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Solon in Herodotus

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Solon is an important figure in Herodotus' *Histories*: he appears early in the work and in connection with the Croesus *logos*, which can be shown to be programmatic for the rest of the *Histories*. Though Solon is soon gone from the main stage, the messages he articulates resonate throughout the work.[1] In what follows I offer an analysis of the encounter between Solon and Croesus (1.29–33) and its after effects (1.86–90), paying particular attention to the themes and ideas associated with the Herodotean Solon. Where relevant, I refer for comparison to the poetic fragments ascribed to Solon. I will also consider the other, brief references to Solon in Egypt at the court of Amasis (2.177.2) and in Cyprus at the court of Philokypros (5.113.2), which respectively show Solon in his capacity as lawgiver and as poet of the *ainos*. Finally, I consider Herodotus' choice to focus on Solon as opposed to other wise men, the relationship between this Herodotean Solon and the Solon of the poetry associated with his name, what sort of Solon emerges from the work, and the relationship between Herodotus and the figure he has created.

Solon is immediately introduced in connection with the theme of wealth (*ploutos*): he and others, termed *sophistai*, "arrive at Sardis at the *akmē* of its prosperity" (ἀπικνέονται ἐς Σάρδις ἀκμαζούσας πλούτωι, 1.29.1).[2] Wealth and what it may or may not bring is a central theme in the ensuing interchange between Solon and Croesus, and this note is sounded early. The information that Sardis is at its height (ἀκμαζούσας, 1.29.1) of wealth is reminiscent of Herodotus' own observation of the rise and fall of the cities of men (1.5.3–4):

1 They find resonance, for example, in the advice of Amasis (Solon's host in Egypt, which may be significant) to Polykrates of Samos (3.40–41) and of Artabanus to Xerxes (e.g. 7.10, 7.43). On the programmatic nature of Croesus' *logos*, see Shapiro 1996 generally and 348 n.1. For a survey of scholarly support for this view, see Harrison 2000, 31–63, Pelling 2006, 142–143.

2 πλοῦτος (verse 9) together with χρήματα (verse 7) also appear early in the poetic Solon's *Hymn to the Muses* (fr. 13 W^2), given first place in the edition of Solon by Gentili and Prato.

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> τὰ γὰρ τὸ πάλαι μεγάλα ἦν, τὰ πολλὰ αὐτῶν σμικρὰ γέγονε· τὰ δὲ ἐπ' ἐμεῦ ἦν μεγάλα, πρότερον ἦν σμικρά. τὴν ἀνθρωπηίην ὦν ἐπιστάμενος εὐδαιμονίην οὐδαμὰ ἐν τὠυτῶι μένουσαν, ἐπιμνήσομαι ἀμφοτέρων ὁμοίως.
> As for the things which in the past were great, the majority of them have become small, while the things that in my time were great were formerly small. And so knowing that human happiness never stays in the same place, I shall make mention of both equally.

It is also a foretaste of the theme of instability that Solon will expand on (1.32.1–4) and which the subsequent fall of Sardis and Croesus will illustrate. Solon's arrival is mentioned in connection with that of *sophistai* (1.29.1):

> ἀπικνέονται ἐς Σάρδις ... ἄλλοι τε οἱ πάντες ἐκ τῆς Ἑλλάδος σοφισταί, οἳ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον ἐτύγχανον ἐόντες, ὡς ἕκαστος αὐτῶν ἀπικνέοιτο, καὶ δὴ καὶ Σόλων ἀνὴρ Ἀθηναῖος ...
> There came to Sardis ... all the wise men from Greece who lived at that time, arriving at different times, and in particular Solon, an Athenian ...

This construction may or may not imply that Solon should be taken as a *sophistēs*, but he is certainly complimented on his wisdom (*sophiē*) when received by Croesus (1.30.2):[3]

> Ξεῖνε Ἀθηναῖε, παρ' ἡμέας γὰρ περὶ σέο λόγος ἀπῖκται πολλὸς καὶ σοφίης εἵνεκεν τῆς σῆς καὶ πλάνης, ὡς φιλοσοφέων γῆν πολλὴν θεωρίης εἵνεκεν ἐπελήλυθας.
> Athenian guest, much talk about you has reached us, because of your wisdom and travel, about how you have covered much ground in pursuit of wisdom and for the sake of *theōriē*.

The themes of travel and *theōriē* are here associated with *sophiē*. One may compare the opening lines of the *Odyssey* (1.3), where Odysseus' extensive travels go together with his knowledge of the *noos* of men: πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω, "He saw the cities of many men and knew their mind".[4] In addition, Herodotus presents Solon as a *nomothetēs* or lawgiver who has tempo-

3 How and Wells 1912 ad loc. maintain that the construction ἄλλοι τε οἱ πάντες ... σοφισταί ... καὶ δὴ καὶ Σόλων ("both others, all the *sophistai*, and in particular Solon") as opposed to οἵ τε ἄλλοι ("both all the other *sophistai* and in particular Solon") indicates the two groups are separate and Herodotus does not characterize Solon as a *sophistēs*. This insistence may be motivated by a perception of a (later) negative connotation behind that term, but it is clear from other instances in the *Histories* that it simply means a learned man familiar, for example, with the customs of others and able to explain or transmit them to his own or other people: following Melampus subsequent *sophistai* expound to the Greeks the cult of Dionysus (2.49.1); Pythagoras is described as "not the weakest *sophistēs*" (4.95.2). On the term *sophistēs* here see Kurke 2011, 103–105.

4 For the meaning and connotations of *theōriē*, see Nagy 1990b, 164–167; Ker 2000, 308–311 (and 311–315 for the *theōriē* of the Herodotean Solon), Rutherford 2013.

rarily exiled himself from his homeland in order not to be forced to change any of the laws he has introduced (1.29.1–1.30.1):[5]

> ... καὶ δὴ καὶ Σόλων ἀνὴρ Ἀθηναῖος, ὃς Ἀθηναίοισι νόμους κελεύσασι ποιήσας ἀπεδήμησε ἔτεα δέκα, κατὰ θεωρίης πρόφασιν ἐκπλώσας, ἵνα δὴ μή τινα τῶν νόμων ἀναγκασθῇ λῦσαι τῶν ἔθετο. αὐτοὶ γὰρ οὐκ οἷοί τε ἦσαν αὐτὸ ποιῆσαι Ἀθηναῖοι· ὁρκίοισι γὰρ μεγάλοισι κατείχοντο δέκα ἔτεα χρήσεσθαι νόμοισι τοὺς ἄν σφι Σόλων θῆται. αὐτῶν δὴ ὧν τούτων καὶ τῆς θεωρίης ἐκδημήσας ὁ Σόλων εἵνεκεν ἐς Αἴγυπτον ἀπίκετο παρὰ Ἄμασιν καὶ δὴ καὶ ἐς Σάρδις παρὰ Κροῖσον.
> ... and in particular [there came to Sardis] Solon, an Athenian who had made laws for the Athenians at their bidding and had been absent from the city for ten years, sailing away on the pretext of *theōriē*, but really to avoid being forced to change any of the laws which he had passed. For the Athenians could not do this themselves, since they were constrained by mighty oaths to use for ten years whatever laws Solon had given them. It was for this reason, and for the sake of *theōriē*, that Solon had come to Amasis in Egypt and to Croesus in Sardis.

This characterization of Solon activates a complex of ideas traditionally associated with *nomothetai*: these are figures who bring good order to their communities but who must leave them, whether temporarily and voluntarily, as in the case of the Herodotean Solon, or permanently, through permanent exile or even death (as in the case of Lycurgus).[6] This passage, together with the brief mention of Solon's borrowing of a law from Amasis of Egypt (2.177.2), constitutes the sole appearance of Solon as lawgiver in the work. When Herodotus comes to give a brief historical portrait of Athens in the context of Croesus' assessment of the Athenians and Spartans as potential allies, there is no mention of Solon's activities. He does indeed describe there an Athens in a state of *eunomiē*, but it is actually at the time of Peisistratos' first tyranny and it is Peisistratos who is responsible for this (1.59.6):[7]

> οὔτε τιμὰς τὰς ἐούσας συνταράξας οὔτε θέσμια μεταλλάξας, ἐπί τε τοῖσι κατεστεῶσι ἔνεμε τὴν πόλιν κοσμέων καλῶς τε καὶ εὖ.
> Neither disturbing the existing set of offices nor changing the laws, [Peisistratos] administered the city in accordance with established practice, ordering it finely and well.

5 Cf. Stehle 2006, 104, who links Solon the traveling wise man and Solon the lawgiver as a "configuration", one of three she identifies as clustering around him, that "belonged to different groups and served different interests".

6 Plut. *Lyc*. 29.5. See Szegedy-Maszak 1978.

7 Osborne 2002, 514 sees this lack of interest as reflecting Athenian lack of interest at the time in Solon's actual policies: "Herodotus' account surely reflects the Athenians' own attitudes in the middle of the fifth century. All the signs are there that there was little interest in Solon's constitutional arrangements until dissatisfaction with radical democracy in the last quarter of the century led to an attempt to promote the ancestral constitution as an alternative, at which point what Solon did, or what he could be held to have done, became important".

