

**INTERTEXT AND ALLUSION IN HERODOTUS' *HISTORIES*:
AUTHORITY, PROOF, POLEMIC**

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool
for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy by

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To Robert and Beryl

You know the line: 'Say goodbye, Catullus, to the shores of Asia Minor.'

Cy Twombly

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Abstract

Intertext and Allusion in Herodotus' *Histories*: Authority, Proof, Polemic

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This study considers anew the central question of Herodotus' relationship with literary and textual sources. It examines how Herodotus comes to define his own work in a context where many artists (both narrative and visual) are seeking to accumulate, delineate, and ultimately dictate cultural memory.

Rather than applying traditional *Quellenforschung*, my analysis centres on examining significant intertextual and allusive relationships in his work. In each chapter, I address the nature of Herodotus' engagement with certain textual rivals/genres, namely early prose writers, inscriptions, poets (especially Homer, Simonides, Aeschylus, Sophocles), and oracles. From this emerges a highly nuanced engagement with myriad texts in the *Histories* (principally: as authoritative voices; as persuasive evidence; and as voices for disputation). Such engagement furnishes considerable authority for the writer of the *Histories*, to the extent that he provides a superior view of the past, compared to the more limited, partisan perspectives offered by his textual rivals.

My study reinforces the salient point that Herodotus is no historian in any modern sense of the word; his interaction with other literary traditions does not appear in a way that is expected of an academic monograph. Nevertheless the evidence for his engagement with a wide and diverse group of texts—both contemporary and non-contemporary—clearly militates against the consensual view that Herodotus was working with predominantly unfixed, oral traditions. Indeed, through this interplay with other literary works Herodotus most clearly defines for the reader his own unique intellectual achievement: the invention of historiography.

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Acknowledgements

My interest in Herodotus' construction of the *Histories* stems from an MA module entitled 'Writing and Power in the Ancient Greek World', in which I began to confront the difficult question of the relationship between the written word and its intended recipients. Of course, the many and arbitrary influences behind any piece of work are impossible to list, though here I shall include those that are especially important to me.

First and foremost, I wish to thank my friends and family, who have offered unending support throughout my PhD. My thanks go particularly to the stimulating and rewarding discussions I have had with Anne Landborg, Jason Wickham, David Griffiths, Tobias Tjärnbro, and Max Facey.

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It is my hope that what follows begins to do justice to Herodotus and his effulgent *Histories*—a unique *tour de force* in the history of ideas.

List of Abbreviations

References in round brackets in the text and in the footnotes are to Herodotus, unless stated otherwise. All citations of Herodotus are from the Oxford Classical Text edition of C. Hude (Oxford, 1908), and aside from where stated, all translations are my own (though assisted by the punctilious translations of Waterfield and Godley). All citations of Plutarch's *De malignitate Herodoti* are taken from Bowen (1992), whose translations I have made great use of. Secondary literature is referred to by the surname of the author and date of publication. Abbreviations for ancient authors and their works follow those of LSJ, and for journal titles (where used) *L'Année Philologique*.

Asheri I	'Book I', in D. Asheri, A. Lloyd, A. Corcella, O. Murray and A. Moreno, (2007): 57-218.
Asheri II	'Book III', in D. Asheri, A. Lloyd, A. Corcella, O. Murray and A. Moreno, (2007): 379-542.
Asheri III	D. Asheri, <i>Erodoto: Le Storie. Libro IX: La battaglia di Platea</i> (Milan, 2006).
Bowie	A.M. Bowie, <i>Herodotus: Histories Book VIII</i> (Cambridge, 2007).
CEG	P.A. Hansen (ed.), <i>Carmina epigraphica Graeca</i> , I (Berlin and New York, 1983).
Corcella	'Book IV', in D. Asheri, A. Lloyd, A. Corcella, O. Murray and A. Moreno, (2007): 543-721.
DK	H. Diels and W. Kranz, <i>Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker</i> . I-III (Berlin, ⁶ 1952).
EGM	R.L. Fowler, <i>Early Greek Mythology</i> (Oxford, 2001—).
FGE	D.L. Page, <i>Further Greek Epigrams</i> (Cambridge, 1981).
FGrHist	F. Jacoby, et al., <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> (Berlin and Leiden, 1923—).
Flower and Marincola	M. Flower and J. Marincola, <i>Herodotus: Histories Book IX</i> (Cambridge, 2002).
Hornblower I	S. Hornblower, <i>A Commentary on Thucydides. Volume I: Books I-III</i> (Oxford and New York, 1991).
Hornblower II	S. Hornblower, <i>A Commentary on Thucydides. Volume II: Books IV-V.24</i> (Oxford and New York, 1996).
Hornblower III	S. Hornblower, <i>A Commentary on Thucydides. Volume III: Books 5.25-8.109</i> (Oxford and New York, 2008).
HW I-II	W.W. How and J. Wells, <i>A Commentary on Herodotus</i> (Oxford, ² 1923).

- IG* *Inscriptiones Graecae* (Berlin, 1873—).
- Legrand I Ph. -E. Legrand, *Hérodote. Histoires. Livre I* (Bude ed., Paris, 1932).
- Legrand II Ph. -E. Legrand, *Hérodote. Histoires. Livre II* (Bude ed., Paris, 1936).
- Lloyd I A.B. Lloyd, *Herodotus Book II: Introduction* (Leiden, 1975).
- Lloyd II A.B. Lloyd, *Herodotus Book II: Commentary 1-98* (Leiden, 1976).
- Lloyd III A.B. Lloyd, *Herodotus Book II: Commentary 99-182* (Leiden, 1988).
- Macan I R.W. Macan, *Herodotus. The Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Books. i-ii* (London, 1895).
- Macan II R.W. Macan, *Herodotus. The Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Books* (London, 1908).
- Masaracchia A. Masaracchia, *Erodoto. La Battaglia di Salamina. Libro VIII delle Storie* (Milan, 1990).
- ML R. Meiggs and D.M. Lewis (eds.), *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the end of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford, 1969).
- Nenci I G. Nenci, *Erodoto. Le Storie. Libro V. La rivolta della Ionia* (Milan, 1994).
- Nenci II G. Nenci, *Erodoto. Le Storie. Libro VI. La battaglia di Maratona* (Milan, 1998).
- OCD*³ S. Hornblower and A.J. Spawforth (eds.), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford, ³1996, revised 2003).
- PMG* D.L. Page (ed.), *Poetae Melici Graeci* (Oxford, 1962).
- PW H.W. Parke and D.E.W. Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle, I-II* (Oxford, 1956).
- Rawlinson G. Rawlinson (ed.), *A History of Herodotus* (London, ⁴1880).
- Rosén H.B. Rosén (ed.), *Herodoti Historiae. I-II* (Leipzig, 1987-1997).
- Stein H. Stein (ed.), *Herodotos* (Berlin, 1881-1896).
- TrGF* B. Snell, R. Kannicht and S. Radt (eds.), *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta. I-IV* (Göttingen, 1977-2005).
- W² M.L. West (ed.), *Iambi et Elegi Graeci. I-II* (Oxford, ²1992).

Chapter 1

Herodotean Contexts

Ἔτερος ἔξ ἑτέρου σοφός | τό τε πάλαι τό τε νῦν.

— Bacchylides¹

Aber was immer dem Herodot als Material für seine Geschichte vorgelegen haben mag, es kann nicht der geringste Zweifel daran bestehen, daß er selbst es war, der ihr die Form gegeben hat, in welcher wir sie lesen.

— Kurt von Fritz²

It seems likely that many tales and traditions were still in circulation at the time [Herodotus] wrote them down...Provided that one does not take the view that Herodotus made up most of his narrative, it is then possible to say that he may have changed the emphasis, inserted the tales into larger, more meaningful narratives and historical patterning, *but to a large extent the repeated story-motifs may be a product of the traditions that he picked up rather than his own creation*...He must have been at the mercy of his sources to some extent [my italics].

— Rosalind Thomas³

1.1 An Oral Historian?

Writing the past provides little comfort for those eager to experience an unalloyed version of it. Or so the astute reader might well infer, having traversed Herodotus' anachronic *Histories*. For his text is one awash with subtle indications that all is not as it seems: rival accounts, conflicting motivations, inexplicable phenomena, unverifiable data—all contribute to the historian's sense of unease about his ability to relate, in Rankean terms, wie es eigentlich gewesen. And yet, in spite of these epistemological complexities, Herodotus battles to present an authoritative account of the events that led up to and occurred during the great conflict between Greeks and non-Greeks in 490-479 BCE. For as he states in his proem, his account is one that seeks not only to combat time's cruel erasure of human

¹ *Paeon* fr. 5 B=Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 5.68.6. For a contextual reading of this fragment, see Fearn (2007b) 2-5, 16-20.

² (1967) 213.

³ (2000) 6.

activity, but also one that explains the cause of these recent hostilities (ὥς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται...τά τε ἄλλα καὶ δι’ ἣν αἱ τήν ἐπολέμησαν ἀλλήλοισι).⁴

In order to explain his war, Herodotus appeals to a vast and diverse range of stories (*logoi*). But *how* did Herodotus the researcher begin to piece together such an unwieldy number of (often contradictory) *logoi* into a cohesive narrative? And, related to this, what *kinds* of *logoi* were at his disposal? The answer to the latter question for a great number of Herodotus’ current students is that his *Histories* is primarily the product of orally-derived information—myriad epichoric traditions, family traditions, individual informants—testimonia very often never before committed to writing, all incorporated into one over-arching account by our master-narrator. One of the important forerunners of this strand of thought, as is so often the case in modern Herodotean studies, is Felix Jacoby’s book-length *Realencyclopädie* entry on Herodotus. His analysis ‘severed [Herodotus] from written sources in general’,⁵ explicitly underlining Herodotus’ reliance on oral sources, notably the *logioi andres* (‘learned figures’) of a particular community, and thus drawing our attention to the differences between Herodotus’ historical methodology and that of a modern historian.⁶ In addition to Jacoby’s detailed inquiry, there is also the seminal work of Milman Parry, and subsequent Homeric scholars like Albert Lord, whose research transformed scholarship on the oral composition of Homeric poetry, contributing greatly to the emerging study of oral traditions in the mid-twentieth century.⁷

In light of this important work, a significant strand of Herodotean scholarship has offered extensive discussion on the difficult question of Herodotus’ sources, specifically looking to further our understanding of the extent to which he relied on oral informants and local, non-written traditions.⁸ A particularly significant contribution in this endeavour is Oswyn

⁴ On Herodotus’ proem and its role in the prologue, Węcowski (2004) is now essential. (Cf. further discussion at §4.2 below.)

⁵ Luraghi (2001a) 6.

