff., cites other passages that may be complimentary (V. 69, 78, VIII. 17, IX. 114), but these are not clearly so (cf. C. Fornara, *Herodotos – An Interpretative Essay* [Oxford 1971] 54–56).

7) Kinzl (above, n. 5) 199, n. 32 considers these words rhetorical, but does that alter their gross inaccuracy?

dicted not only by the archon-list, which shows that Kleisthenes was back and cooperating with the Peisistratids by the mid-520s, but also by Herodotos' own report of Megakles' marriage alliance with Peisistratos (I. 60.2–61.3): Herodotos overlooks the unflattering truth to defend the Alkmaionidai<sup>8</sup>). Later, he argues that the Alkmaionidai “much more than Harmodios and Aristogeiton” freed Athens, believing apparently that their actions in 511 more than compensated for their embarrassing activities before and showing completely aside for the moment the crucial part played by the Spartans<sup>9</sup>). Whether he believed what he wrote is of little consequence: his special pleading on behalf of the Alkmaionidai, although unsuccessful, shows clearly to what extent he was favourably disposed toward the family and what form the expression of that favourable disposition would take<sup>10</sup>).

Herodotos is not favourably disposed toward the Gephyraioi. His sub-digression concerning the clan's origins (V. 57–61) tries to contradict their own traditions, traditions that were certainly more valid than Herodotos' inferences<sup>11</sup>). In it, moreover, Herodotos stresses the foreignness of the clan, ending it with the implication that the Gephyraioi with their separate temples and rites were still unassimilated among the Athenians and were thus still aliens. Far from being autochthonous Athenians, the Gephyraioi were originally not even Greek, according to Herodotos, but Phoenician, an allegation that is tantamount to a disparagement<sup>12</sup>).

8) Archon-list: SEG X, 352; *contra* C. Fornara, (above, n. 6) 56, n. 37, who asserts that “no pro-Alcmaeonid would have described Megakles in this fashion”: Herodotos says nothing about the substantial cooperation between Megakles and Peisistratos that must have occurred as a result of the marriage-alliance and very little at all that could be construed as unflattering to Megakles. Indeed, the point of the story is to demonstrate Megakles' righteous indignation at his affront by Peisistratos.

9) Hdt. VI. 123.2; an earlier passage (V. 65.1) suggests that the Spartans would never have taken the Peisistratidai on the Akropolis unless their children were captured: this denigration of the Spartan role in Athens' liberation was noticed by Macan (above, n. 2) I, 204.

10) *Contra* Fornara (above, n. 8) 54, n. 33: Herodotos' attitude toward the Alkmaionidai is abundantly clear from what he says pointedly on their behalf here.

11) Cf. How and Wells (above, n. 2) 28; Jacoby (above, n. 4) 337, n. 40; Davies (above, n. 3) 472–73 follows Herodotos, although he admits a “substratum of truth in the family claim to Eretrian origin. . . .” But how possibly could Herodotos know more about the family than they themselves?

12) Cf. Isokrates IX. 47: Παραλαβὼν γὰρ τὴν πόλιν ἐκβεβαρωμένην καὶ διὰ τὴν Φοινίκων ἀρχὴν οὔτε τοὺς Ἕλληνας προσδεχομένην. The Phoenicians constituted the bulk of the sailors on the Persian fleet, which, during the fifth century B. C., posed the greatest threat to Athens and the safety of the Aegean.

This even though Thukydides (VI. 54.2) describes Aristogeiton as ἀνήρ τῶν ἀσπῶν, μέσος πολίτης, a description that certainly belies Herodotos' magnified distinctions<sup>13</sup>). Shortly after the subdigression (V. 62.2), Herodotos emphasizes that the Alkmaionidai were an Athenian family<sup>14</sup>). The stress on the foreignness of the Gephyraioi was purposely intended to be blended into the story of Athen's liberation in order to detract from the tyrannicides and their image as patriots; the same stress by contrast, was also meant to enhance the patriotic image of the Alkmaionidai who were, Herodotos tells us, Athenian through and through. We note that the sub-digression concerning the origins of the Gephyraioi is after all completely irrelevant either to the death of Hipparchos or to the liberation of Athens.