It is clear that it is Solon the *sophos* that interests Herodotus more. The figure of the *sophos*, like the lawgiver, is associated with travel and knowledge, and Solon is one of the most constant figures in canonical lists of the Seven Sages.[8] Croesus has in fact already encountered just such a *sophos* (although Herodotus does not label him as such), whom Herodotus identifies as either Bias of Priene or Pittakos of Mytilene (1.27.2). That the identity of the interlocutor can be attributed to either name (Herodotus does not express a preference) shows perhaps that we are dealing here with a type, a wise man who can speak truth to power and who often expresses himself in pithy and paradoxical fashion.[9] Like Solon, Bias-Pittakos is described as "arriving at" Sardis (ἀπικόμενον ἐς Σάρδις, 1.27.2; cf. ὁ Σόλων … ἀπίκετο … ἐς Σάρδις παρὰ Κροῖσον, 1.30.1), where ἀπικέσθαι ("to arrive") seems to be a typical verb indicating the arrival of the traveling *sophos* at the court of the powerful.[10]

The establishing of Solon as a *sophos* and the fact that he comes to the court of a ruler already primes us to expect a display of wisdom in a discourse characterized by paradox and brevity to the point of obtuseness alternating with more expansive explanation. The appropriate term for the discourse in this passage, is, as Nagy has suggested, *ainos*, "a code that carries the right message for those who are qualified and the wrong message or messages for those who are unqualified".[11] This particular *ainos* revolves around the term *olbios*, which turns out to have simultaneously a surface (unmarked) meaning and a more obscure and specific (marked) one. The word is introduced in the narrative when Solon is given a tour of Croesus' treasury and is shown everything there is "great and prosperous" (μεγάλα καὶ ὄλβια, 1.30.1). The narrative focus here on sheer volume, plenty, and great wealth clearly reflects Croesus' understanding of the term as great material wealth and good fortune, and this is made plain when he asks Solon immediately after the tour if he has seen anyone in his travels who is the most *olbios* of all men (1.30.2), "expecting that he himself was the most *olbios* of men" (1.30.3). Solon's brief answer ("O King, Tellos the Athenian") produces a

8 On the type of the *sophos* or sage and the lists of the Seven Sages, see Martin 1993; cf. also Kurke 2011, 95–124 and Tell in this volume.

9 Kurke 2011, 126–136 contends that the original *sophos* in this story is actually Aesop.

10 Cf. Solon's arrival in Cyprus at the court of Philokypros (5.113.2): … Φιλοκύπρου δὲ τούτου τὸν Σόλων ὁ Ἀθηναῖος ἀπικόμενος ἐς Κύπρον ἐν ἔπεσι αἴνεσε τυράννων μάλιστα, "… this Philokypros, whom Solon the Athenian, when he came to Cyprus, in hexameters praised above all tyrants". Ker 2000, 312 also notes that Solon's great repute for *sophiē* "arrives" at Sardis (παρ᾽ ἡμέας γὰρ περὶ σέο λόγος ἀπῖκται πολλός, 1.30.2), just as Solon himself does, as if it is an independent entity. As I will note below, the same conceit of a tradition independent of the actual person occurs when Solon's words come upon Croesus when he is on the pyre (1.86.3).

11 Nagy 1990b, 148.

reaction of wonder (ἀποθωμάσας, 1.30.4) in Croesus that is clearly unwelcome to him, since he expects first prize in this contest. The image of the *agōn* is maintained throughout this interaction, seen both in the "Who is the most *olbios* of them all?" motif and in the detail that Croesus expects that even if he cannot win first prize he can at least get second, δοκέων πάγχυ δευτερεῖα γῶν οἴσεσθαι (1.31.1), "supposing that he would definitely win second place", a metaphor from athletic competition. As is the nature of the *ainos*, where an idea may work simultaneously on two levels, the *agōn* for Croesus revolves around recognition that he is the most *olbios* in terms of material prosperity. On the other hand, as becomes clear by the end of the interaction, for Solon the *agōn* for the prize of being *olbios* really amounts to the struggle of the hero during his lifetime for the prize of *olbos* after death, a lasting, blissful prosperity with compensation for toils and struggle in the form of the immortality of hero cult, which we will see clearly in the Kleobis and Biton story.[12]

Croesus' *thōma* or wonder at Solon's answer resides both in its concise form (merely a name and ethnicity, with no explanation) and its content (who is this unknown man from an insignificant place?).[13] The brevity of the response is oracular in tone as well as typical of the paradoxical responses of sages, and is the first in a series of links that the text suggests between Solon's discourse and that of the Delphic oracle.[14] Like oracular responses and the *ainos* in general, it offers an immediate but unsatisfactory surface reading and clearly demands decoding to yield a deeper meaning. Solon is here both the source and conveyor of the *ainos* and its interpreter, fulfilling the role of a *theōros*, the oracular messenger who faithfully transmits to his own community the message from the god.[15] In his decoding of his own reply it is significant that he immediately stresses the *polis* (Athens, of course, as one might expect from him) as the framework that supports Tellos' *olbos*, then moves to the realm of the *oikos* and the fact that he had fine sons: Τέλλωι τοῦτο μὲν τῆς πόλιος εὖ ἡκούσης παῖδες ἦσαν καλοί τε

12 On the connection between the athletic *agōn* and the *agōn* of the hero, see Nagy 1990b, 136–145.

13 On the Herodotean *thōma* as narrative marker for deeds, sights, or objects that are worthy of attention and subvert the norm, and which often form a center around which an ingenious explanation is provided either by a figure in the *Histories* or the historian himself, see generally Munson 2001. Appearing as it does in a passage where the idea of the *teleutē* or *telos* figures heavily, the name Tellos is generally understood to be significant and a *nom parlant*, in form a hypocorism from a name such as Telesiphron: cf. e.g. Immerwahr 1966, 156–157n. 21; Nagy 1990b, 245 n. 129.

14 See Kurke 1999, 156–157; Ker 2000, 315 on this similarity.

15 On the *theōros* see Nagy 1990b, 162–167 and 164–165 on poets and lawgivers as *theōroi*. Cf. also Ker 2000, 315 on this point.

κἀγαθοί (1.30.4),[16] "at a time when his *polis* was enjoying prosperity Tellos had fine, upstanding sons".

The *polis* of Athens – and its success (εὖ ἡκούσης), perhaps not just in material terms but also in terms of good order (*eunomiē*) – provides the context for Tellos' happiness, and one might see here a nod to Solon's poetry of the *polis* and the good order his laws aim to bring. Within this essential framework that the *polis* provides, Tellos has a family that also flourishes and endures, fine sons who in turn have their own children that survive. But the capping element in his happiness is his glorious death, 1.30.4–5:

> τοῦτο δὲ τοῦ βίου εὖ ἥκοντι, ὡς τὰ παρ' ἡμῖν, τελευτὴ τοῦ βίου λαμπροτάτη ἐπεγένετο· γενομένης γὰρ Ἀθηναίοισι μάχης πρὸς τοὺς ἀστυγείτονας ἐν Ἐλευσῖνι βοηθήσας καὶ τροπὴν ποιήσας τῶν πολεμίων ἀπέθανε κάλλιστα, καί μιν Ἀθηναῖοι δημοσίηι τε ἔθαψαν αὐτοῦ τῆι περ ἔπεσε καὶ ἐτίμησαν μεγάλως.
> Having what by our standards was a comfortable livelihood he had in addition a most glorious end to his life. For when the Athenians fought a battle against their neighbors in Eleusis, he lent his help and having put the enemy to flight suffered a very noble death, and the Athenians buried him at public expense in the very spot he had fallen, and they paid him great honor.

The mention of a glorious end of life (τελευτὴ τοῦ βίου λαμπροτάτη) sounds in advance Solon's theme of looking to the *teleutē* of every matter (1.32.9). It also occurs in the context of the *polis*, as Tellos loses his life in a beautiful and honorable fashion, bringing aid to his comrades and routing the enemy in a war with the Eleusinians.[17] His personal life is bound up with the *polis* in yet another way when the city, not his family, arranges his burial on the battlefield, at the very spot where he fell, καί μιν Ἀθηναῖοι δημοσίηι τε ἔθαψαν αὐτοῦ τῆι περ ἔπεσε

16 See Kurke 1999, 153–155 and 2011, 350n. 67 on this and the emphasis on Tellos' status as a citizen and member of a community, also shown by his public, as opposed to private, funeral (1.30.5).

17 The Eleusinian context of the war against Athens' "neighbors" (ἀστυγείτονας, 1.30.5, a term which seems to emphasize a relationship not just of contiguity but also of friendship: cf. 6.99.2, where the Carystians refuse to attack their πόλιας ἀστυγείτονας, Eretria and Athens) is reminiscent of the annual ritual battle at Eleusis. In the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 265–267 the description of the battle, which occurs at the appropriate season (*hōra*, cf. the use of *hōra* in the Kleobis and Biton story, discussed below), is mentioned in connection with the fact that Demeter is the holder of *timai* (268), which involve the bestowal of lasting prosperity on the Eleusinians through the rites of the Mysteries (cf. 480 "*Olbios* is he who has seen these things"). Cf. Nagy 2013, 13§7, who finds it "significant that the figure of Tellos … is connected with the prehistory of Eleusis (Herodotus 1.30.5), the site of the Eleusinian Mysteries". Cf. also 13, §9: "… the Eleusinian Games … may be related to the prehistory of the 'war' that had led to the death of Tellos".