⁶ Jacoby (1913) esp.392ff., 397-400, 413f., cf. 419-67 for a detailed analysis of all Herodotus’ sources. (Note already the brief remarks in Macan I.i lxxv-i.) For Jacoby’s considerable influence on Herodotean scholarship, see esp. Dewald and Marincola (2006a) 1-7, cf. Murray (2001) 319: ‘it would be a true revolution if we could be persuaded to cease from either repeating or contradicting the views of Jacoby’. For a useful précis of twentieth-century developments in oral history, and their impact on studies on Greek historiography and Herodotus, see Luraghi (2001a), (2005) esp.62-73; cf. Thomas (1992) 29-51. For the *logioi andres*, see n.59 below.

⁷ See esp. Vansina (1985), an elaboration of his earlier ground-breaking work *De la tradition orale* (1961).

⁸ Just a selection of scholars arguing for Herodotus’ primary dependence on oral sources and/or working from the starting-point that his is an ‘oral narrative’: Momigliano (1966a), Lang (1984) 5-8, *passim*; Evans (1980), (1991) 89-146; West (1985); Murray (1987) and (2001b); Dewald (1987) 169; Flory (1987) 16; Thomas (1989) *passim*, esp.3-4, 171-2, 247-51, 264-82, (1992) 102-4; Gould (1989)

Murray's 1987 article on Herodotus' oral sources, a work (self-admittedly) heavily indebted to mid-twentieth century field researchers' works on contemporary oral traditions in Africa, notably Jan Vansina's *Oral Tradition* (1965) and Ruth Finnegan's *Oral Literature in Africa* (1970).⁹ For Murray, Herodotus' entire literary persona is the product of Greek oral traditions—traditions which Murray characterises as 'firmly in the category of free not fixed texts...[aside from] oracles and a very few references to poetry'.¹⁰ Murray's Herodotus emerges as one that is the last and greatest of the oral *logopoioi*, writing down traditions in order to resist their evanescence.¹¹ The effect of Murray's study can be detected in numerous scholars' works. For instance, Stadter writes that the

written version [of the *Histories*] creates a new genre by expanding, joining, and interrelating the *logoi*, and by adding other material such as lists and catalogues, but arises naturally out of the oral *logoi* which are at its heart.¹²

And in an especially important article on Herodotus' epigraphic evidence, Stephanie West vigorously asserts Herodotus' offhand approach in relation to his reported inscriptions, proposing instead an author who 'transmuted a jumble of oral tradition', displaying the mindset that is characteristic of oral literature, inasmuch that his text implies that inanimate objects are peripheral evidence in comparison to living, spoken traditions.¹³

These interpretations are, of course, inextricably related to the discursive persona that the Herodotean narrator develops over the course of the narrative. For it has often been remarked that Herodotus' poikilic style is much more uneven, paratactic, and stitched together than that of his near-contemporary Thucydides, and indeed all of subsequent western historiography;¹⁴ and it is these qualities that are often the substance behind the widely-held

27-41; Stadter (1997); de Jong (1999) *passim*, Munson (2001) 14-5; Williams (2002) 158; Slings (2002), de Bakker (2007) 2; Baragwanath (2008) 3-4; Schellenberg (2009) 145-6; Dewald (2012) 67 with n.17, 72.

⁹ Murray (1987)—hereafter I will be referring to the more recent version of his article (2001a), reprinted in Luraghi (2001). Cf. Finley's staunch belief that such traditions could last no more than three generations (1975) esp.295ff.

¹⁰ *Pace* Baragwanath and de Bakker (2012a) 51 ('poetic material and vocabulary are pervasive in the *Histories*, as are direct hexametric quotations of Delphic oracles and lines from Homer'), cf. also chs.4-7 below.

¹¹ Murray (2001a), product of oral traditions=21ff., use of free texts=23, oral *logopoios*=34. sler (1991).

¹² Stadter (1997) 16.

¹³ West (1985) 288, 304-5; cf. now West (2011) 266. West is often associated with the so-called "liar school" of Herodotus (see below), though it must be stressed that unlike these other sceptical assessments of Herodotus' work, West is considerably more accepting of the view that Herodotus was working with oral traditions.

¹⁴ Cf. Arist. *Rhet.* 1409a29–1409b4. See Immerwahr (1966) esp.47ff.; Dewald (1987) 148. For a full treatment of Herodotus' narrative persona, see the valuable contributions by Immerwahr (1966);

view that the Herodotean narrator is akin to a storyteller or performing poet. As de Jong's thoroughgoing narratological investigation of the *Histories* puts it, Herodotus is 'un narrateur qui parle plutôt qu'un narrateur qui écrit'.¹⁵ What is more, the opening clause of the *Histories*, Ἡροδότου Ἀλικαρνησέος ἱστορίας ἀπόδεξις ἦ δε, generates significant verbal correspondences with other contemporary rhetorical and scientific discourses (cf., e.g., Hipp. *De arte* 1), a crossover which, according to Thomas, places Herodotus amongst a competitive group of intellectuals who were committed to displaying their knowledge and new ideas in an oral performance or lecture, that is, an *epideixis*.¹⁶

These oral features are not wholly an unconscious outcome of Herodotus' "oral" age, however, as Slings' investigation into Herodotus' oral style clearly shows. For certain oral features in the *Histories*, such as chunking (splitting up a small or large narrative segment into its constituent parts), as well as the pervasive use of ring composition (indeed Herodotus' latent concern about a new period of strife in the *Histories*' coda is just one way in which the whole work is itself one giant ring composition),¹⁷ are as much about disseminating knowledge in a way that his audience will find comprehensible and, importantly, credible. But while the outwardly oral character of Herodotus' work is beyond dispute, there are, as we shall see below, various reasons for us to problematise Slings' dogmatic belief that 'the major part of his sources are oral traditions, and the writer wishes his style to reflect the content'.¹⁸

The resulting impact of these various examinations of Herodotean orality is perhaps best illustrated by Asheri's intelligent introduction to the recently translated *Commentary on Herodotus*. In his somewhat polemical reflections on our general understanding of the genesis of ancient historiography and its original sources, Asheri remarked:

Dewald (1987); (with modifications) (2002); de Jong (1999), (2004); Munson (2001). For his paratactic style, see especially Immerwahr (1966) 46-78; Stambler (1982) 212-4; Dewald (1987); Hartog (1988) 350-5; Munson (2001) 241-2; *pace* Bakker (2006), who, in adopting the language of Dionysus of Halicarnassus (*De Thuc.* 5), argues that Herodotus' style is better described as syntactic, inasmuch that he integrates 'disparate action strings into the ongoing progression of one single, heterogeneous, *logos*' (93-4).

¹⁵ de Jong (1999) 222. On Herodotus' oral style, cf. also Lang (1984) *passim*, Slings (2002), accepting that Herodotus' style is in no small way a rhetorical choice, apposite for his subject matter. For narratology, see Genette (1980).

¹⁶ See Thomas (2000) 249ff., esp. 262-3, cf. Thomas (1993) 229-30, (2003) esp. 174-5. For reservations concerning Thomas' connection of Herodotus' *apodexis* with contemporary oral *epideixis*, see Bakker (2002) 12ff., and already Connor (1993) 26.

¹⁷ See esp. Ayo (1984) 42ff., Boedeker (1988), Dewald (1997); cf. Thomas (2000) 106-7, Sewall-Rutter (2007) 11 with n.17, (more generally) Immerwahr (1966) 46-78, 306-7. For ring composition in another Herodotean *logos* (7.226-7), see Vannicelli (2007) 316-8.

¹⁸ Slings (2002) 63.

The tendency of modern scholars to overestimate the importance of written sources, and even regularly to attribute almost all oral testimonies to written texts, does not agree with our general knowledge of the abilities and methods of early Greek ethnographers and historians.¹⁹

Indeed, he proposed that that the ‘oral character’ of Greek cultural traditions in the fifth century, as well as the *Histories*’ [seemingly] remarkable mix of credulousness and scepticism, serve as compelling proof that there cannot have been scores of other quasi-historians (whose works Herodotus might have referred to), working before, or even alongside him.²⁰ This view well illustrates the fallaciousness of proposing written sources at every turn, an approach that hardly coheres with our understanding of Herodotus’ or indeed others’ praxis in the fifth century,²¹ and rightly demonstrates that Herodotus’ methods must necessarily be interpreted not alone, but alongside a wider group of intellectual figures operating in his age.

And yet, with this greater appreciation of the oral transmission of knowledge, there lurks a fresh danger that where previous scholars might have anticipated a written source, we might instinctively, and without considering the ramifications, replace this with an epicoric tradition or local informant. Such a move can hardly provide a more favourable impression of the genesis of the *Histories*. Indeed there are significant reasons for us to complicate somewhat the picture of Herodotus the oral historian, as developed by Murray *et alii*. First, Luraghi’s metadiscourse on Herodotus’ source references persuasively shows that we must not immediately interpret the scores of *akoē* statements in Herodotus—the ‘least powerful’ according to Luraghi²²—as autobiographical statements mapping out his methodology; instead these are better understood as metaphorical representations of how knowledge would usually ‘be conceived and experienced by his audience’.²³ Secondly, Fowler has uncovered

¹⁹ Asheri (2007) 19.

²⁰ Asheri (2007) 18-23. Nevertheless, he does accept that others had already begun to write down oral material (19), but does not really explore the complex question of whether Herodotus acquired oral traditions first hand, or repeated them from others’ works, for which see Luraghi (2001b).

²¹ Indeed, even Xenophon does not give any clear references in the fourth century; see esp. Thomas (1989). Note also Luraghi (2001b): ‘in Herodotus’ Greece, knowledge about the recent past...was only just beginning to be the business of a group of specialists’ (149). For a hypo-reductive reading, see Fontenrose (1978) 128, whose extreme contrast between modern and ancient archival practices (‘there was nothing of what we might call media’) veers towards caricature—an inadequate appreciation of the contours of written culture in fifth century Greece.

²² See differently Schepens (1977) 258-61, arguing that *akoē* statements comprise of both oral and written accounts, the former ranked as more authoritative than the latter.

