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Madness in Context in the *Histories* of Herodotus

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Abstract

This thesis is a study of the way Herodotus uses madness in his *Histories*. It aims to examine the changing nature of madness depending on the context in which Herodotus uses it. I also examine some examples of madness in the works of Homer, the Tragedians and the Hippocratic corpus in order to illuminate the varying examples from the *Histories*. This required close reading of all works in question in the original Ancient Greek as well as examination of secondary literature on the authors and topics concerned.

Herodotus’ use of madness varies according to the context in which he uses it, so he does not have a coherent view of madness. Madness, as Herodotus employs the concept, is often violent, but not always physically; it may be verbal or may be used of a person who expresses a violent idea. Sometimes it is a divine punishment; sometimes it signals transgression against divine law. He also uses madness as a literary device to highlight themes of the various *logoi*, and to reflect not only the state of the one called mad, but the one who is using the term. His usage is similar in some ways to each of the works of Homer, the Tragedians and the Hippocratic writers.

In conclusion, madness is a device which Herodotus uses to good effect depending on what effect he wishes to make at the time, in a specific *logos*. 
Dedication

To Mum, Dad, Penny, Rodney, Tim, Esther, Terry and Yue, and family members of the feline persuasion; also to friends too numerous to mention: the people who have to deal with the underside of research and who are always there when it turns to custard. I appreciate you all immensely and could not have done this without your practical and moral support in all forms and however it is expressed.
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