(1.30.5).[18] Another important detail in Solon's description is that the Athenians "paid Tellos great honor", ἐτίμησαν μεγάλως (1.30.5). As first Regenbogen and then more thoroughly Nagy have pointed out, this detail seems to indicate hero cult.[19] Here already, then, is an important indication that Solon is talking about a different kind of *olbos* from the one Croesus is, one that lasts beyond death and, more importantly, is actually predicated on death. The ainetic mode is underlined by the verb of instruction and incitement (προετρέψατο) used to describe Solon's speech to Croesus (1.31.1):[20] ὡς δὲ τὰ κατὰ τὸν Τέλλον προετρέψατο ὁ Σόλων τὸν Κροῖσον εἴπας πολλά τε καὶ ὄλβια ..., "since Solon had led Croesus on by talking much about Tellos' blessedness ...".

Solon's idea of what constitutes *olbos* is made clearer in the more extensive tale of Kleobis and Biton, runners up in the most *olbios* contest. The metaphor of an *agōn* is maintained as Herodotus reports that Croesus hopes that he can obtain at least second prize (δοκέων πάγχυ δευτερεῖα γῶν οἴσεσθαι, 1.31.1). The metaphor spills over into Solon's story, as we are told that Kleobis and Biton were in fact athletic victors, καὶ πρὸς τούτωι ῥώμη σώματος τοιήδε· ἀεθλοφόροι τε ἀμφότεροι ὁμοίως ἦσαν (1.31.2) "And in addition they had bodily strength of the following sort: they were both of them alike prize-winners". Rather than merely telling us that they have the necessary bodily strength to perform the exploit that will soon be narrated, this detail can also be understood as setting up a connection between the *aethlos* of the athlete and the *aethlos* of the hero, who receives compensation after death for his struggles: for as we will see by the end of the story, Kleobis and Biton are characterized precisely as cult heroes.[21]

The Kleobis and Biton story is significantly longer than the Tellos account and more attention is lavished on them than on Tellos. Solon develops his message more completely here, yet they receive only second prize. While Tellos' *teleutē* is "most glorious" (λαμπροτάτη), theirs is "best" (ἀρίστη, 1.31.3). As in the story of Tellos, who is well off by Athenian standards (τοῦ βίου εὖ ἥκοντι, ὡς τὰ παρ᾽ ἡμῖν, 1.30.4), a certain basic material comfort is present as part of the package (1.31.2): τούτοισι γὰρ ἐοῦσι γένος Ἀργείοισι βίος τε ἀρκέων ὑπῆν ..., "Argives by descent, they had a sufficient livelihood ...".

18 In this picture of the involvement of the *polis* in the burial of a citizen could there be an echo of traditions about Solon's restrictions of excess at private aristocratic funerals (e.g. Plut. *Sol.* 21.4–5)?
19 Regenbogen 1965, 382; Nagy 1990a, 132 and especially n. 51.
20 Cf. Moles 1996, 267, who calls this a *protreptikos logos*.
21 Cf. Nagy 1990b, 246 on the intersection of the *aethlos* of the athlete and the *aethlos* of the hero. Sansone 1991, 123–124 also comments on this detail, which is important for his thesis that the brothers take the place of the oxen not just as conveyors of the ox cart but also as sacrificial victims.

"Sufficient" does not mean that they have just enough to get by on, but that like Tellos, they are quite comfortably off, if not to the same extent as Croesus : that their mother is priestess at the prestigious shrine of Argive Hera and that they are prize-winners are indications of this.[22] As becomes clear from Solon's later exposition, he by no means advocates the renunciation of possessions and material goods (1.32.5–6). In moving beyond his own city of Athens to talk of two Argives, Solon is able to strike a more panhellenic note and himself becomes more of a panhellenic figure. It mirrors a tendency in Herodotus himself to explain things to his audience in panhellenic terms, explaining for example the shape of the Taurian peninsula or Crimea in terms of first Attica and then, "for one who has not sailed past these parts of Attica", in terms of the heel of Italy (4.99.4–5). This panhellenic aspect derives also from the fact that the Kleobis and Biton story, while Argive in origin and staged against the backdrop of the Argive countryside and its local traditions (cf. the detail that the priestess must arrive at the festival of Hera in an ox cart, 1.31.2), has here a distinctly Delphic coloring to it.[23] This is clearly signaled at the end of the story by the mention of the statues of them (εἰκόνες, 1.31.5) that are dedicated at Delphi, and which were perhaps associated with a narrative similar to the one Herodotus has Solon relate.

This story plays even more on the *telos-teleutē* theme, amplifying this as an element of *olbos* even more than the Tellos story does. Very prominent in the narrative is the theme of unseasonality, the failure of things at first to happen on time or at the right time, versus seasonality, when everything happens at the right time and achieves its *telos*.[24] This is thus an expansion and deepening of the theme of *teleutē* in the first story, where the beautiful and glorious end is present but the idea of unseasonality is not. Tellos dies after a good innings and has children and grandchildren (1.30.4), whereas Kleobis and Biton die young and without offspring: it is in this sense that they must take second place.[25] Just before a festival of Hera (whose name may contain the same root as the word *hōra*, "due season", and who presides over fulfillment of marriage), the young men fail to bring in the oxen from the field that are to draw their priestess mother's cart to the festival.[26] As Solon puts it, they are "locked out" by the time (ἐκκληιόμενοι δὲ τῆι ὥρηι, 1.31.2), and so undertake to pull the cart themselves for the entire distance of forty-five stades. Being out of joint with the *hōrē* in this sense, they also suffer

22 Thus I would not characterize their lives or that of Tellos as "humble" (M. Lloyd 1987, 25).

23 Noted by e.g. Regenbogen 1965, 385; M. Lloyd 1987, 25.

24 See Nagy 2013, 13§12–19 on this.

25 Cf. M. Lloyd 1987, 24 on this question.

26 On the meaning and relevance of the name Hera, see Nagy 2013, 13§18 and Burkert 1985, 131 with n. 2.

an end which also seems at first to be unseasonal: young men cut short in their prime, they die in their sleep after their exertions and after being feasted and celebrated (1.31.5). This is quite unlike Tellos' death at a later age, after already begetting children and having seen them beget their own children in turn. But the paradox is, as Solon explains, that the god actually has provided them with a perfect death, showing "that it is better for a mortal to be dead than to be alive": διέδεξέ τε ἐν τούτοισι ὁ θεὸς ὡς ἄμεινον εἴη ἀνθρώπωι τεθνάναι μᾶλλον ἢ ζώειν (1.31.3). This is a key sentence in Solon's exposition: true to the nature of the *ainos*, it bears two different meanings for two different audiences. Read literally, it inverts the conventional wisdom that it is better to be alive than dead. While such sentiments (it is better not to be born and thus avoid the sufferings of life) can be found in archaic Greek thought (and indeed elsewhere in the *Histories*), the context suggests that the emphasis is different here.[27] One must live, and life is desirable and dear, providing the arena in which to become *olbios*: but true and lasting *olbos*, resulting from what one has done in life, can come only after death, and in the form of hero cult, which bestows immortality.[28]

The great honor and glory that Kleobis and Biton win is effectively frozen and preserved when they are held in a permanent sleep. They finally reach a *telos* and are now "arrested in this *telos*" (ἀλλ' ἐν τέλεϊ τούτωι ἔσχοντο, 1.31.5), so that they are no longer in an unseasonal state but in a perfect, eternal one. This immobility and fixed state is further expressed in the statues (*eikones*) of them with their fixed posture and with the fixed and endlessly repeating narrative associated with them, which may have been told to visitors (such as Solon and Herodotus) at Delphi.[29] If not explicitly stated here, there is a clear suggestion that they enjoy hero cult after their death.[30] The great honors paid to them and the fact that they

27 *Pace* M. Lloyd 1987, 25: "The point is that death is best for everyone, even for those with an adequate livelihood". For this thought in Herodotus cf. the Thracian Trausoi, who mourn the birth of a child because of the trials and pains of earthly existence (τὰ ἀνθρωπήια πάντα πάθεα, 5.4.2) he will have to endure, but celebrate the death of an adult as an escape from these. Cf. also Harrison 2000, 60, who describes this ethnographic passage as embodying a "Solonian idea". It is true, however, that the Trausians see the deceased as being ἐν πάσηι εὐδαιμονίηι (5.4.2) after death, which recalls the blessed existence of heroes in the afterlife.

28 As Nagy 2013, §13.21 puts it: "For the uninitiated, this wording means that you are better off dead – that you might as well choose to be put out of your misery instead going on with life. For the initiated, this same wording means that a life after death will be better for you than the life you are living now".

29 Cf. Nagy 2013, 13 §14 on the play between ἔσχοντο (1.31.5), used of the boys' attitude in sleep, and the idea of *schēma*, a pose in dance or statuary.