²³ Luraghi (2001b) quotes at 142, 160 respectively; similarly, though rather differently put, West (2004b) 90. For important forerunners of Luraghi’s discussion on Herodotus and the authorial voice, see the articles by Dewald and Marincola in *Arethusa* (1987), and Shrimpton (1997) esp.109. Note also the prescient discussion in Macan *I.i* lxxiv-xc (‘There is an extreme ambiguity in the employment

valuable correspondences between Herodotus' work and a number of his (prose) contemporaries, arguing emphatically, *contra* Jacoby,²⁴ for the emergence of other written histories and chronicles circulating prior to and alongside the publication of Herodotus' work. Fowler vigorously maintains that Herodotus could hardly have been as prescient as to break away from previously established poetic traditions and singularly create a new proto-scientific genre without other literary influences. The result of this approach is a convincing refutation of Jacoby's rigid scheme of Greek historiographical developments in favour of a more opaque—and pluralised—picture, in which other researchers were working contemporaneously to Herodotus.²⁵ Thirdly, in relation to what Pearson termed '[the] eternal problem of Herodotean sources',²⁶ it is somewhat difficult to talk about the provenance of information in Herodotus as there is nothing in his work straightforwardly comparable to the academic footnote (indeed Hornblower well notes that there is no term for a "source" in Herodotus), and there is nothing in the *Histories* to indicate that Herodotus the researcher rated oral sources as more authoritative than written ones.²⁷

If we look to Herodotus' literary heritage, there are yet further factors that we need to be cognizant of in discussing his use of oral sources. While Fowler's important work indicates that Herodotus was not the only figure compiling and narrating historical traditions in prose, there are clear correspondences in Herodotus' thought and method with other literary genres too—not least the various different forms of poetry, such as epic, elegiac, *epinikia* or iambic.²⁸ For Herodotus' age was one in which poetry was performed in a variety of contexts: some open and democratic (e.g. *epitaphioi logoi*), others more élite and private (e.g. *symposia*).²⁹ And the great influence that such literary genres—both high and low—

of such [oral] *formulae* in Herodotus' diction...and the *formulae* proper in the first instance to the word spoken are freely used of the word written', lxxv).

²⁴ Jacoby (1956) 16-64.

²⁵ Fowler (1996) 68; cf. Fowler (2001), (2006), (with adjustments) Clarke (2008) esp.186, and already Macan l.i lxxxix. Fowler also notes that this more pluralised picture does not necessarily detract from the uniqueness of Herodotus' work, which is best illustrated by showing how any peculiarly Herodotean qualities are inextricably linked to his *modus operandi* (p.69). Cf. also Lateiner (1986), Thomas (2000) *passim*, arguing for medical and sophistic influence. Marincola (2001) 33, too, questions the sharp move away from the question of Herodotus and his written sources, noting that many of Herodotus' topics were clearly treated by others writing before him.

²⁶ Pearson (1939) 76.

²⁷ Hornblower (2002) 374. For source references in ancient historiography more broadly, see Schepens (1975).

²⁸ Genre of course being a loaded term, see further Conte (1994) esp.105-28 ('The specificity of each genre resides in the combination, indeed, in the recombination of reality', p.126). This thesis will reflect throughout on Herodotus' sense of his own genre, demonstrating that while not akin to contemporary historiography, the *Histories* is a text which develops a nuanced understanding of genre—both its' own and others', cf. Chiasson (2003). For further discussion on ancient Greek historiography as genre, see Marincola (1999), Boedeker (2000), cf. the classic study of Momigliano (1996b); for Greek literature more broadly: Rosenmeyer (1985).

²⁹ See Gentili (1988) 3-23.

exerted on all kinds of oral traditions circulating during the fifth century is well expounded by Leslie Kurke in her recent book on early Greek prose:

For families like the Alcmeonids and individuals like the tyrant Cleisthenes attempted to control, shape, and propagate their cultural memory through the appropriation of epic forms and the commissioning of high, poetic encomia by professional poets of panhellenic stature like Simonides, Pindar, and Bacchylides, while popular traditions would tend to embrace the low forms of comedy, iambic, and fable to resist and parody the pretensions of the great.³⁰

So, for example, where Herodotus may have acquired some piece of information through an unwritten source such as a high-ranking local informant or an exalted group of individuals, like the Egyptian priests that dominate Book Two,³¹ we must be alert to the ways in which that information has already been consciously shaped, refracted, or even elided due to an awareness of and engagement with specific literary paradigms. Thus the reader must be attuned to the following obvious, yet vital detail: in a great number of places, information that has been passed on to Herodotus has already been developed into a fixed text (whether written or not), before it is then in turn committed to the Herodotean text.³²

I think it is precisely this complex handling of information, which occurred prior to Herodotus' inquiries, that continues to foment such contrasting views on Herodotus' relationship with his information, such as the profoundly conflicting interpretations offered by von Fritz and Thomas cited above. We hardly need reminding that Herodotus is a consummate narrative artist, consciously committed to relating his own reading of the recent past; this is clearly illustrated by certain underlying ideologies, themes and motifs which are reinforced in numerous *logoi* over the span of his entire work. But he is also the (cognizant) heir of a bewildering set of traditions that often serve a particular social, political or cultural agenda in their more local context. To suppose that Herodotus consistently reduces every tradition to the bare fact before reshaping accordingly (if such a thing were even possible), not only refuses Herodotus' interlocutors any agency, but it also leaves Herodotus with a *logos* that would simply prove unrecognisable to any external reader—even unintelligible. The reality is clearly more nuanced: Herodotus' sources of information are not purely passive, nor is Herodotus at the mercy of others' reports. One of the chief aims of this study, then, is to explore this dialectical relationship between Herodotus and his sources further,

³⁰ Kurke (2011) 424.

³¹ See the summary in Haziza (2009) 20, n.65.

³² Similarly Gianguilio (2001) 127 shows how 'we have to think not only of a complex interplay between written texts and 'oral' traditions, but also of a semi-oral tradition'. See also West (2004b).

showing how Herodotus reflects or refracts his information more or less in different contexts and, depending on the nature of the source, for different ends.

It is also important in this context to recognise another group of scholars who broadly reject the formulation that Herodotus constructed his work from numerous local informants' accounts and oral traditions that were potentially at his disposal. In a work that has in no small way inspired many of Herodotus' critics to consider afresh Herodotus' sources and his narrative manner, Detlev Fehling³³ rejected Herodotus' position as a critical historian by emphasising recurring patterns and what he deemed to be false source citations which re-appear throughout Herodotus' work.³⁴ A number of scholars contemporary to Fehling also elucidated other aspects of Herodotus' work which equally failed under close critical scrutiny, further contributing to what is often identified as the "liar school" of Herodotus.³⁵ Armayor analyses several specific cases in which Herodotus claimed autopsy to be his principle form of inquiry, and after elucidating extensive inaccuracies, stresses that we must re-imagine Herodotus' entire historical position. So, for instance, in his assessment of Herodotus' catalogues of the Persian Empire against the extant epigraphic evidence from Persia, Armayor concludes that 'in modern terms, Herodotus sought to write a *story* of history rather than history itself [author's italics]'.³⁶ What emerges more or less from these authors' works is the sense that Herodotus is not so much a researcher operating within a predominantly oral culture, and all the problems that such a reality entails, but is rather a literary artist, whose source attributions are often highly erroneous and suggestive of a thoroughly different narrative than that assumed by those who regard the *Histories* as a history would be willing to admit.

³³ Later translated by J.G Howie (1989) *Herodotus and his 'Sources': Citation, Invention and Narrative Art*; I hope to explore elsewhere the impact of Fehling's work on Herodotean historiography.

³⁴ For criticism, see the following note and §2.4, n.87. Fehling is in fact the latest in a long line of critics who have offered a substantive attack on Herodotus' veracity, cf. esp. Sayce (1883) for an equally hyper-critical work which denounced Herodotus' portrayal of the East as unhistorical, based rather on popular stories or *märchen*.

³⁵ For this expression, see Pritchett (1993), who splits his defence of Herodotus into two halves. The first emphasises the shortcomings of Herodotus' critics, particularly their unsubstantiated evidence, while the second half illustrates common methodological approaches between Herodotus and later writers such as Pausanias, whose source references, in contrast to Herodotus, have not been so extensively dissected by modern scholars. In an especially barbed passage, Pritchett notes that while Fehling lambasts Pausanias for writing in a thoroughly Herodotean manner, he (Fehling) in fact provides no documentation to illustrate the apparently fictive nature of any of Pausanias' source-references (352, n.305). Note also the spirited defence in Rhodes (1994) and Dover (1998).

³⁶ Armayor (1978) 9.

Finally, before I move on to identify the methodology and the objectives of this study, a few more remarks are needed vis-à-vis the very self-consciousness of Herodotus' enterprise,³⁷ and the *Histories'* explicit connection with the written word. Let us take three examples: first, in a much-cited passage at the beginning of his *Cyrus logos*, Herodotus explicitly speaks of his *logos* as a single enterprise (ἡ μὲν ὁ λόγος),³⁸ asserting that he is aware of four accounts concerning Cyrus' life, though 'I shall write' (γράψω)³⁹ that which does not veer from 'the truth' (τὸν ἐόντα) by magnifying Cyrus' life, ἐπιστάμενος περὶ Κύρου καὶ τριφασίας ἄλλας λόγων ὁδοῦς φῆναι. (1.95.1). Secondly, in his *Aigyptios logos* Herodotus records that 'I write about [the mode of hunting crocodiles] that appears to me most worthy of narration [though there are countless others]' (ἡ δ' ὧν ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ ἀξιωτάτη ἀπηγήσιν εἶναι, ταύτην γράφω, 2.70.1). And thirdly, in Book Six, where he is describing the nature of the Spartan dual kingship, Herodotus states that concerning the kings of the Dorians:

τάδε δὲ κατὰ τὰ λεγόμενα ὑπὲρ Ἑλλήνων ἐγὼ γράφω, τούτους τοὺς Δωριέων βασιλέας μέχρι μὲν δὴ Περσέος τοῦ Δανάης, τοῦ θεοῦ ἀπεόντος, καταλεγόμενους ὀρθῶς ὑπὲρ Ἑλλήνων καὶ ἀποδεικνυμένους ὡς εἰσὶ Ἕλληνες. (6.53.1).⁴⁰

In all three of these passages there is an explicit connection made between worthiness of narration and written memory: the version of Cyrus' life that Herodotus writes is the most committed to truth; the form of crocodile hunting that he describes is the most narratable; and the information Herodotus gleaned from those Greeks who recount the Dorian kingship up until the time of Perseus is narrated because they καταλεγόμενους ὀρθῶς. These passages clearly illustrate therefore an acute awareness of the significance of commemorating via writing, and show that Herodotus' account is a selective one, with the

³⁷ Indeed it is worth reiterating the writeness of Herodotus' opening clause Ἡροδότου Ἀλικαρνησέος ἱστορίας ἀπόδεξις ἦδε; the author begins his work with his own name and patronymic, a profound rupture with the effaced poet in earlier poetic traditions, cf. Most (1990) 47-8 ('the author identifies the text as his text...[it may] be compared word for word with other people's texts').

