

## Herodotus 1.45.3

Herodotus describes the aftermath of Adrastus' accidental killing of Atys (1.45):<sup>1</sup>

Παρήσαν δὲ μετὰ τοῦτο οἱ Λυδοὶ φέροντες τὸν νεκρὸν ὅπισθε δὲ εἶπετό οἱ ὁ φονεὺς. Στάς δὲ οὗτος πρὸ τοῦ νεκροῦ παρεδίδου ἑωυτὸν Κροῖσῳ προτείων τὰς χεῖρας ἐπικατασφάξαι μιν κελεύων τῷ νεκρῷ λέγων τήν τε προτέραν ἑωυτοῦ συμφορὴν καὶ ὡς ἐπ' ἐκείνη τὸν κατ' ἄρῃαντα ἀπολωλεκῶς εἶη οὐδέ οἱ εἶη βιώσιμον. Κροῖσος δὲ τούτων ἀκούων τὸν τε Ἄδρηστον κατοικτίζει καίπερ ἔων ἐν κακῷ οἰκηίῳ τοσοῦτῳ καὶ λέγει πρὸς αὐτόν· Ἔχω ὦ ξεῖνε παρὰ σέο πᾶσαν τήν δίκην ἐπειδὴ σεωυτοῦ καταδικάζεις θάνατον. Εἷς δὲ οὐ σύ μοι τοῦδε τοῦ κακοῦ αἴτιος εἰ μὴ ὅσον ἀέκων ἐξεργάσασο ἀλλὰ θεῶν κού τις ὅς μοι καὶ πάλαι προεσήμαινε τὰ μέλλοντα ἔσσεσθαι. Κροῖσος μὲν νυν ἔθαψε ὡς οἰκὸς ἦν τὸν ἑωυτοῦ παῖδα· Ἄδρηστος δὲ ὁ Γορδίῳ τοῦ Μίδεω οὗτος δὴ ὁ φονεὺς μὲν τοῦ ἑωυτοῦ ἀδελφεοῦ γενόμενος φονεὺς δὲ τοῦ κατ' ἄρῃαντος ἐπέιτε ἡσυχίῃ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐγένετο περὶ τὸ σῆμα συγγινωσκόμενος ἀνθρώπων εἶναι τῶν αὐτὸς ἦδε βαρυσυμφορώτατος ἐπικατασφάξει τῷ τύμβῳ ἑωυτόν.

Herodotus says that Croesus buried his son ὡς οἰκὸς ἦν (3), as Rawlinson puts it, «with such honours as befitted the occasion».<sup>2</sup> No doubt he did give his son a proper funeral: would that not go without saying?<sup>3</sup> Of course, redundancy and fullness of expression are among Herodotus' most endearing faults. Nevertheless, given the Greek — or rather, the more generally human — horror of fathers burying their sons, and the fact that Atys is not named in this sentence, but referred to as τὸν ἑωυτοῦ παῖδα, I wonder whether Herodotus wrote that Croesus buried his own son ὡς οὐκ οἰκὸς ἦν.

The best parallels are always found in the same author and work: here we have one in the same episode. In explaining to Croesus why Tellus of Athens was the most fortu-

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus is quoted from the edition of C. HUDE (Oxford, 1927<sup>3</sup>).

<sup>2</sup> Though not entirely satisfactory, this seems preferable to the alternative translations, «it is likely» (LSJ<sup>9</sup> s.v. *ἔοικα*) and «as was natural» (J. E. POWELL, *A Lexicon to Herodotus* [Cambridge, 1938], s.v. *οἶκα*). It would indeed have been unnatural in the extreme if Croesus had left his son (or anyone else who had not grievously annoyed him) unburied, and that makes his burial of Atys more than merely «likely». In short, the words are even more redundant in these translations than in RAWLINSON'S.

<sup>3</sup> It would not go without saying if Croesus' other son, the mute one, had died. A father who can say what he says to Atys (εἷς . . . μοι μούνος τυγχάνεις ἔων παῖς· τὸν γὰρ δὴ ἕτερον διεφθαρμένον οὐκ εἶναί μοι λογίζομαι, 1.38.2) would no doubt have been capable of having the other son buried secretly or without any of the usual ceremonies, if he had died instead of Atys.

nate of all the men he knew (1.30.4-5), Herodotus' Solon puts the survival of all of his children and grandchildren second on the list of reasons:<sup>4</sup>

Τέλλω τοῦτο μὲν τῆς πόλιος εὖ ἠκούσης παῖδες ἦσαν καλοί τε κἀγαθοί  
καί σφι εἶδε ἅπασι τέκνα ἐκγεγόμενα καὶ πάντα παραμείναντα τοῦτο δὲ  
τοῦ βίου εὖ ἤκοντι ὡς τὰ παρ' ἡμῶν τελευτῆ τοῦ βίου λαμπροτάτη  
ἐπεγένετο· κτλ.

Tellus is of course a sort of 'anti-Croesus'. The pathos of a father burying his own son fits well with the other paradoxes in the story, that Adrastus has unintentionally killed first his own brother and then the son of the one who purified him: all three acts are *παρὰ φύσιν*, though the first is far commoner than the other two. Corruption would have been easy, and might be explained in either of two ways: omission of *οὐκ* before *οἰκ-* by haplography,<sup>5</sup> and interpolation — or should we call this sort of willful deletion 'exterpola-tion'? — due to offense at the idea that Croesus would not have given Atys a proper funeral.

<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Plato's (or Pseudo-Plato's) Hippias of Elis lists burying one's parents and being buried by one's children as essential ingredients of the most beautiful life: *Λέγω τοίνυν ἀεὶ καὶ παντὶ καὶ πανταχοῦ κάλλιστον εἶναι ἀνδρῶν, πλουτοῦντι, ὑγιαίνοντι, τιμωμένῳ ὑπὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων, ἀφικομένῳ εἰς γῆρας, τοὺς αὐτοῦ γονέας τελευτήσαντας καλῶς περιστείλαντι, ὑπὸ τῶν αὐτοῦ ἐκγόνων καλῶς καὶ μεγαλοπρεπῶς ταφῆναι* (*Hip. Maj.* 291d9-e2). A magnificent burial is important, but it is clearly subordinated to the question of who is burying whom.

<sup>5</sup> Though not impossible, haplography is obviously less likely if Herodotus wrote *ἔοικός*, as printed in the recent Teubner text of H. B. ROSÉN (Leipzig, 1987). The apparatus reads «*ἔοικός A οἰκός cbMQSV*».