30 Implicit hero cult in Solon's *ainos* of Kleobis and Biton is explicit in Herodotus' account of the athlete Philippos of Kroton, an Olympic victor and the handsomest of the Greeks: "On account

are accounted blessed while alive, combine with the divine manner and place of their death to form a typical hero narrative.[31] The *makarismos* of the boys by the Argives works together with what Nagy calls the sacral sense of the term related to *makar*, *olbios*, which is clearly the sense in which Solon uses the term in this encounter.[32] This more restricted and marked meaning of the word, referring to the fortunate and blessed state of those with a happy afterlife, is contrasted with the more conventional sense of "prosperous, wealthy", and this difference in meaning, the one more obscure, the other obvious and lying on the surface, mirrors the nature of the *ainos*, which offers a surface meaning to an audience not appreciative of it and another, restricted meaning to the correct or deserving audience.

Croesus angrily objects to having his happiness (which he terms here *eudaimoniē*) dismissed as inconsequential and again asks for an explanation (1.32.1). Solon's response to this request is to move from his ainetic mode to a more explicit style of speech.[33] It is interesting that in this section, where coded speech is abandoned and a more direct approach taken, the message is nevertheless hard to fathom, to judge from Croesus' reaction and repeated modern discussions of the scene.[34] Solon continues to develop the *telos* theme but now adds to this the theme of instability, which renders it impossible to pronounce whether a man is *olbios* until his end is clear. The theme is first sounded in Solon's pronouncement on the divine, that it is "altogether an envious and turbulent thing" (πᾶν

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of his beauty he won (ἠνείκατο: note the metaphor of winning the prize of permanent prosperity and blessedness and cf. δευτερεῖα οἴσεσθαι, 1.31.1) from the people of Egesta what no one else had: for they built upon his tomb a *hērōon* and they propitiate him with sacrifices" (5.47.2).

31 Ἀργεῖοι μὲν γὰρ περιστάντες ἐμακάριζον τῶν νεηνιέων τὴν ῥώμην ... (1.31.3): "Forming a circle about them, the Argives congratulated them on their strength" [lit. "said they were blessed on account of their strength"].

32 For the close connection of *makar* and *olbios*, cf. e.g. Theogn. 1012–1013 W^2 ἆ μάκαρ εὐδαίμων τε καὶ ὄλβιος, ὅστις ἄπειρος / ἄθλων εἰς Ἀίδου δῶμα μέλαν κατέβη, "Ah, blessed, happy, and fortunate is he who descends to the dark house of Hades with no experience of struggles!", and de Heer 1969, 47–48. In Plutarch's retelling of the Herodotean story it is interesting that he has Croesus ask Solon if he has seen anyone μακαριώτερον "more blessed" (*Sol.* 27.3) and in fact does not use the word *olbios* anywhere in his version.

33 Kurke 2011, 409 n. 25 describes this as typical of the "sophistic pattern of fable narrative and then long explanatory epilogue" and compares it to Demaratos' speech to Xerxes, where the former first uses the allegory of Peniē and Aretē (5.102.1), then moves to *gnōmē*.

34 Pelling 2006, 214 sums it up aptly: "It is hard to know exactly what Solon is saying here". He helpfully distinguishes three threads: "1. Life is mutable; anyone's fortune may change. 2. God is envious of those who come closest to divine prosperity, and turbulent in destroying them. 3. The most prosperous act or think in particular ways, and those ways contribute to their destruction".

ἐὸν φθονερόν τε καὶ ταραχῶδες, 1.32.1). This leads to the thought that a lengthy period of time provides many opportunities for sufferings to arise (1.32.2) ἐν γὰρ τῶι μακρῶι χρόνωι πολλὰ μὲν ἔστι ἰδεῖν τὰ μή τις ἐθέλει, πολλὰ δὲ καὶ παθεῖν, "For over much time one may see many things that one does not wish to, and suffer many things too".

This in turn gives rise to a tour-de-force demonstration and calculation of the number of days of a man's life (1.32.2–4), and returns in ring composition to the idea of instability (1.32.4):[35] οὕτω ὦν, ὦ Κροῖσε, πᾶν ἐστι ἄνθρωπος συμφορή, "And so, Croesus, man is altogether a thing of chance".

The scene of calculation is a possible point of contact between the Herodotean Solon and the poetic Solon, whose poem on the ages of man (fr. 27 W^2) sets the limit of man's life at seventy (verse 18), as does the Herodotean Solon, 1.32.2:[36] ἐς γὰρ ἑβδομήκοντα ἔτεα οὖρον τῆς ζόης ἀνθρώπωι προτίθημι, "I set the boundary of a man's life at seventy years".

Both texts have a didactic and virtuoso quality to them. The complex calculation is also another point of contact between the Herodotean Solon and other *sophoi*, cf. e.g. Thales' prediction of an eclipse of the sun (1.74.2), as well as Herodotus himself, who makes a number of impressive calculations, e.g. the size of the Black Sea (4.86.1–3) or the amount of grain consumed by Xerxes' army (7.187.2).[37]

The discussion of instability in human life then moves on to the question of who can better endure this instability: the rich man or the poor? Here Solon finally gets to the root of Croesus' confusion at being denied the title of most *olbios*, distinguishing between the idea of prosperity measured as, or produced by, wealth (*ploutos*) versus prosperity as happiness. The very rich man (ὁ μέγα πλούσιος) will only be more *olbios* than the man having sufficient livelihood for the day (τοῦ ἐπ' ἡμέρην ἔχοντος) if he meets the end of his life well while having good things (πάντα καλὰ ἔχοντα εὖ τελευτῆσαι τὸν βίον, 1.32.5): many very rich men (ζάπλουτοι) are not *olbioi*, while there are many who are fortunate (εὐτυχέες) though having a moderate livelihood (μετρίως ἔχοντες βίου, 1.32.5). Wealth gives the ability to fulfill one's desires (ἐπιθυμίην ἐκτελέσαι) and endure great disaster

35 There is subtle variation: at the beginning of the ring the instability is posited of the divine, who is entirely (πᾶν) envious and turbulent, while at the end, the focus is on the human, who is entirely (πᾶν) chance.

36 See Noussia-Fantuzzi 2010, 14–15 and 376–377, who suggests that though the use of numbers such as three, seven, and ten as ordering devices is highly traditional, Solon's divisions in hebdomads are distinctive and new.

37 The Herodotean Solon's authoritative first person "I set" (προτίθημι) also mirrors the assertive use of the first person in Herodotus' calculations: cf. e.g. οὕτω τέ μοι μεμέτρηται, "It has been measured by me thus" (4.86.4). On Herodotus' calculations, see Keyser 1986.

(ἄτην μεγάλην) when it befalls one, but good fortune (εὐτυχίη) tends on its own to ward off *atē* and the evils of life while bestowing the blessings of children and beauty (1.32.6). *Eutukhiē* is a precondition for being *olbios*, but is distinct from *olbos*, which a man can only be said to have if he reaches the *telos* of his life well and while having *eutukhiē* (1.32.7). Here the limitations of being human come into play: no human can simultaneously be sufficient (*autarkēs*) in everything, but inevitably lacks something (1.32.8). All humans are subject to capricious divine behavior, which can give a taste of *olbos* but turn things upside down and remove it, "roots and all" (προρρίζους, 1.32.9).[38]

Scholars agree that in these strands of ideas that Solon expounds here can be found points of contact with themes in the poetry attributed to Solon.[39] But what of the terminology of the Herodotean Solon and his insistence on *olbos* as a transcendental kind of prosperity, with intimations of a blessed afterlife? At first glance, it might appear that the poetic Solon knows nothing of his Herodotean counterpart and uses the terms *olbios* and *olbos* in the sense Croesus understands them.[40] Fr. 23 W^2, with its labeling of the man who has boys, horses, hunting dogs, and a guest friend as *olbios,* seems to support this. Similarly, fragments 6 W^2 and 34 W^2 warn against the effects of too much *olbos* (πολὺς ὄλβος). But alongside these unmarked usages of *olbios* and *olbos*, there is an important occurrence at the beginning of the Hymn to the Muses (fr. 13.1–8 W^2), where Solon asks them for *olbos*:

Μνημοσύνης καὶ Ζηνὸς Ὀλυμπίου ἀγλαὰ τέκνα,
Μοῦσαι Πιερίδες, κλῦτέ μοι εὐχομένωι·
ὄλβον μοι πρὸς θεῶν μακάρων δότε καὶ πρὸς ἁπάντων
ἀνθρώπων αἰεὶ δόξαν ἔχειν ἀγαθήν·
εἶναι δὲ γλυκὺν ὦδε φίλοις, ἐχθροῖσι δὲ πικρόν,
τοῖσι μὲν αἰδοῖον, τοῖσι δὲ δεινὸν ἰδεῖν.
χρήματα δ' ἰμείρω μὲν ἔχειν, ἀδίκως δὲ πεπᾶσθαι
οὐκ ἐθέλω· πάντως ὕστερον ἦλθε Δίκη.

38 A similar idea will be voiced by another *sophos* and warner figure, Amasis, in his advice to Polykrates of Samos (3.40.3): οὐδένα γάρ κω λόγωι οἶδα ἀκούσας ὅστις ἐς τέλος οὐ κακῶς ἐτελεύτησε πρόρριζος, εὐτυχέων τὰ πάντα, "For I have not yet heard of anyone who, enjoying good fortune in all things, did not end his life badly and in complete destruction". Polykrates also repeats another of Solon's insights, that the divine is envious (3.40.2).