³⁸ For similar acknowledgments of his whole *logos*, see 1.5.3; 2.3.2, 123.1; 4.30.1; 6.19.2, 3; 7.152.3, 171.1, 239.1, for further uses of the term, cf. Powell (1938) s.v. λόγος.

³⁹ Powell (1938) s.v. γράφω lists 34 instances of the verb, 7 of which refer to the historian's own activity (1.95.1; 2.70.1, 123.1, 3; 4.195.2; 6.53.1; 7.214.3). However, we must also consider the following compound forms of the verb: ἀναγράφω [3 instances], ἀπογράφω [6 instances], ἐγγράφω [5 instances], ἐπιγράφω [8 instances], καταγράφω [1 instance], περιγράφω [4 instances], προσεγγράφω [1 instance], συγγράφω [6 instances]). This adds up to a grand total of 68 total uses of the verb and all its compounds.

⁴⁰ Nenci II ad loc. argues that Herodotus may have transmitted the work in writing, 'ma la «pubblicazione» o recitazione è aurale almeno fino alla fine del IV sec. a.C.', cf. Nagy (1990) 220. On Herodotus' performance context, see further §6.4 below.

implication that many accounts go unwritten, deemed unworthy or un-credible.⁴¹ Such examples further illustrate the need to exercise caution, so as not to make Herodotus' world one in which writing is less common than in fact was the case.⁴²

In returning to the central question posed at the start of this chapter, namely the nature of Herodotus' *logoi* and their provenance, these divergent responses and approaches in contemporary scholarship clearly demonstrate how our understanding of Herodotus' relationship with oral and literary sources remains highly controversial. But there can also be little doubt that the more successful approach to these problems is one that (i) never loses sight of the wider social and cultural context within which Herodotus was operating,⁴³ and/or (ii) does not underestimate the narrative voice of the Herodotean text itself. In order to understand the *Histories* and Herodotus' achievement, it is that very work that we must now turn to.⁴⁴

1.2 Intertext and Allusion

This study considers anew the central question of Herodotus' relationship with literary and textual sources. It examines how Herodotus comes to define his own work in a context where many artists (both narrative and visual) are seeking to accumulate, delineate, and ultimately dictate cultural memory (see more below).⁴⁵ Important in this regard is his decision to present his own research in Ionic prose; and this in an age when poetic metre is only beginning to be dismantled from its position at the epicentre of literary culture.⁴⁶ His predominant use of prose (bearing in mind a certain level of flexibility in this regard)⁴⁷ not

⁴¹ See also, e.g., 3.125.3: 'ἀποκτείνας δέ μιν οὐκ ἀξίως ἀπηγήσιν Ὀροίτης ἀνεσταύρωσε'; 7.135.1: 'αὐτὴ τε ἡ τόλμα τούτων τῶν ἀνδρῶν θώματος ἀξιοῦ καὶ τάδε πρὸς τούτοισι τὰ ἔπεα', etc.

⁴² For private reading in the later fifth century, not the famous line of Dionysus in *Ar. Ra.* 52-3: 'καὶ δῆτ' ἐπὶ τῆς νεῶς ἀναγιγνώσκοντί μοι | τῆν Ἀνδρομέδαν', cf. 1105-18; *X. Mem.* 4.2. On the circulation of texts in antiquity, see principally Dearden (1999) 227-8; cf. Gentili (1988) 20-1; Herington (1985) 189-91, and further references in Baragwanath (2012) n.61.

⁴³ Cf. the excellent remarks in Luraghi (2001a) 15.

⁴⁴ Amongst other recent discussions on Herodotus' intellectual context see, e.g.; Fowler (1996); Thomas (2000), (2006); Dorati (2000); numerous contributions in Luraghi (2001) and Giangiulio (2005); cf. already Corcella (1984), esp. 239-66, Lateiner (1986). For the theoretical dangers in reading texts through a contemporary, de-contextualised lens, see Skinner (2002) 57-89.

⁴⁵ For the related question this poses, namely which of the *Histories*' narratives did Herodotus' initial audiences/readers know prior to his work, see de Jong (1999) 244-5.

⁴⁶ Note Fehling (1995), speaking of 'that age of general progress in which Herodotus lived' (10). On the significance of prose during the so-called Greek enlightenment of the later fifth century, see Goldhill (2002) esp. chs.1-2, Marincola (2006) 13-5; however, note the splendid observations in Hornblower (2001) 135 and Kurke (2011) esp.368, who rightly complicate our characterisation of Herodotus as a prose (i.e. "factual") author, arguing for a more diverse range of registers in his work (e.g. quasi-epic, Aesopic, epigraphic, etc.). On the relationship of poetry to truth, see the important discussion in Halliwell (2011) 13-24.

⁴⁷ Herodotus' impressive knowledge of earlier poetry not only surfaces in his extended use of poetic tropes and explicit quotation of original verses, but also in his creation of quasi-poetic lines which

only leads Herodotus to express a discerning awareness of and significant caution towards other textual formats and their narrative presentations, such as when he remarks on the epic poetry of Homer (τῆν ἑποποιίην, 2.116.1; see §4.3 below) or when he refers to the hexametric verses inscribed on some of the Cadmeian inscriptions he discovered in the temple of Ismenian Apollo in Boiotia (ἑξαμέτρῳ τόνῳ [5.60], ἑν ἑξαμέτρῳ [5.61.1], see §3.5 below), but it also proves a key factor in terms of Herodotean rhetoric (which is inextricably bound to his sense of genre).⁴⁸ Hence, the mode of Herodotus' work is an essential component of his establishment of an authoritative and persuasive persona, which the reader understands, and indeed believes, is concerned with “real” data—as a purveyor of truth.⁴⁹ Nuanced interaction with other literary genres and the variation of register in his work is thus a key element of Herodotus' narrative presentation, and these different registers are also fundamental in the way that they too contribute to the overall texture and format of his own genre, historiography.

Although our discussion above on Herodotus' place in an age of (primarily) orally-transmitted information indicates that it is neither sustainable nor indeed feasible to demonstrate every place where Herodotus is specifically working with a *written* text (though it is patently clear that he had recourse to written materials),⁵⁰ it is certainly fruitful to engage closely with his awareness of different types of text by analysing significant intertextual and allusive relationships in his work with other extant authors/genres.⁵¹ Though the terms

often elicit an epic effect for the audience. Indeed, over a century ago, Verrall (1903) 99-100 uncovered five near-hexameters in the speech of a Coan woman who begs Pausanias for her own freedom (9.76).

⁴⁸ For historiography as a rhetorical genre, see above all Woodman (1988), cf. Loraux (1980), Pelling (2000) 7-12.

⁴⁹ For Herodotus and the different registers of truth in his work, see Harrison (2004), cf. Marincola (2007) 62ff.

⁵⁰ West (2004b) 90 even argues that Herodotus specifically downplays his bookish tendencies, since many in his era are sceptical about undue reliance on script. For a brief but useful summary of the written sources available to Herodotus, see Lateiner (1989) 91-107, cf. Hornblower (2002) 374ff., Osborne (2002) 510-13. For Herodotus on the cusp between orality and literacy, see Hartog (1988) 282-9, Thomas (1992) 74-100 and (1993) 226-7, Bakker (2002) esp.28ff., cf. Luraghi (2001b) 153-4, de Jong (1999) 229 ('il est un narrateur entre *epos* at *logos*'). While I wholly support the emphasis on a united, written work in Rösler (2002), I remain less than convinced by Rösler's rather schematic belief that up until writing down his *Histories* (a decision taken late in his career), Herodotus was an 'oral *logographos*' who never toured the (final) work that has come down to us, or even any part of it. The relationship between his written account and its spoken origins is surely less easily delineated than this. On writing and the mixed role it has played in human history, see the famous discussion in Lévi-Strauss (1955) 337-49 ('Leçon d'écriture').

⁵¹ Cf. Wesselmann (2011) 35-43, whose discussion on an intertextual reading of myth in Herodotus anticipates many of the ideas expressed here. For important recent discussions on the heuristic value of intertextual study in Greek historiography, see O'Gorman (2009), Levene (2010) 82-126, esp.84-6, Damon (2010), Pelling (2013), cf. already Hornblower (1994) 54-72; and, for a full-scale application of intertextual theory to Greek historiography, see Hornblower (2004), whose study illustrates deep ideological connexions between Thucydides and Pindar, even if the former never explicitly cites the

intertext and allusion are often used interchangeably,⁵² I would like to establish a clear distinction in how they are applied in this study. For while the intertext might well be regarded as a *feature* of text that is discerned by the reader—the intertext operating as a moment ‘in which verbal structures or phrases from past texts are repeated in a new text...a momentary re-living of the past in the present’,⁵³ the allusion is to be rather understood as an *instrument* of text, that is the intentional (or indeed not-so-intentional) move by an author to identify a particular event, fact, or ideology with that expressed in a preceding text.⁵⁴ Such a definition necessarily allows us to explore a great range of what might then be termed intertexts or allusions in Herodotus’ work. From the very explicit quasi-quotation, such as when Herodotus cites Pindar for ‘speaking correctly in his poetry’ about the relativity of *nomos* at 3.38.4,⁵⁵ to the much more muted echo, for instance Herodotus’, what we might term “quiet”, awareness and refinement of Aeschylus’ *Persae* and its uncompromising presentation of a concordant Hellenic victory in 480-79, especially in Herodotus’ Salamis *logos* (see §6.2 below).

In terms of my own methodology, I am primarily concerned throughout this study with passages which can reasonably be held to show allusive or intertextual effects. Though it is quite inefficacious to speak of the intentions of Herodotus the man (almost nothing can be said in this regard),⁵⁶ it is central to the thesis of this study that we can, and indeed are encouraged to, discuss the narrator’s intentions vis-à-vis the use of intertexts or allusions; that is to say, how these intertextual moments affect our reading of the Herodotean text—not to mention our conceptualisation of what kind of work he is writing.⁵⁷ Naturally, the uneven

epinikian poet. For the original conception of intertextuality, see Kristeva (1980); and, for the ‘limits of intertextualism’, Hinds (1998) 47-51 is essential.

⁵² Though famously distinguished by Hinds (1998).

⁵³ O’Gorman (2009) 241.

⁵⁴ For the term text, I refer the reader to the definition of Bal (1985) 5: ‘a *text* [author’s italics] is a finite, structured whole composed of language signs...The finite ensemble of signs does not mean the text itself is finite, for its meanings, effects, functions, and background are not. It only means that there is a first and a last word to be identified; a first and a last image of a film; a frame of a painting [and so forth].’ As implied above, there is no possible way of ever determining unequivocally that an author specifically alludes to a specific text in a specific way.