Herodotos is actually of two minds about the tyrannicide. At VI. 123.2, he is convinced that the Alkmaionidai liberated Athens "much more than Harmodios and Aristogeiton." But earlier, at VI. 109.3, he has Miltiades urge Kallimachos before the battle of Marathon to make Athens free and "leave behind a memorial of freedom such as not even Harmodios and Aristogeiton left"<sup>15</sup>). This double-mindedness accounts for why Herodotos blunts his attack on the importance of the murder: he never says that the tyrannicides were insignificant, only that the Alkmaionidai were *more* significant. Indecision about the merit of their act probably prevented Herodotos from arguing that Harmodios and Aristogeiton

Plutarch too (Mor. 860e) observed the insult, the importance of which observation lies in the fact that it shows Herodotos was alone in his designation of the Gephyraioi as Phoenician. Cf. Jacoby (above, n. 4) 337, n. 40.

13) The second part of the description of Aristogeiton was undoubtedly meant to contrast Aristogeiton's limited station with Hipparchos' high station; the first part shows clearly that Thukydides was unaware of Aristogeiton's foreignness (see above, n. 12).

14) . . . Ἀλκμεωνίδαί, γένος ἕοντες Ἀθηναῖοι καὶ φεύγοντες Πεισιστρατίδας . . . cf. also Hdt. VI. 125.1: οἱ δὲ Ἀλκμεωνίδαί ἦσαν μὲν καὶ τὰ ἀνέκαθεν λαμπροὶ ἐν τῆσι Ἀθήνησι . . . Professor H. I. Immerwahr, *Form and Thought in Herodotus* (Cleveland 1966) 117, n. 119, observes that this emphasis comes also at the expense of other Athenian families, who, except for the Alkmaionidai, are shown to be foreign. Clearly, Herodotos has gone to greater lengths in the case of Gephyraioi.

15) Cf. H. Friedel, *Der Tyrannenmord in Gesetzgebung und Volksmeinung der Griechen* (Stuttgart 1937) 33; A. J. Podlecki, *The Political Significance of the Athenian 'Tyrannicide'-Cult*, *Historia* 15 (1966) 140, suggests that VI. 121 ff. was written later than VI. 109 and inserted into an already completed narrative after Herodotos had learned the true story from the Alkmaionidai. But that must also mean that the entire account of Athens' liberation (V. 55 ff.) was a revision.

ton did not free Athens as strongly as Thukydides did later<sup>16</sup>). The same indecision caused Herodotos to argue against them obliquely by omitting the story of the tyrannicide almost entirely and by suggesting that the heroes of Athenian freedom and the state symbols of democracy were really not Athenian at all. This denigration was followed by praise for the Alkmaionidai and for their contribution to Athenian freedom, which Herodotos describes effusively. Because of his high regard for the Alkmaionidai, Herodotos felt that this treatment was necessary: even in their most glorious and triumphant days among the Athenians, the Alkmaionidai were never honoured by the Athenians for the contribution to freedom and, in fact, were held in suspicion<sup>17</sup>). Herodotos probably considered it his duty to counterweight the scale of credit for Athens' freedom more in favour of the family that he esteemed.

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16) Cf. Fornara (above, 4) 422–23.

17) It is not possible to examine the character of the Alkmaionidai in detail, but the view that the family “could point with pride to their own liberation of Athens” (Jacoby [above, n. 4] 158–68; Podlecki [above, n. 15] 130–31) seems to me ill-founded: some of the family were collaborators with the tyrants, some were suspected of collaborating with the Persians and the tyrants later; they had introduced foreigners onto Attic soil to fight with the Athenians (thus committing *προδοσία*) and, during the Herms-affair (Thuc. VI. 27–29), were expected to do so again (cf. Thuc. VI. 61.2). They were undoubtedly perceived as cynical and opportunistic by the Athenians, not patriotic; naturally, family history would have it otherwise and it is apparent that Herodotos accepted that.