39 See e.g. Chiasson 1986; Harrison 2000, 36–38; Noussia-Fantuzzi 2010, 14–17.

40 This is the position of Crane 1996, cf. p. 81: "The two central ideas of the Herodotean Solon – that mere wealth does not constitute *olbos* and that no man can be called *olbios* until after his death – reflect an interpretation of this key term that is foreign to the language of Solon himself. The poetic Solon has an outlook very similar to that of his Herodotean counterpart, but his linguistic usage is closer to that of the Herodotean Kroisos".

> Splendid offspring of Memory and Olympian Zeus, Muses of Pieria, hear my prayer: grant me *olbos* from the blessed gods and that I may always possess good repute from all men; that I be sweet to my friends and bitter to my enemies, worthy of respect to the former, but fearsome to behold for the latter. I desire to have money, but I do not wish to have obtained it unjustly: for in every case Justice comes later.

This is an invocation of the Muses, and the first thing this Solon asks them for is *olbos* from the *makares theoi* and good repute (*agathē doxa*) from men. If *olbos* means only material wealth and prosperity, why ask the Muses for this, whose business is surely memory and the unperishing *kleos* that poetry can convey?[41] Furthermore, the fact that his request to men is for *doxa* suggests that *olbos* is the divinely bestowed parallel to glory and good repute from mortals. There is no doubt that material comfort is part of this blessedness, as the rest of the poem, with the speaker's desire for goods and property (*khrēmata*) in line 7, makes clear. The *olbos* that the poetic Solon requests for himself seems then to be the blessedness of imperishable *kleos* bestowed by poetry, and perhaps even intimates at hero cult. In this sense the *olbos* which the Herodotean Solon speaks of can help us understand the Solon of the poetry. One could also consider the fragment in which the poetic Solon pronounces that no mortal is *makar*, but all are *ponēroi*, subject to pain, distress, and toil as long as they live (fr. 14 W^2): οὐδὲ μάκαρ οὐδεὶς πέλεται βροτός, ἀλλὰ πονηροὶ | πάντες, ὅσους θνητοὺς ἠέλιος καθορᾶι, "No mortal is blessed, but all mortals the sun looks upon are wretched".

The Solon of this fragment overlaps with the Herodotean Solon, who denies the title *olbios* to anyone while alive, and grants it only to those who have completed the *telos* of life well. *Makar* is a sacral term, generally applied to the gods, and thus is a functional equivalent to the Herodotean Solon's *olbios*.[42]

His *ainos* falling on ears not yet prepared to understand it, Solon is politely sent on his way by Croesus, "clearly thinking that he was ignorant" (κάρτα δόξας ἀμαθέα εἶναι, 1.33).[43] Solon's apparent lack of understanding of Croesus' terms, the fact that his system of values seems to have nothing in common with those of

41 See Noussia-Fantuzzi 2010 ad loc. on this problem. Nagy 1990b, 248 with n. 140 sees this a marked instance of *olbos* which is "equivalent to unmarked *ploutos* plus divine sanction and *dikē* 'justice' ". He is not, however, inclined to see an afterlife connotation in this instance: "we see the transcendence of *olbos* in terms of life in the here and now, not in the afterlife".

42 Cf. de Heer 1969, 28–29 for the sacral connotations of *makar* and Noussia-Fantuzzi 2010 ad loc.

43 ἀποπέμπεται at 1.33 could mean "sent him on his way" in the sense of "sent him packing". But it could mean "gave him a send-off", as it does at 3.50.2, where the maternal grandfather of Periander's sons receives them kindly (ἐφιλοφρονέετο) and then sends them off home, and at 7.105, where Xerxes sends off Demaratos without anger and gently. Cf. the motif of the *pompē* as

Croesus, appears to be ignorance also of what is appropriate and commensurate, a lack of *kharis*. He does not follow the aristocratic code of exchange, refusing to reciprocate and display *kharis* where it is due, beginning with his visit to the royal treasury. Here, as Kurke has pointed out, another Athenian visitor to the very same treasury, namely Alkmeon, son of Megakles, does follow the code and show the appropriate respect for Croesus' *olbos*. Reciprocation and *kharis* follow in the form of Croesus' invitation to help himself to as much treasure as he can carry on his person (6.125).[44] In keeping with the parallelism that can be detected between Solon and Apollo as sources, transmitters, and decoders of wisdom, they both come in for accusations of lack of *kharis*, Solon here, and Apollo later when Croesus demands an explanation for the god's seeming lack of gratitude and aid (1.90.4). In the accusation of ignorance and *amathia*, there is also a possible overlap between the Herodotean Solon and the poetic Solon. In one poem (fr. 33 W^2), Solon is criticized as being senseless, since he does not make use of the opportunity the gods have given him to cast his net and grasp for himself great wealth by becoming tyrant.

> οὐκ ἔφυ Σόλων βαθύφρων οὐδὲ βουλήεις ἀνήρ·
> ἐσθλὰ γὰρ θεοῦ διδόντος αὐτὸς οὐκ ἐδέξατο·
> περιβαλὼν δ' ἄγραν ἀγασθεὶς οὐκ ἐπέσπασεν μέγα
> δίκτυον, θυμοῦ θ' ἁμαρτῆι καὶ φρενῶν ἀποσφαλείς·
> ἤθελον γάρ κεν κρατήσας, πλοῦτον ἄφθονον λαβὼν
> καὶ τυραννεύσας Ἀθηνῶν μοῦνον ἡμέραν μίαν,
> ἀσκὸς ὕστερον δεδάρθαι κἀπιτετρίφθαι γένος.
> Solon was no deep thinker nor a man of good counsel: for when the god gave him an opportunity he did not take it. Though he encircled his prey, awestruck he did not pull in his great net, deprived at the same time of will and wits. Would that I could lay hold of it, getting endless wealth and ruling Athens as tyrant – if only for one day, to be flayed later into a wineskin and to have my lineage rubbed out.

Though it is not explicit in the Herodotean passage, Solon may also be viewed as *amathēs* because in not rendering *kharis* to Croesus he denies himself the possibility of wealth (as Alkmeon does not), just as he denies the title of *olbios* to Croesus.[45] In the Herodotean version, the criticism of Solon comes from a real tyrant, one who already has *ploutos aphthonos*, while in the poetic fragment the criticism seems to come from an imagined critic that Solon is channeling, one who dreams

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a gracious gesture, often involving gifts, in the code of guest-friendship in the *Odyssey*, e.g. *Od.* 7.331–333). Solon himself hopes for such a send-off in his verses to Philokypros (fr. 19 W^2).

44 Kurke 1999, 151.

45 There is a suggestion of this in Plutarch's version of Solon's visit, where he has Aesop say to Solon that he should be more pleasant with kings (*Sol.* 28.1).

of *ploutos aphthonos* and tyranny, even if he could only have it for a day and lose it all after that.[46]

Solon then disappears from Sardis and from the narrative, at least as a person, and the envious and turbulent divinity he warns Croesus about (1.32.1, 1.32.9) is immediately seen at work in the story of Croesus' son Atys and his destruction at the hands of Adrastos, the very man appointed to protect him from death by an iron weapon that Croesus has foreseen in his dream (1.34–45).[47] Herodotus makes the connection explicit when introducing the episode, 1.34.1:[48] μετὰ δὲ Σόλωνα οἰχόμενον ἔλαβε ἐκ θεοῦ νέμεσις μεγάλη Κροῖσον, ὡς εἰκάσαι, ὅτι ἐνόμισε ἑωυτὸν εἶναι ἀνθρώπων ἁπάντων ὀλβιώτατον, "After Solon's departure a great vengeance from the gods befell Croesus, presumably because he considered himself the most *olbios* of all men".

Solon gives Croesus no explicit warning about the dangers of thinking himself the most *olbios*, nor about the dangers of *koros*, *hubris*, and *atē* and consequences of transgression whether in deed or thought, though they are there for an ideal audience to find.[49] It is one of the distinctive features of the Herodotean Solon that his warnings about these dangers, so prominent and explicit in the Solonian poetry, are only implicit in his words to Croesus. As both Nagy and Pelling have shown, it is Herodotus who gets to demonstrate the workings of *hubris* and *atē*.[50] If the Herodotean Solon is indirect, this is a function of the genre of the *ainos* – and of the realities of talking truth to power.

Solon does make a return to the narrative after Croesus' defeat by Cyrus, when Croesus is placed on the pyre. Yet it is not his person that returns but his

46 See Noussia-Fantuzzi 2010 ad loc. for the history of interpretation of this fragment and in particular the change of the transmitted ἤθελε to ἤθελον in verse 5.

47 Immerwahr 1966, 157–158 suggests that the very names of these figures bear out the themes that their actions illustrate: Atys as if from *atē*, Adrastos from *a-drastos*, "he from whom one cannot run away", epithet (Adrasteia) of the goddess Nemesis (Aesch. *Pr.* 936).

48 Vandiver 2012, 156 n. 50 explores the question of what element in this sentence ὡς εἰκάσαι ("supposedly") qualifies: is the speculation about whether it was indisputably nemesis from the gods or about whether it was Croesus' thoughts (and thus actions?) that caused it? On the question whether this passage involves "thought-policing" or whether "thinking" here includes action upon thought, see Pelling 2006, 150.