⁵⁵ καὶ ὁ ρῥῶς μοι δοκέει Πίνδαρος ποιῆσαι νόμον πάντων βασιλέα φήσας εἶ ναι. West (2004b) 84, following others, reads this is a catachresis of the original Pindaric poem. For the relationship between Pindar and Herodotus, see Nagy (1990) 215-38 *passim*, Hornblower (2004) esp.107-13; and, for the Pindaric *ainos* (cf. Nagy [1990] 147ff.) in Herodotus, see Ceccarelli (1993), Hollmann (2011) 132-42. As a number of scholars have acknowledged, there is still more to be said concerning the shared worlds of Herodotus and Pindar.

⁵⁶ Indeed throughout this study references to ‘Herodotus’ denote the primary narrator, unless otherwise stated. On the evidence for Herodotus’ life, see §6.3 below.

⁵⁷ For an *archaeologia* of the intellectual shift away from the author’s (ostensibly unknowable) intentions, see the masterful defences in Skinner (2002) 93-102 (‘to know what a writer meant by a particular work *is* to know what his or her primary intentions were in writing it [author’s italics]’, p.101), and Heath (2002) 59-97, who shows how critics often misrepresent intentionalist approaches; cf. (briefly) Levene (2010) 84 with n.5.

picture that we have of Herodotus' age, not least due to the sheer amount of fragmentary or lost works, inevitably means that certain allusions or intertextual glosses are much more acutely felt than others. For instance the preservation of Aeschylus' *Persae* allows us to explore a complex relationship between tragedian and historian (§6.2 below), whereas the loss of works such as that of Herodotus' cousin or uncle Panyassis of Halicarnassus, Ἰωνικὸν, an elegiac work reputed to be 7,000 lines long, provides just one instance where we can do no more than argue *ex hypothesi*.⁵⁸

A second, less straightforward instance of this dearth illustrates how even an exiguous record can to some extent be overcome. In his well-known derision of map-makers and their laughable attempts at depicting the earth (4.36f.), Herodotus fails to name a single individual with whom he takes issue. Fortunately, surviving fragments indicate with some precision that figures including the Milesians Anaximander and Hecataeus were clearly behind Herodotus' pointed polemic, though there may of course be others (see further §2.5). Hence, even where there are gaps it remains possible to look broadly across a range of literary debts, albeit, inevitably, some receiving less coverage than others,⁵⁹ so that we uncover a dynamic relationship with the various types of text over the course of the *Histories*. From the funerary marker with an inscription attached, to the versified (and often Delphic) oracle (see further chs.3 and 7 respectively), we shall see how such items are not merely decorous or superfluous, but are significant in terms of Herodotus' interpretation of history *and* in terms of understanding how he came to do so.

Consequently, the following key arguments will be developed over the course of our investigation. First and foremost: a diverse group of intellectual figures and literary traditions contribute meaningfully to the overall composition, ideology and presentation of Herodotus' *Histories*. The almost axiomatic belief of many scholars that Herodotus' work is chiefly the product of oral traditions is not only one that lacks clarity,⁶⁰ but is also one that is emblematic of a period of scholarship, in which scholars sought to develop more sophisticated methodologies for interpreting the varying ways that (typically non-Western) societies seek to formulate and narrate memory. While comparative examples may of course

⁵⁸ Cf. the Suda entry s.v. Πανύσσις. For Panyassis' potential impact on Herodotus, cf. Marincola (2006) 13. (N.B. the celebration of Panyassis' epic poetry in the Salmakis inscription, see further Isager [1998].)

⁵⁹ For instance, Bacchylides *Ode* 3, like Herodotus, is concerned with the fall of Croesus, and describes (more fantastically than Herodotus) the translation of Croesus from a burning pyre after the fall of Sardis; a close relationship between the two stories is highly likely. On Bacchylides' poem and its context, see Hutchinson (2001) 321-58; and for some remarks on its influence on Herodotus, see West (2004b) 85-8, and (2011) 257-9, confidently concluding that Herodotus' account is a 'rationalization of Bacchylides' (p.259).

⁶⁰ This point is well made in Thomas (1993) 229.

offer greater understanding, they must never be misapplied anachronistically, projecting an ahistorical reading of the original context. In Herodotean studies, a particularly obvious example of this is the notion that the so-called *logioi*, a group of oral prose chroniclers or ‘remembrancers’, lie behind many of Herodotus’ *logoi*; Luraghi has convincingly demonstrated how this is nothing if not a modern fallacy.⁶¹ Without denying the impact that (individual and collective) unfixed memory had on Herodotus’ work, our study brings to the foreground the significance of fixed literary and textual traditions for Herodotus and his work.

Secondly, our exploration of intertextual and allusive correspondences between Herodotus and other sources of information will highlight the especial authority which the narrator derives from such engagement—particularly in terms of what his work offers that is distinct from other, non-historiographical presentations of the past. *Historiē* is what drives the narrator to reflect on his use of diverse materials at various points in the narrative (e.g. 2.99.1, 147.1) in order that he may display his ἱστορίας ἀπόδειξις; and his employment of these materials often generates substantial authority for the narrator, though for varied reasons. Sometimes the reference to another source may be explicit and in itself warrant the form of evidential proof the narrator seeks (e.g. καὶ Ἀρίονος ἔστι ἀνάθημα χάλκεον οὐ μέγα ἐπὶ Ταivάρῳ, 1.24.8), whereas sometimes the explicit reference may be more polemical in tone, generating authority through difference (e.g. 2.142-3 where the narrator besmirches the genealogical pretensions of Hecataeus in favour of evidence procured from the Egyptian priests, cf. §2.3 below). However Herodotus’ *Histories* also crafts authority for the narrator, like all subsequent Greek and Roman historiography, by practicing negation by silence.⁶² For instance Herodotus is curiously silent about other attempts to memorialise the Persian Wars, either in the form of a lyric poem like the “new Simonides” or in that of a tragic drama like Aeschylus’ *Persae* (see ch.5 and §6.2 respectively),⁶³ although, as we shall see, his presentation of the same events does not entirely divagate away from these non-historiographical accounts. The investigation which follows, then, will elaborate on some of the most important strategies that Herodotus applies in using other texts so as to develop a persona that his reader will find persuasive.

⁶¹ Prose chroniclers: Nagy (1987), (1990) 221-4, 325-6; ‘remembrancers’: Evans (1991) esp.113-31; modern fallacy: Luraghi (2001b) esp.157f., (2006) 82, (2009) *passim*, cf. Thomas (1993) 225. Note also Luraghi’s remark that Evans’ theory is ‘completely derived from African cultures’ (2001b, p.157, n.61), precisely the kind of misapplication of comparative evidence that we should avoid.

⁶² So e.g., for instances in which Thucydides might well be silently correcting Herodotus, see Hornblower II 34-5, 346, Thomas (2000) 122.

⁶³ Cf. West (2011) 256, though it is rather unclear about why West finds these discrepancies so alarming; if anything, one might well have expected an even more profound rupture between Simonides’ and Aeschylus’ celebrated accounts produced in the 470s, and Herodotus’ later historiographical work which is so patently concerned with contemporary intra-Hellenic conflict.

The third significant point that will be developed over the course of this study is that Herodotean allusions may also serve as one of the chief forms of proof for a particular *logos*. Time and again Herodotus will stress to his audience the actuality of the events that he records—often adducing some kind of *tekmerion/marturion*, a commanding proof that is intended to capture the audience’s belief. A particularly intricate example of this is his *logos* about Mycerinus’ pyramid, in which he refutes the view that the courtesan Rhodopis was responsible for its construction (2.134-5). What follows is an elaborate presentation of proofs, wherein Herodotus makes temporal connections between Rhodopis, the *logopoios* Aesop and the *mousopoios* Sappho (2.134.3-4, 135.1, 6 respectively).⁶⁴ Both authors (whose works are never cited) are subtly presented as distinct from Herodotus, though, ironically, they both make a positive contribution to the overall narrative presentation of *historiē* (see further discussion at §7.5 below). We shall discover numerous other such examples in which an intertextual frame or allusion serves to buttress a given *logos*, emphasising the narrator’s authority.⁶⁵

What will emerge from our investigation is that establishing Herodotus’ relationship with *specific* authors or literary traditions offers valuable insights concerning his thought and method, and yet, instantaneously, it ends up limiting our *sui generis*, poikilic author. Where Herodotus’ commentator Alan Lloyd writes

[in Herodotus’ Egyptian and Libyan logos] his approach is essentially empiricist and shows a keen awareness of contemporary scientific and philosophical thought, but his position as a continuator of epic tradition is equally clear⁶⁶

the point is precisely that specific affiliations must not be allowed to dominate our overall impression of Herodotus. That is to say, it is in many ways anachronistic to see him as being primarily (or exclusively) influenced by, e.g., lyric poets or prose historians or pre-Socratic philosophers or medical writers, since his work represents a not always lucid, but nonetheless masterful, synthesis of many different genres and sources—a variety of which had been in some way committed to a fixed, textualised form. In this way, my wide-ranging investigation will recalibrate the current consensus on Herodotus’ “oral” persona and

⁶⁴ Cf. the convincing suggestions in Beercroft (2010) 139-42, who notes that *mousopoios* does not appear in earlier Greek literature; are we to detect a Herodotean neologism? Certainly the pointed contrast that Herodotus develops between Aesopic and Sapphic modes of storytelling (as expanded upon by Beercroft) makes this rather more likely. Cf. West (2004b) 81, who suggests a possible link with the word *μοισοπόλων* in a Sapphic fragment (F150).

⁶⁵ On intertextual frames, see Eco (1981) 21-2.

⁶⁶ Lloyd (1990) 242.

encourage readers to see his work and its composition in a rebalanced light—though one which is perhaps even further divorced from our own understanding of history as genre in the twenty-first century than many have allowed/acknowledged.⁶⁷

Before we move on the next chapter, it is worth reflecting a little more on one crucial area that sets Herodotus apart from many (or even all?) of his predecessors, allying him closely with his near-contemporary Thucydides: his application of *historiē* (see esp. ch.2 *passim*).⁶⁸ Herodotus is concerned with the world around him and is at pains to present an account which reflects the results of his extensive inquiries (a methodology which should not make him any less of a narrative artist than we have proposed thus far).⁶⁹ Though failing to provide the reader with a cogent description of his methodological process in the manner of a Thucydides,⁷⁰ Herodotus nonetheless provides infrequent indications of his process, most famously at the heart of his *Aigyptios logos*:

μέχρι μὲν τούτου ὄψις τε ἐμὴ καὶ γνώμη καὶ ἡστορίη ταῦτα λέγουσα ἐστὶ τὸ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦδε Αἰγυπτίους ἔρχομαι λόγους ἐρέων κατὰ τὰ ἤκουον: προσέσται δὲ αὐτοῖσιν ὅτι καὶ τῆς ἐμῆς ὄψιος. (2.99.1).