49 Contrast for example the explicit message of the poetic Solon, fr. 6.3–4 W^2: τίκτει γὰρ κόρος ὕβριν, ὅταν πολὺς ὄλβος ἕπηται | ἀνθρώποις ὀπάσσοις μὴ νόος ἄρτιος ἦι "For surfeit begets *hubris* when much *olbos* attends those men whose minds are not apt". The Herodotean Solon does use the term *atē*, but seemingly in the sense of destruction, though to understand this as referring to the destruction caused by folly and *hubris*-induced delusion is not a great leap to make, as Munson 2001, 184 suggests. Cf. Pelling 2006, 151 on this language as sufficient "to trigger that nexus of familiar ideas".

50 Nagy 1990b, 248–249; Pelling 2006, 149–152.

name and the advice associated with his name. As Herodotus puts it, the advice of Solon "comes to" (ἐσελθεῖν) Croesus, 1.86.3:

> τῶι δὲ Κροίσωι ἑστεῶτι ἐπὶ τῆς πυρῆς ἐσελθεῖν, καίπερ ἐν κακῶι ἐόντι τοσούτωι, τὸ τοῦ Σόλωνος, ὡς οἱ εἴη σὺν θεῶι εἰρημένον, τὸ μηδένα εἶναι τῶν ζωόντων ὄλβιον.
> As Croesus was standing upon the pyre, there came to him, though he was in such great distress, the statement of Solon, that it had been spoken with divine inspiration, [the statement] that no living man was *olbios*.

Of the many striking features of this scene I will focus on two. The first is that it is framed as an epiphany: Solon's dictum breaks upon Croesus like the sudden and portentous arrival of a god.[51] This fits into a pattern of parallels between Solon and his advice and the divine figure of Apollo and his authoritative oracle.[52] Herodotus' version of Croesus' experience on the pyre continues the tradition of divine intervention (seen, for example, in Bacchylides, *Ode* 3), but adds to it. Later on in the narrative, in reaction to Croesus' indignant questioning, Apollo will claim to have intervened on his behalf (1.91.3), but what Herodotus shows us first, before the rain miracle, is rather Solon's intervention. The second remarkable feature is that it is a disembodied Solon who makes an appearance, not Solon himself but Solon's dictum, τὸ τοῦ Σόλωνος. Solon the man has disappeared, leaving in his place an authoritative formulation of his words that seems to have a life of its own and that eternally replays his message in unaltered form. One may parallel here the disappearance of Solon the lawgiver from Athens, leaving in his place his laws, the physical presence of the *axones*, wooden panels inscribed with his laws.[53]

This method of introduction and referral to his advice is reminiscent of the citation seal that introduces an authoritative *epos*: one may compare, for example, the introduction formula for the monuments set up by Hipparchus in Plato's *Hipparchus* 229a:[54] μνῆμα τόδ' Ἱππάρχου· στεῖχε δίκαια φρονῶν, "This is a monument of Hipparchus: go your way thinking just thoughts".

It is also possible to see Solon's dictum that "no living man is *olbios*" (μηδένα εἶναι τῶν ζωόντων ὄλβιον) as dactylo-spondaic, which wraps the content of his wisdom in the authoritative clothing of *epos*. It also has a *multum in parvo* effect, distilling the lengthy discourse into an authentic capsule whose contents can be

51 Illustrated with parallels by Kurke 1999, 157–159.

52 On this idea see again Kurke 1999, 157–159.

53 Cf. Ker 2000, 324 for the idea of the departure of Solon from the middle of the city and its occupation by the laws themselves.

54 Nagy 1990b, 161 notes the rivalry between Hipparchus' utterances and those of Apollo's oracle at Delphi: perhaps one might see such a rivalry (or collaboration) here.

expanded and expounded if necessary, as will in fact be necessary in the interaction between Croesus and Cyrus.

The epiphany of Solon's wisdom has an instant effect on Croesus, and he responds to it with a cry that is just as condensed as the formulation of Solon's wisdom and which also formally resembles the language of cult (1.86.3): ὡς δὲ ἄρα μιν προσστῆναι τοῦτο, ἀνενεικάμενόν τε καὶ ἀναστενάξαντα ἐκ πολλῆς ἡσυχίης ἐς τρὶς ὀνομάσαι ‚Σόλων' "When this came to him, he gathered himself, and groaning aloud after a long silence, he thrice spoke the name 'Solon' ".

The threefold invocation of Solon seems to borrow from ritual invocations of gods and underscores the similarity developed between Solon's wisdom and that of Delphic Apollo.[55] The mere mention of his name seems to be a kind of shorthand expressive of everything Solon has taught, but its oracular brevity will have to be expanded and interpreted, as the subsequent interaction between Croesus and Cyrus shows. This encounter mirrors that between Solon and Croesus. Just as Solon begins his advice to Croesus with the simple mention of a name (Tellos the Athenian, 1.30.3), so Croesus' exclamation consists only of a name, thrice repeated. There is then incomprehension on the part of each listener and a question: Croesus in amazement at what Solon has said asks him he how he judges Tellos to be the most *olbios* (1.30.3); Cyrus listens to Croesus call Solon's name and bids the interpreters ask who it is he is calling upon (1.86.4). The questioner is given a brief answer that proves equally incomprehensible. In the Croesus-Cyrus scene, the gap between Croesus' message and Cyrus' inability to comprehend it is underlined and mirrored by the physical difficulties in communication between the two men. The fact that they speak different languages (something which is not signaled in the Croesus-Solon interview) is stressed by the detail that interpreters (ἑρμηνέας, 1.86.4) must intercede. These, despite their official function and the fact that they can translate Croesus' words from Lydian (presumably) into Persian, cannot however interpret Croesus' enigmatic reply about who Solon is. For them his words are signs that have no meaning (ἄσημα, 1.86.5): ὡς δέ σφι ἄσημα ἔφραζε, πάλιν ἐπειρώτων τὰ λεγόμενα, "As he was saying things that were meaningless to them, they asked him again what was said".

They can grasp the surface meaning but cannot get at the deeper meaning, just as Croesus could not get at the meaning behind Solon's answers. There is a strong parallel here with oracular responses and their interpretation, which is part of Herodotus' presentation of Solon as a source of wisdom equal and com-

55 That Cyrus asks whom Croesus is calling upon (τίνα τοῦτον ἐπικαλέοιτο, 1.86.4) may suggest he thinks Croesus is invoking a god. See Howie 2004, 54–55, who suggests that the triple exclamation is reminiscent of a worshiper's invocation of a god, and comments on the ritual connotations of ἐπικαλέομαι.

plementary to the Delphic oracle. In Croesus' explanation of who Solon is, we see key themes in Solon's teaching (and the poetry attributed to him). He describes him as "the one whom I would have for all the money in the world talk to all tyrants" (τὸν ἂν ἐγὼ πᾶσι τυράννοισι προετίμησα μεγάλων χρημάτων ἐς λόγους ἐλθεῖν, 1.86.4). With the use of the marked term *turannos* instead of *basileus* (with which Solon is careful to address Croesus during their interaction: ὦ βασιλεῦ, 1.30.3), a series of associations is activated. Among them is the idea of absolute rule, its access to power and wealth, and its difficult relationship to them. The power of the tyrant allows one to be an exponent both of *dikē* and of *hubris*, and the use of the term *turannos* signals the potential, vulnerability, and danger associated with the position.[56] In the mention of talking (ἐς λόγους ἐλθεῖν) to *turannoi* is sounded the power of advice and *ainos* that Solon's voice provides, and not just for one individual, but for all rulers (πᾶσι τυράννοισι). Here a panhellenic theme is sounded, which I will argue is a feature of Herodotus' treatment of the specifically Athenian Solon. Lastly, Croesus' renunciation of wealth (and with it presumably power and tyranny) in favor of Solon's *ainos* and its distribution reflects Solon's renunciation of wealth and *kharis* from Croesus (which, as we have seen, finds a parallel in the poetry attributed to him, fr. 33 W^2). The framing of Croesus' fervent wish that Solon appear in person and talk to all tyrants (including presumably Cyrus) as incapable of fulfillment (aorist indicative + ἄν) seems to draw on the theme of the absent lawmaker, who leaves his community so that his laws may work without his being forced to add to, detract from, or interpret them. Like a *theōros* Croesus can however channel Solon's voice and transmit his advice. This he now does, and after being badgered by the interpreters, he finally provides a decoding of his elliptical utterances, relating the details of Solon's visit and speeches to him and adding as authentication that it has all come to pass as he said it would. The motif of vision involving learning (which may involve the viewer himself learning or causing learning in others) is repeated, as is the key term *olbos* and the idea of the universality of the message (1.86.5):

> λιπαρεόντων δὲ αὐτῶν καὶ ὄχλον παρεχόντων ἔλεγε δὴ ὡς ἦλθε ἀρχὴν ὁ Σόλων ἐὼν Ἀθηναῖος, καὶ θεησάμενος πάντα τὸν ἐωυτοῦ ὄλβον ἀποφλαυρίσειε (οἷα δὴ εἴπας), ὥς τε αὐτῶι πάντα ἀποβεβήκοι τῆι περ ἐκεῖνος εἶπε, οὐδέν τι μᾶλλον ἐς ἐωυτὸν λέγων ἢ <οὐκ> ἐς ἅπαν τὸ ἀνθρώπινον καὶ μάλιστα τοὺς παρὰ σφίσι αὐτοῖσι ὀλβίους δοκέοντας εἶναι.

56 The expression of Nagy 1990b, 184–185, who demonstrates the close parallels between tyrant and lawgiver. This is something Theogn. 39–42 flirts with; cf. Solon's refusal in fr. 33 W^2. Cf. also discussion (verses 186–187) on the same figure described as *basileus* and *turannos* and later (verse 281) on use of *turannos* in Pind. *Pyth.* 3.85: "… the use of *turannos* in this poem is clearly not negative, only ambivalent. In the poetic medium of Pindar, the word *turannos* is like the figure of Croesus, conveying overt positive aspects as well as latent negative ones".

> After they had persisted and badgered him, he said that when in the beginning Solon, an Athenian, came to him and had viewed all his *olbos*, he had made light of it (such things he said!), and that it had all turned out just as he had said, speaking not so much with regard to himself as to humanity in its entirety, and particularly to those seeming to themselves to be *olbios*.

A pattern can be seen here which links Solon's discourse to that of Croesus with Cyrus. A lengthier explanation, coming after the mention of a name (Solon 1.86.3; cf. Tellos the Athenian, 1.30.3 and Kleobis and Biton 1.31.1), is then followed by a slightly lengthier – but still enigmatic – explanation (1.86.4; cf. 1.30.4–5 and 1.31.2–5), matching Solon's final speech to Croesus (1.32.1–9). In fact, it seems to repeat and incorporate it (if the expression οἷα δὴ εἴπας is understood as formula of recapitulation).[57] This time Solon's message does find a worthy recipient and the effect on Cyrus is presented as instantaneous and dramatic, 1.86.6:[58]

> καὶ τὸν Κῦρον ἀκούσαντα τῶν ἑρμηνέων τὰ Κροῖσος εἶπε, μεταγνόντα τε καὶ ἐννώσαντα ὅτι καὶ αὐτὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐὼν ἄλλον ἄνθρωπον, γενόμενον ἐωυτοῦ εὐδαιμονίηι οὐκ ἐλάσσω, ζῶντα πυρὶ διδοίη, πρός τε τούτοισι δείσαντα τὴν τίσιν καὶ ἐπιλεξάμενον ὡς οὐδὲν εἴη τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποισι ἀσφαλέως ἔχον, κελεύειν σβεννύναι τὴν ταχίστην τὸ καιόμενον πῦρ καὶ καταβιβάζειν Κροῖσόν τε καὶ τοὺς μετὰ Κροίσου.
> And Cyrus, hearing from his interpreters what Croesus had said, changed his mind and realized that he, himself a human being, was consigning to the fire another human, one who had been no lesser than him in terms of happiness. In addition to this, fearing vengeance and considering that nothing in the affairs of men was secure, he ordered his men to extinguish the now burning fire and to bring down Croesus and those with him.

The *metanoia* of Cyrus seems to match the sudden, divinely inflected arrival of wisdom to Croesus, and the impression of divine intervention is continued with the miracle of the sudden rainstorm that extinguishes the flames of the pyre and saves Croesus from death (1.87.2).[59] The repeated detail that Solon's *ainos* applies

57 Pelling 2006, 157 n. 62 surveys the possible meanings of οἷα δὴ εἴπας. His translation is "that was how Croesus put it". I prefer to take the subject of εἴπας as Solon, not Croesus, and to take οἷα as exclamatory (cf. Smyth § 2687 on exclamatory οἷος after verbs of praise, blame, and wonder), so that the whole expression expands on the emotion in ἀποφλαυρίσειε and underlines Solon's extraordinary and surprising ideas, which now turn out to be well founded.

58 But Cyrus does not absorb the whole message, as his later campaign against the Massagetae will show: see Shapiro 1994 and Pelling 2006, 164–172 on this and the question of whether Croesus gives good advice then.

59 No divinity is named in the description of the rainstorm, but the detail that it came out of a clear sky (ἐκ δὲ αἰθρίης τε καὶ νηνεμίης, 1.87.2) points to this (cf. the "black cloud" sent by Zeus in Bacchylides 3.55), and Apollo later takes credit for saving Croesus while he was burning (1.91.3).

to all mankind (and in particular to *turannoi*) together with the ability of Cyrus to make a connection between Solon's message, Croesus' position, and his own produce a humanitarian "moment" on the scale of the encounter between Achilles and Priam in *Iliad* 24 and which is repeated in the scene between Kambyses and Psammenitos (3.14–15).[60] After his downfall and transformative moment on the pyre, Croesus is immediately transformed into an advisor figure, who now assists Cyrus and is eventually handed down to his successor, Cambyses, as a prized and valuable possession (1.208).

The wisdom of Solon is thus transmitted to Croesus, though it is the habitus and mode of a *sophos* and *Warnerfigur*, and not just Solonian content that is handed down. Croesus' advice on occasion involves the characteristic technique of the paradox or shifting the premise of the problem. Thus Croesus demonstrates to Cyrus that in allowing his soldiers to plunder Sardis freely he is essentially destroying his own property, since he is now ruler of the city (1.88.2–3). The Solonian theme of instability in human affairs prefaces his advice to Cyrus about how to proceed against the Massagetae, particularly in the image of the wheel of human affairs (1.207.1–2):

> τὰ δέ μοι παθήματα ἐόντα ἀχάριτα μαθήματα γέγονε. εἰ μὲν ἀθάνατος δοκέεις εἶναι καὶ στρατιῆς τοιαύτης ἄρχειν, οὐδὲν ἂν εἴη πρῆγμα γνώμας ἐμὲ σοὶ ἀποφαίνεσθαι· εἰ δ' ἔγνωκας ὅτι ἄνθρωπος καὶ σὺ εἷς καὶ ἑτέρων τοιῶνδε ἄρχεις, ἐκεῖνο πρῶτον μάθε ὡς κύκλος τῶν ἀνθρωπηίων ἐστὶ πρηγμάτων, περιφερόμενος δὲ οὐκ ἐᾶι αἰεὶ τοὺς αὐτοὺς εὐτυχέειν.
> The things I have undergone, though unpleasant, have become lessons for me. If you think you are immortal and that you command an army that is of that sort too, there would be no point in my giving you my opinion. But if you realize that you too are a human and rule over others who are such, then understand first that there is a wheel in the affairs of men, and as it revolves it does not allow the same people to enjoy good fortune all the time.

It is a notorious fact that Cyrus follows Croesus' advice (which further involves choosing to advance into Massagetan territory over the Araxes river and give battle there, rather than withdrawing and giving battle on Persian territory, and to trick the barbarian and wineless Massagetai into drinking unmixed wine and to attack them thus disabled) and ends up losing the campaign and his life. This is later thrown in Croesus' teeth by Cyrus' son, Cambyses, who taunts him with the fact that he also lost his own kingdom (3.36.3). Yet Cyrus has not entirely taken on board Solon's warning, as retransmitted by Croesus, about the instability of human *eutukhiē* and has presumed on its permanence.[61] Croesus is not

60 The Achilles-Priam parallel is noted by Pelling 2006, 160. On the humanity of the Kambyses-Psammenitos scene, cf. Hollmann 2011, 173–175.

61 Here I follow the views expressed in Shapiro 1994.

consulted about the advisability of the campaign as a whole, only about which of two alternatives is better. The recriminations of Cambyses are thus reminiscent of those of Croesus against Apollo, who, however, shows that Croesus is responsible for his own mistakes and should have asked more questions (1.91.4).

Solon may disappear from the court of Croesus and absent himself from the subsequent narrative, but he does have two remaining appearances in the *Histories* that, though brief, nevertheless continue some of the themes associated with him. When Herodotus introduces him in Book One, he mentions that Egypt is his first destination after leaving Athens and that Amasis is his host there, yet this encounter is passed over in favor of his visit to Sardis and Croesus (1.30.1). In Book Two, the Egyptian *logos*, we finally learn of this visit. The encounter is different in a number of ways. Firstly, the Solon we see here is primarily a *nomothetēs* and the interaction revolves around a specific law and not a broader, philosophical theme. He is quite simply described as taking from the Egyptians a law of Amasis that requires each man to show every year that that he has a respectable livelihood (2.177.2):[62]

> νόμον δὲ Αἰγυπτίοισι τόνδε Ἄμασίς ἐστι ὁ καταστήσας, ἀποδεικνύναι ἔτεος ἑκάστου τῶι νομάρχηι πάντα τινὰ Αἰγυπτίων ὅθεν βιοῦται· μὴ δὲ ποιεῦντα ταῦτα μηδὲ ἀποφαίνοντα δικαίην ζόην ἰθύνεσθαι θανάτωι. Σόλων δὲ ὁ Ἀθηναῖος λαβὼν ἐξ Αἰγύπτου τοῦτον τὸν νόμον Ἀθηναίοισι ἔθετο· τῶι ἐκεῖνοι ἐς αἰεὶ χρέωνται, ἐόντι ἀμώμωι νόμωι.
> Amasis was the one who established the following law for the Egyptians: that each year every Egyptian should demonstrate the source of his livelihood to the nomarch. If he fails to do this and to demonstrate a just life, he is punished by death. Solon the Athenian took this law from Egypt and set it up for the Athenians, which they have continued to use, since it is a good law.