Such elliptical references to his method mean that Herodotus' (at least stated) commitment to truth remains more oblique than Thucydides' uncompromising statement on his preference for *opsis* and well-examined informants, as well as his explicit rejection of τὸ μυθῶδες (1.22.2, 4),⁷¹ declarations that bolster the reader's faith in his account as an accurate record of the past. However, our study will illustrate that Herodotus too consistently suggests—both implicitly and explicitly—that his is a superior view of the past, compared to the more limited, partisan perspectives offered by his textual rivals. Indeed, through this interplay with other literary works, Herodotus most clearly defines for the reader his own unique intellectual achievement: the invention of historiography.

⁶⁷ This is not to deny that it is possible to write history without fixed texts, see Goody (1977) 91.

⁶⁸ The bibliography on the relationship between Herodotus and Thucydides continues to gather pace; alongside the excellent remarks in Hornblower II 122-37, see (more recently) Węcowski (2008), and the contributions by Corcella, Rengakos, Rogkoti, and Rood, in Rengakos and Tsakmakis (2006).

⁶⁹ Müller (1981) 299ff., Hunter (1982) 110ff., Lateiner (1986), Darbo-Peschanski (1987), Lloyd (1990) 242 have also proposed that Herodotus' methods were empirical, and based on exploring the limits of knowledge.

⁷⁰ Thuc. 1.22. See Hornblower I 59-62 for a close reading focussing on important similarities and differences with Herodotus' historical approach, cf. also Marincola (1997) 8-10. For a narratological reading of this passage and the implications vis-à-vis Thucydides' awareness of Herodotus, see Hornblower (1994b) 152-8; and for Herodotus' methodological statements, Fowler (1996) 69-80.

⁷¹ On this phrase, see Flory (1990).

Chapter 2

Making *Logos*

τούτων ἴσως εἴρηται τὰ μὲν Ὀρφεῖ, τὰ δὲ Μουσαίῳ
κατὰ βραχὺ ἄλλοι ἀλλαχοῦ, τὰ δὲ Ἡσιόδῳ, τὰ δὲ
Ὀμήρῳ, τὰ δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις τῶν ποιητῶν, τὰ δὲ ἐν
συγγραφαῖς, τὰ μὲν Ἑλλησι, τὰ δὲ βαρβάρους· ἐγὼ δὲ
ἐκ πάντων τούτων τὰ μέγιστα καὶ ὁμόφυλα συνθεῖς
τοῦτον καινὸν καὶ πολυειδῆ τὸν λόγον ποιήσομαι.

— Hippias of Elis¹

We live among ideas much more than we live in nature.

— Saul Bellow²

2.1 Understanding the World

πρόθυμος δὲ ἔα τάδε παρ' αὐτῶν πυθέσθαι, ὅτι κατέρχεται μὲν ὁ Νεῖλος
πληθύνων ἀπὸ τροπέων τῶν θερινέων ἀρξάμενος ἐπὶ ἐκατὸν ἡμέρας...τούτων ὧν
πέρι οὐ δένδρον οὐδὲν οἶός τε ἐγενόμην παραλαβεῖν παρὰ τῶν Αἰγυπτίων,³
ἰστορέων αὐτοῦς ἦντινα δύναμιν ἔχει ὁ Νεῖλος τὰ ἔμπαλιν πεφυκέναι τῶν
ἄλλων ποταμῶν: ταῦτά τε δὴ τὰ λελεγμένα βουλόμενος εἰδέναι ἰστορέον καὶ ὅ
τι αὔρας ἀποπνεούσας μοῦνος ποταμῶν πάντων οὐ παρέχεται. ἀλλὰ Ἑλλήνων
μὲν τινες ἐπίσημοι βουλόμενοι γενέσθαι σοφίην ἔλεξαν περὶ τοῦ ὕδατος τούτου
τριφασίας ὁδοῦς: τῶν τὰς μὲν δύο τῶν ὁδῶν οὐδ' ἀξιῶ μνησθῆναι εἰ μὴ
ὄσον σημῆναι βουλόμενος μοῦνον. (2.19.2-20.1).⁴

And so Herodotus begins his sizeable excursus on the inundation of the Egyptian river (2.19-27),⁵ seeking out Egyptian informants to bolster his account, before rubbishing three different Greek theories on the subject—two scathingly designated as being ‘unworthy of

¹ *FGrHist* 6 F4, cf. P. Pae. 7b, 11-2.

² in Cronin and Siegel (1994) 95.

³ Haziza (2009) 96-7 discusses the Egyptians' theologically-driven interest in the inundation, concluding that ‘le refus catégorique auquel se heurte Hérodote en quête d'informations sur le sujet doit donc être interprété autrement que par ignorance...sa venue ne pouvait donc pas être réduite à des explications mécaniques basement naturelles, puisqu'elle dépendait du divin’ (97).

⁴ Cf. 2.97.

⁵ For a judicious analysis of this passage, see Lloyd II 91-107, cf. Haziza (2009) 92-104. On the intellectual underpinnings of this passage, and in particular, the ubiquitous language of proof, see esp. Gould (1989) 8-9; Thomas (2000) 182-5, (‘probably the single most sustained piece of argumentative proof in the *Histories*’ [182-3]); and Corcella (1984) 77-81.

memory'.⁶ These lines are just one of the myriad rewarding vignettes from his compendious study into all aspects of Egyptian society and its history.⁷ For Herodotus' Egypt is one that possesses 'the most wonders (πλεῖστα θωμάσια) out of any land, and everywhere supplies monuments beyond [mere] word' (2.35.2). This passage—rich with terms used by Herodotus to describe his critical methodology (e.g. πηθέσθαι, ἰστορέων, βουλόμενος εἰ δέναι ἰστορέων, σημῆναι),⁸ and directly engaged with various other intellectuals in the later fifth century who also considered the Nile flooding—thus provides a useful starting point for thinking about Herodotus' intertextual and allusive relationship with other thinkers interested in burgeoning areas of research as diverse as ethnography and the natural sciences, or medicine and philosophy.

Of course, attempting to decipher the totality of Herodotus' intellectual affiliations or even the full impact of fifth-century intellectual discourse on his work—a task made no easier by the paucity of references to other works in Herodotus—is one that goes far beyond the realms of this chapter.⁹ With this in mind, we shall focus primarily on earlier prose figures interested in (local) history, ethnography, philosophy, and geography. Due to the nature of the sources, such an investigation will predominantly centre on Hecataeus of Miletus, one of Herodotus' most eminent prose predecessors who makes a (uniquely) repeated appearance in Herodotus' work (though by no means as often as readers would have liked or expected),¹⁰ as well as a number of other early (though equally oblique) thinkers, notably: Anaximander, Protagoras, and Xenophanes.¹¹

⁶ Though Herodotus does not name any of the Greeks with whom he takes issue, Thales—mentioned at 1.74.2, 75.3, 170.3—is reputed to have theorised on the Etesian winds (DK 11.A.16 ~ Aet.4.1.1), and is the likely recipient of Herodotus' polemic against the theory that the Etesian winds cause the flood of the Nile (2.20.2); note also, the similar speculations of Euthymenes of Massilia (*FGrHist* 647 F1), another potential source. Cf. as well, the discussions on the Nile inundation in Anaxagoras (DK 59.A.91), very likely the thinker behind the third theory criticized at 2.22 (Lloyd II ad loc.); Diogenes of Apollonia (DK 64.A.18); and Oinopides of Chios (DK 41.A.11).

⁷ Any investigation into Book Two must necessarily begin with Lloyd's three-volume commentary (1975-88); cf. now Haziza (2009).

⁸ For these and other terms used to refer to the narrator's method as historian, see further Dewald and Marincola (1987) 35-40, Marincola (1987) *passim*, de Jong (2004) 103-5, Lloyd (2007) 228ff.; for the wider intellectual context, Thomas (2000) esp.272f.

⁹ The most significant omission here is discussion on the influence of medical writers and epideictic works, for which see the important study of Thomas (2000), cf. Lateiner (1986), Thomas (1993), (2003), (2006). For further bibliography on Herodotus' intellectual affiliations, see above §1.1, n.44.

¹⁰ The other prose writer whom Herodotus mentions (though not as a writer) is Scylax of Caryanda (4.44). On the reasons behind Herodotus' lack of what we might call 'source citations', see the excellent observations of Luraghi (2001b) esp.158-60, ('his discourse mirrors the experience of his audience, who would be far less familiar with written accounts than with narratives transmitted by word of mouth', 159), cf. already Parke (1946) 83-4.

¹¹ On Herodotus and geography, see Payen (1997) *passim*, esp.47-8; talking of 'la cartographie de son oeuvre', and (more broadly) Clarke (1999); cf. further discussion below at 2.5, with references. For Herodotus and the Presocratics, see esp. Lloyd II 156ff., cf. Myres 1953 43: 'in the collection of facts about Man, and in the interpretation of them, Herodotus is the only "Pre-Socratic" writer who is

In turn, the first step of our inquiry into the *Histories*' relationship with other texts will comprise three key strands. First, after briefly considering Hecataeus' reception in modern and ancient criticism, we shall investigate Hecataeus' role in Herodotus' *Histories* as an historical agent, and consider the generic implications of his typically unsuccessful advice. Next, we shall broaden our analysis and consider a number of more implicit allusions to Hecataeus/earlier prose writers and their methods at certain points in the *Histories*, showing the ways in which they exerted a significant influence on Herodotus' conception of his task, even if the fissiparous and distorting extant fragments often blur (or even impede) the reader's sense of the point of reference of these Herodotean intertexts. Indeed, the various apothegms and theories which Herodotus cites are not necessarily quotations of an individual author in a modern sense; his decidedly less bookish age was one in which ideas and references moved much more fluidly.¹² Finally, we shall discuss the agonistic spirit with which he approaches earlier prose-writers,¹³ best reflected in his excursuses on Hecataeus' family-tree (2.143-4) and Aristagoras' fruitless attempt to persuade the Spartan king Cleomones to march on Persia (5.49-51), passages which illustrate that, paradoxically, it was in his reliance on pre-existing earlier prose writers' methods of argument and narration that Herodotus was in part able to construct a work that was intellectually and structurally divorced from them. We shall begin, then, with a brief re-examination of the much-contested question of Hecataeus' place within the historiographical genre.