Secondly, the *theōriē* that motivates Solon's travels here involves observation, as does his experience in Sardis, where in Croesus' treasury he "views and looks at everything" (θεησάμενον δέ μιν πάντα καὶ σκεψάμενον, 1.30.2). During Solon's Egyptian visit, however, the knowledge and wisdom associated with this observation seem to flow from the host, Amasis, to the traveller, Solon, rather than from the visitor to the traveller. This relationship reflects a general tendency in Herodotus to present the Egyptian culture as older and more authoritative than the Greek, which leads to Herodotus' notorious claim that the Greeks took the names of the gods from the Egyptians (2.52.1–2). In fact, Herodotus appears himself as a kind of *theōros* in this book, travelling, recording, and asking questions of the Egyptians, and conveying this information to the Greeks, while also selecting and

62 Plutarch (*Sol.* 22.3) describes a Solonian law giving authority to the Areopagos to investigate each man's source of support and to punish the lazy.

praising certain practices, and in this, as I will say in the conclusion, we may see a link between the figure of Solon and Herodotus.

The connection Herodotus sets up in 1.30.1 between Solon and Amasis is thus not developed in the same way as the one between Solon and Croesus. Rather, it is in the figure of Amasis that the wise man and sage connection is present, and he will later appear as a *Warnerfigur* in the encounter with Polykrates of Samos and his ring (3.40–43), also displaying elsewhere many characteristics typical of both the trickster and *sophos*.[63]

Solon disappears again from the *Histories*, emerging in the narrative in Book Five in context of the conquest of Cyprus by Cyrus. As with his appearances in Book One at Croesus' court and then in Book Two at that of Amasis in Egypt, here too he is shown travelling and arriving at the court of the powerful (5.113.2):[64] Φιλοκύπρου δὲ τούτου τὸν Σόλων ὁ Ἀθηναῖος ἀπικόμενος ἐς Κύπρον ἐν ἔπεσι αἴνεσε τυράννων μάλιστα, "It was this Philokypros [son of Aristokypros] whom Solon the Athenian after his arrival on Cyprus praised especially among tyrants, using hexameters".

At Philokypros' court Solon's *theōriē* seems to involve dispensing advice and wisdom, as at Croesus' court, rather than gathering it, as at Amasis' court. This appearance differs from Solon's previous appearances in that there is no reporting of the content of his advice gained or given, only its form and mode.[65] Here we see clearly articulated the genre of advice, *ainos* (αἴνεσε), the fact that it is performed in hexametric verse (ἐν ἔπεσι), and lastly that it involves comparison of Philokypros with other *turannoi* (ἐν ἔπεσι αἴνεσε τυράννων μάλιστα). That Solon performed an *ainos* for Philokypros "especially among *turannoi*" means presumably that he praised him, but the genre may include both praise and blame, the one complementing the other, or at least it may present praise alloyed with warning and advice.[66] That Philokypros is compared to other *turannoi* may offer a further clue about the tenor of this advice. As we have seen above, the term *turannos* is a marked one, and while its use need not imply anything about the legitimacy of a ruler, it draws attention to the fact that the ruler is possessed of power that could tempt him to abuse it. We have seen how Croesus himself uses the term pointedly

63 The categories are in fact closely connected, as Martin 1993 has shown; cf. Hollmann 2005 on tricksters and *sophoi* in Herodotus.

64 Cf. 1.29.1 ἀπικνέονται … ἄλλοι τε οἱ πάντες ἐκ τῆς Ἑλλάδος σοφισταί … καὶ δὴ καὶ Σόλων; 1.30.1 ἐς Αἴγυπτον ἀπίκετο παρὰ Ἄμασιν.

65 The content is in fact partially preserved in the texts attributed to Solon (fr. 19 W^2), where Solon wishes for a lengthy reign for his Cyprian host and a good send-off and *nostos* for himself.

66 On the double-edged quality of the *ainos*, cf. Nagy 1990b, 149 with n. 20. On the *ainos* in Herodotus, see Hollmann 2011, 132–142.

when he describes Solon to Cyrus as the one whom he would have talk to all *turannoi* (1.86.4). There the context of Croesus' remark – the fragility of wealth and power in his own case and potentially in that of Cyrus too – also seems to complement the sense of the *turannos* as powerful figure vulnerable to the excess and *atē* that power can bring.

Both at the court of Croesus and that of Philokypros Solon performs an *ainos* to one who may be viewed as a *turannos*, but the medium is different in each case. In Book One, Solon (or rather, Herodotus) chooses the medium of prose, and the content is presented in a style varying from the oracular and dense, calling for exegesis, to a more discursive and open *gnōmē*. In Book Five, Solon explicitly uses the medium of poetry, but the content of his *ainos* is not reported, except that the verb describing his communication (αἴνεσε) acts as a kind of packaging or envelope to give us some indication of what lies within. It seems that when Solon speaks directly in the *Histories* he can only do so in Herodotus' medium of which he is the master, prose.[67]

This brings us to the relationship between Herodotus and Solon. Why should Herodotus choose him as his lead figure to introduce certain fundamental and programmatic ideas that are then taken up, repeated, and developed in the following books of the *Histories*?[68] Solon is just one of several wise men in the *Histories*, it could be argued, who are qualified to deliver the message Solon transmits to Croesus. Though Herodotus may or may not consider them as a group, many of the other subsequently canonical Seven Sages figure in the *Histories*: Bias, Pittakos, Khilon, Thales, the controversial Periander, Thrasyboulos, as well as Anakharsis, and even Aesop.[69] As I have already noted above on 1.27.2, attributions of the same material to different *sophoi* give the impression that sometimes one sage figure seems to differ little from another and that they are to some extent interchangeable. One might ask whether one of the Ionian sages, such as Bias of Priene, or Pittakos of Mytilene, or Thales of Miletus, would not have been a more natural choice, at least in terms of physical proximity, and the passage 1.27.2–3 shows a tradition of interaction of these Ionians with Croesus. For that matter, a tradition attested first in Ephorus has a meeting and debate

67 See Nagy 1990b e.g. p. 332.

68 I should note that I am leaving aside the possibility that Solon appears because he actually was at Sardis with Croesus and that Herodotus is thus reflecting a historical reality. Plutarch (*Sol.* 27.1) is already aware of the chronological problems involved.

69 Cf. Martin 1993 on this, who in fact sees in *Histories* 1.29.1 a suggestion that the *sophoi* are imagined as living at the same time (113 n. 16). For the suggestion that Aesop is linked to the Seven see Kurke 2011.

(*homilia*) of all of the Seven Sages (with the exception of Thales) at the court of Croesus.[70]

The privileging of Solon may lie in a combination of his ethnicity and the content of the tradition associated with him. The choice of an Athenian could be characterized as significant and as recognizing the eminence and importance of the Athenians as a whole and their contributions to the Greek world. The first appearance of Solon the Athenian at 1.29 is simultaneously the first appearance in the work of the Athenians and their *polis*, and Solon hereby introduces the theme of the importance of this people, who are at present simply a small dot on the landscape of the world that Croesus moves in. Such a reading of course needs to be considered together with the larger question of how Herodotus presents the Athenians and their role within the work. Herodotus goes out of his way to acknowledge the importance of Athenian leadership and contributions to the Persian Wars, famously calling them the "saviors of Greece" (σωτῆρας γενέσθαι τῆς Ἑλλάδος, 7.139.5). His praise of the Athenians is not however unalloyed and he does not hold back from reporting the negative or joking at their expense: cf. his comments on Athenian gullibility when he relates how they took the woman Phye, outfitted by Peisistratos as Athena, for the goddess herself and accepted Peisistratos (1.60.3). Some have detected in Herodotus' description of Athenian activities during and immediately after the Persian Wars an implicit warning about Athenian imperialist and hubristic behaviour during the time the *Histories* is being composed, that is, the period leading up to the Peloponnesian War and the earlier part of war.[71] If this is so, one might see Herodotus as the same kind of warner figure as Solon, who is determined not to flatter and to tell the truth as he sees it, giving praise where due, but just and unbridled criticism too. In other words, Herodotus deals in *ainos* as much as Solon, and in Solon Herodotus finds the perfect figure with which to begin his *ainos* to the Athenians and other Greeks.

A very particular Solon emerges from Herodotus' work. Herodotus conscientiously addresses all Greeks, explaining phenomena in such a way that all Greek communities will understand them (cf. his description, mentioned above, of the shape of the Crimea in terms of both Attica and Southern Italy). Perhaps Solon too is rendered panhellenic, being left with a few Athenian details for the sake of verisimilitude, but otherwise stripped of specifically local content. Certain elements that cluster around the Solon of the poetic fragments are recognizable in the Herodotean Solon, and maintain this verisimilitude, but it is clear that the

70 Ephor. *FGrH* 70 F 181 (= D. L. 1.40).

71 On this approach cf. e.g. Fornara 1971; Nagy 1990b; Moles 1996 and 2002.

packaging of Solon as *sophos* is more important to Herodotus than the contents of Solon's legislative and poetic activity. It looks very likely that for the Athenians of Herodotus' time this was equally the case.[72]

72 See Osborne 2002, 514, cited above. It may also be that the tradition of Solon as sage – including Herodotus' version – led to the attribution of poetry to Solon: a possibility floated by Lardinois 2006, 28 n. 46, who points out generally that we do not have to accept "touting these fragments as prime examples of Solon's own words".