2.2 Ἑκαταῖος ὁ Μιλήσιος, ἀνὴρ πολυπλανῆς¹⁴

Hecataeus of Miletus has long troubled modern researchers in their attempts to explain the early stages of Greek historiography. But what can be said about this elusive figure? He represents one of the central figures from the so-called "Milesian school", and his *floruit* can be roughly dated to the last two decades of the sixth century BCE, an age in which ideas and discourse were expanding into new areas. The uneven surviving fragments of his work reveal with a fair amount of certainty that he wrote a couple of works, namely a *Tour of the World* (περὶ ὁδοῦ γῆς)¹⁵ and the *Genealogies* (Γενεαλογίαι). These fragments indicate that like the Herodotean narrator, Hecataeus (purported to) travel to a number of different regions

preserved in full'—an interpretation refuted by Thomas (2000) 23, whose study persuasively shows how this underestimates the contemporary, Hippocratic influences on Herodotus' work.

¹² Cf. Lloyd I 129, n.160: '[Herodotus' work] will also include many Ionian pundits whose oral communications were received by Herodotus...are now lost beyond all recall'.

¹³ Assmann (1992) 286 well speaks of the 'agonistischer Intertextualität' that is at the core of Greek historiography, cf. Kurke (1999) 29, Barker (2009) 144-51.

¹⁴ Agathemerus *Ge. Inf.* 1.1. For Hecataeus' travels, see Jacoby (1912) 2688-90, *contra* the sceptical remarks in West (1991) 152.

¹⁵ It appears that the περὶ ὁδοῦ γῆς contained only two books on Europe and Asia, see Erbse (1992) 172-3, cf. Asheri (1990) 134: '[the περὶ ὁδοῦ γῆς] was intended to be an ancillary index to a map'. Indeed there is no convincing evidence that either Hecataeus, or any other figure preceding Herodotus, offers such a broad range of interests; cf. esp. Fowler (2006) esp.32ff.

of the world, and touched upon a wide range of subjects, such as ethnography, geography and mythology. However, beyond these basic observations, even after one sifts through the gallimaufry of Hecataean fragments, there is much that remains unclear about the precise nature of his life and work,¹⁶ a point that inhibits any coherent investigation into whether Hecataeus has more right than Herodotus himself to the title of “father of history”.¹⁷

This rather unclear picture of Hecataeus’ significance in fact goes back to antiquity. The Roman writer Dionysius of Halicarnassus, writing about the long line of logographers who preceded Thucydides in his *De Thucydide*, lists Hecataeus amongst a number of (mostly) elusive figures who all preceded Herodotus.¹⁸ According to Dionysius, these writers all wrote in a simple, unadorned style; some writing about Greek history, others about barbarians. He goes on to add that ‘they did not bring together each of these separate accounts [as Herodotus and Thucydides did], but split them by nations and *poleis* and then gave an account of each in turn’ (*De. Thuc.* 5).¹⁹ Strabo extends an even more limited picture of Hecataeus’ significance, citing him as one of those writers who translated the works of his poetic predecessors into prose (*FGrHist* 1 T 16)—hardly an audacious reassertion of Hecataeus’ originality.²⁰ Then there is the famous criticism levelled against Hecataeus, as

¹⁶ Pearson (1939) 25-108 is still one of the most complete and authoritative examinations of the Hecataean fragments and testimonia in the English language. See Lloyd I 134-5 for a concise summary of the distinct limitations imposed by the uneven corpus of Hecataean fragments.

¹⁷ Bury (1909) long ago remarked that Hecataeus is ‘the founder of history’ (17). Cf. also Meyer (1893) 758, who stated that ‘Hekataeos ist der Begründer der Geschichtsschreibung bei den Griechen’, though with the qualification: ‘doch nur in dem Sinne, daß er der erste war, welcher die Traditionen über die Vorzeit als *rein menschliche Vorgänge* [my italics] auffaßte und in prosaischer Form darstellte’, Pace Murray (1988) esp.467, who remains sceptical about a historian before Herodotus, citing the *Histories*’ pervasive errors and idiosyncrasies as proof that the genre of history could not have been established earlier.

¹⁸ For an excellent discussion on the different figures that Dionysius lists, see Fowler (1996) 62-9; cf. also Pearson (1939) 3ff. Fowler (2006) 39-41 provides a useful appendix on prose writers active before and during Herodotus’ *floruit*, cf. also useful remarks in Balcer (1987) 23-6, who rightly remarks that if and where Herodotus did rely on written works, he ‘did not feel bound to accept them’ (23)—a methodological principle already forcefully iterated by Hecataeus (see below).

A particularly troublesome figure is Hellanicus of Lesbos (cf. Thuc. 1.97.2), dated by Dionysius here to the time of Thucydides (note also *Pomp.* 3.6), but later regarded by many as a predecessor of Herodotus, e.g. Plutarch *De mal. Herod.* 36; see useful remarks in Fowler (1996) 65-7, who shows that Hellanicus was clearly a contemporary of Herodotus.

¹⁹ Toye (1995) 279-302 defends Dionysius’ authority from Jacoby’s influential criticisms, whereby Jacoby vociferously argued that Dionysius’ understanding of historiographical developments was at best inaccurate. Toye appeals to the surviving fragments and well shows some of the stylistic similarities amongst the early logographers, thus resuscitating Dionysius’ critical acumen. However, we might well question his overtly Thucydidean conclusion that these early writers’ *raison d’être* was, in addition to synchronising the various heroic and mythical traditions, to bring delight to their audience by focusing on ancient myths (300).

²⁰ Bertelli (2001) 79 convincingly refutes these meagre interpretations of Hecataeus’ work, arguing that his use of prose implies a much smaller—and highly critical—audience; Hecataeus was not simply translating the myriad of genealogical poems he inherited, he was subjecting them to a much more rigorous form of inquiry based primarily on likelihood (see below). Strabo is likewise much less effusive about Herodotus than Dionysius of Halicarnassus, see Str. 11.6.3: ‘ῥ ᾄ ον δ’ ᾄ ν τις Ἡσιόδω

well as Hesiod, Pythagoras, and Xenophanes, for their νόσος-lite brand of πολυμαθία (FGrHist 1 T21).²¹ Less taciturn than these is the testimony of the rhetorician Hermogenes of Tarsus, writing in the second-century CE, who notes in his Περὶ ἰδεῶν that Hecataeus had been an especial source of help for Herodotus, even though his unadorned Ionic dialect differs from the more poikilic Herodotus (παρ' οὗ δὴ μάλιστα ὠφέληται ὁ Ἡρόδοτος...τῆ διαλέκτῳ δὲ ἀκράτῳ Ἰάδι καὶ οὐ μεμιγμένῃ χρησάμενος οὐδὲ κατὰ τὸν Ἡρόδοτον ποικίλη, FGrHist 1 T18=EGM T18).²² Elsewhere, Porphyry relates an even closer relationship between Herodotus and Hecataeus, when he states that:

Ἡρόδοτος ἐν τῇ δευτέρῃ πολλὰ ἔκαταί σου τοῦ Μιλησίου κατὰ λέξιν μετὴ νεγκεν ἐκ τῆς Περιηγήσεως βραχέα παραποιήσας.

In his second book, Herodotus repeats many things to the letter, which Hecataeus of Miletus wrote in the *Periegesis*, with only slight modifications.²³ (FGrHist 1 F324).

Clearly this passage implies a rather different picture than the interpretations of Strabo and Dionysius; by focusing not on Hecataeus' style and genre, but on his significance in the formation of Herodotus' well-known Egyptian account, Porphyry thus provides Hecataeus with a much more authoritative status within the text, and demands that we question and dissect this *logos*—and indeed others!—to assess where (and how often) Herodotus was indebted to his Milesian predecessor.²⁴ Moreover, if Herodotus did indeed copy whole passages from Hecataeus *verbatim*, we must surely question our understanding of the nature of evidence and citation in his, and other early Greek historians' works.

Regardless of these various pieces of testimonia which allow the reader to speculate (i) on the scope of Hecataeus' inquiries; (ii) the extent to which his intellectual ambitions overlap

καὶ Ὀμήρῳ πιστεύσειεν ἠρωολογοῦσι καὶ τοῖς τραγικοῖς ποιηταῖς ἢ Κτησίῳ τε καὶ Ἡροδότῳ καὶ Ἑλλανίκῳ καὶ ἄλλοις τοιούτοις', cf. also Str. 12.3.21.

²¹ Cf. the negative usage of πολυμαθία in Heraclitus' critique of Pythagoras at DK 22.B.129; for further discussion, see Węcowski (2004) 144.

²² Cf. *Suda* s.v. Ἐκαταῖος, Ἠγησάνδρου: Ἡρόδοτος δὲ ὁ Ἀλικαρνασεύς ὠφέληται τοῦ του νεώτερος ὄν...τῆν ἀκουστῆς Πρωταγόρου ὁ Ἐκαταῖος πρῶτος δὲ ἰστορίαν πεζῶς ἐξήνεγκε'.

²³ *Contra* Fehling (1989) 259.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 176-7, Fehling is sceptical about the true number of Hecataean influences in Book Two, arguing that Porphyry would surely have cited the most substantial passages that Herodotus transcribed from Hecataeus, and thus, the relatively meagre passages he actually refers to, suggest a much more limited influence. For a thorough analysis of Hecataeus' influence on Herodotus' *Aigyptios logos*, see Lloyd I 127-139 (summarised at 138-9), Lloyd II 8-10; cf., in the *Histories* more broadly, Haziza (2009) 15-17, 49-52. See also Prakken (1940), who argued that Herodotus adopted Hecataeus' chronological calculations in those passages concerning the reigns of the Spartan kings, *contra* Lloyd I 178ff., arguing for the Spartan King list as the probable source. For Hecataeus' and Herodotus' respective positions in the history of Greek Egyptology, see Burstein (1996) 593-7.

with those of Herodotus; and (iii) other meaningful biographical details; it is important to be mindful of the largely arbitrary and highly uneven preservation of his known treatises.²⁵ Indeed, the totality of the Hecataean fragments is far from comprehensive and so it proves very difficult to gauge the overall composition and style of any of his known works.²⁶ Furthermore, out of the few hundred fragments, a considerable proportion are preserved in the epitomised work of the Byzantine lexicographer Stephanus of Byzantium,²⁷ who was specifically writing an *ethnika*, and, as Klaus Karttunen argues, would most likely have selected those sections of Hecataeus' work which would suit his own literary purposes.²⁸ Thus, keeping in mind these potential caveats, let us now consider the critical position amongst contemporary scholars.

A number of twentieth-century scholars adopted one of two extreme positions in relation to Hecataeus' literary achievement.²⁹ On the one hand, Hecataeus was seen as the inventor of genealogical chronology, who, by applying a rationalistic criteria to the various *logoi* which he recounts, was a clear precursor to Herodotus, and thus heavily responsible for the flourishing of Greek historiography.³⁰ Conversely, others asserted that he is in fact much closer to the Hesiodic genealogical tradition, since the extant evidence indicates that he made no really momentous move towards a historical chronological framework.³¹ Of the few

²⁵ Considerable confusion surrounds the textual state of Hecataeus' work by the Hellenistic period, see Diels (1887) 412ff. Certainly, it is not surprising that much of his work should not have survived for us to read; indeed Heidel (1935) rightly noted that many early prose writers' works were simply absorbed and supplanted by later authors who wrote in a more up-to-date style (54). In addition, the foundation of the Alexandrian library by Ptolemy Soter was over 200 years after Hecataeus was writing, hence why his work, along with many others', was most probably in a wretched state; see further remarks in Karttunen (1989) 69.

²⁶ Clarke (1999) 60-2 further complicates the existing picture by showing how many of the fragments could belong to either of Hecataeus' works, noting too that many of the unassigned fragments have been 'rather randomly allocated in modern collections' (62).

²⁷ It is not at all clear as to whether Stephanus was working with Hecataeus' work directly, or if he relied on some older lexicon, see Karttunen (1989) 71.

²⁸ *ibid.* 71. Thus, while Gould (1989)144, n.3 is right to say that the surviving evidence suggests Hecataeus' interest in "narrative" was marginal, by suggesting that his work 'could not possibly have been reproduced to yield what Herodotus gives us' Gould fails to pay due recognition to the possibility that only certain aspects of Hecataeus' work are now extant, precisely because of later authors' own biases.

²⁹ Cf. too Hunter (1982) 310-3.

³⁰ For an extensive bibliography see Bertelli (2001) n.24, but, note especially Diels (1887) 436ff., Meyer (1892) 7ff.; other works which continued this line of argument include (with some caveats) Jacoby (1912) 2667-2690, and *passim*; Heidel (1935) 53-134. More recently, see Armayor (1987) and (2004), Bertelli (2001).

³¹ For a thorough repudiation of Meyer's highly influential view of Hecataeus, see Mitchel (1956) 48-69. In more recent scholarship, the denial of Hecataeus as an innovative figure has been put across most forcefully by Lasserre (1976) 113-42, who, whilst attributing a rational chronology to Hecataeus' work, maintains that he is ultimately best viewed as a 'continuateur de la tradition épique' (118). On the "Hesiodic" organisation of Hecataeus' Γενεαλογίαι, see Bowie (2010) 159, who cites this stylistic overlap as further evidence 'against any claims that it might have been an important ancestor or even antecedent of Herodotean and Thucydidean historiography'

scholars who attempted to find a middle voice between these two extreme positions,³² Fornara played down Hecataeus' so-called rationalistic spirit, but maintained that Hecataeus became an authoritative figure in dealing with the question of the Greeks' many improbable traditions; and what is more, that he separated the heroic age from the *spatium historicum*.³³ Finally, several scholars have adopted a much more subversive reading of Hecataeus' work, arguing that he was writing highly ironical fiction, which Herodotus and other authors misinterpreted.³⁴

More recently, Bertelli has argued that Hecataeus was primarily responsible for implementing an unparalleled rationalistic approach to mythic traditions.³⁵ However it is important to note that Hecataeus' use of a "rational" or "scientific" prose is not original in itself; indeed prose had already been employed by others from the alleged "Milesian school", such as Pherecydes of Syros (who many, both ancient and modern, have credited with the earliest prose work).³⁶ Nevertheless, Hecataeus' prose represents a clear jump from the genealogical poetry which he inherited, ultimately allowing him to transcend established poetic structures and thus disentangle overlapping traditions into one coherent, proto-scientific narrative, as well as providing polemical and argumentative accounts running directly counter to earlier genealogical poetry.³⁷

In his sketch of Greek historiographical developments, Usher has written:

³² Though, note also Roveri (1963) esp.10-6, Lloyd I 137f., and Yunis (2003a): 'in Hecataeus, and above all in Herodotus, Milesian science has become history' (155).

³³ Fornara (1983) 5-7 cf. Fowler (2010) 329, n.27. I am less convinced, however, by Fornara's confident assertion that the *Periegesis* was a comprehensive description of the world, combining the authors' own travels with written, as well as spoken reports, given by others (13). The evidence for Hecataeus' use of written reports is almost entirely non-existent, and it is altogether more likely that Hecataeus *became* a chief literary authority who had collated and written down many oral traditions for the first time.

³⁴ See esp. Heidel (1935), who also believed that whenever he cites the priests as sources, Herodotus had in fact taken the information directly from Hecataeus, often misrepresenting his predecessors' material. Cf. the much too dogmatic interpretation in Armayor (1985) *passim*, esp.75-6, 80; the scanty Hecataean fragments do not allow for such definitive conclusions about his overall narrative style.

³⁵ Bertelli (2001) 89; cf. Corcella (1984) 92, West (2002) 4-8, Saïd (2012) 90-1, cf., the more measured statement in Rood (2010) 63. But note the excellent cautions of Vandiver (1991) 5, and Harrison (2006), discussing the general (ab)use of the term rationalism: 'there is no hard-and-fast distinction between mythical or pre-logical thought on the one hand and rational thought on the other' (129).

³⁶ Ancient testimonia: Schibli (1990) FF1,2,9,10,11,12; modern scholarship, e.g., Jacoby (1947) 13-64, Bertelli (2001) 78, n.27, Kahn (2003) 139-55, esp.143-5. Cf. Yunis (2003a), who offers an exemplary discussion on the difficult question of early prose development. By tackling several fragmentary works, as well as a number of lost works (such as Anaximander's *Peri Physeos*[?]), he convincingly demonstrates that the practical uses of prose must have been 'fairly widespread' by the middle of the sixth century (151).

³⁷ Fowler (2001) 103. Scientific discourse, however, was not limited to those writing in prose. Xenophanes used hexameters and elegies to describe all manner of visible phenomena, e.g. the fossils at Syracuse, Paros and Malta (DK 21.A.33).

Hecataeus employed prose because he was writing in a spirit of scientific enquiry and with the purpose of presenting factual material, not of exercising creative imagination. But it is not in this departure from literary tradition that his main importance lies: he possessed the chief quality which distinguishes the mere story-teller from the true historian – scepticism. He undertakes to tell *only what seems to him credible* [my own italics] for, as he says, 'the stories of the Greeks are many and ridiculous, as it seems to me'. In practice, the principle turns out to be more impressive than its application, so that on occasion Hecataeus seemed gullible and naive even to his contemporaries... However, it is probably not an exaggeration to credit Hecataeus with the first attempt at reconciling mythology with history in his *Genealogies*, and of his being the first writer to observe and record systematically the topography and historical traditions of several cities of the Greek world.³⁸

Whilst we may take issue with some of Usher's positivist, grandstanding remarks on Hecataeus' original contribution to topographical and historical research, not allowing for other figures like Anaximander, Thales, *et alii* to have played their own important role, there is little doubt that Hecataeus should be seen as an innovative figure. And not merely for his application of prose, which provides only a superficial explanation for what he really managed to achieve, but more distinctively, for his (however imperfect) sceptical and critical approach to other sources.

2.3 Ἡρόδοτος οὐ μυθεῖται

Having considered the modern debate and external evidence, let us now turn to representations of Hecataeus in Herodotus' text. For Herodotus not only alludes to Hecataeus' literary record, as we shall see below, but he also makes two references to his role as a leading citizen of Miletus; these fleeting glances reveal further complexities vis-à-vis Herodotus' relationship with Hecataeus and early prose traditions. The first passage is set just before the Ionian Revolt, and, in certain ways, serves as a reflection on Herodotus' own work.³⁹ Unlike his fellow Ionians, whom Aristagoras has persuaded in favour of rebellion, 'Hecataeus the *logopoios*' strongly opposes the idea of embarking on open hostilities against the Persian Empire, methodically (and in Herodotus-like fashion) 'cataloguing all the races subject to the rule of Darius and his power' (καταλέγων τά τε ἔθνεα πάντα τῶν ἤρχε

³⁸ Usher (1970) 2-3; see also Derow (1994) 73-4.

³⁹ So de Jong (2004) 113-4, and Irwin and Greenwood (2007) 34-5, who well comment on Herodotus self-consciously weaving his own research into the narrative, 'confirm[ing] the basis of Hecataeus' advice, if not its viability, by reminding his audience of his coverage of the topic in Book One [1.92]', and thus, staging Hecataeus as a kind of 'textual double'. Cf. also Dewald (1985), West (1991) 156, de Jong (2001) 115, Munson (2007) 160, and de Bakker (2007) 127-8, 130, *contra* Armayor (2004) who reads Hecataeus' advice both here and elsewhere as 'futile, sarcastic' (326).

Δαρειῶς καὶ τῆν δύνάμιν αὐτοῦ, 5.36.2).⁴⁰ Though not able to curry favour amongst his fellow Milesians, it appears that Herodotus portrays Hecataeus as a practical and wise character in this episode.⁴¹ Indeed we are told that he recognised Miletus' systemic weakness as a naval power, and in an overtly anti-traditional (or rather, sacrilegious) manner, recommends that this can only be reversed by seizing valuable *chrēmata* from the oracle at Branchidae (τὰ χρήματα καταρθεῖ ἢ τὰ ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ τοῦ ἐν Βραγχίδησι, 5.36.3).⁴² With these resources, the narrator adds, '[Hecataeus] fully expected them to have mastery of the sea. [For] they would then have the use of that treasure, and the enemy would not be able to strip them of it' (5.36.4). However 'this plan was not approved', Herodotus concludes aloofly, and thus the Milesians immediately begin preparing to play their part in the ill-fated revolt.

Though Hecataeus seemingly plays the role of 'wise adviser' in this *logos*,⁴³ there are signs that the overall portrait of Hecataeus is not as straightforwardly congenial as it might first appear. While Irwin and Greenwood are surely right to detect a meta-narrative on Herodotus' work here, inasmuch that Hecataeus' analysis indeed contains Herodotus' 'truest *aitiē* for the Revolt's failure' (i.e. Persian might)⁴⁴—a point extensively developed by Herodotus in his earlier books, the reader cannot fail to ponder Hecataeus' ultimate failure in persuading his undemocratic audience. Perhaps Herodotus is suggesting that Hecataeus' failure is partly symptomatic of his use of ethnographical knowledge for personal gain?⁴⁵ Or, as Munson has intimated, maybe his strategic advice, which he did not present before the open *dēmos*, was wasted amongst the narrow collective of oligarchs present?⁴⁶ Whatever the inference, Herodotus is certainly proposing a crucial deficiency in Hecataean inquiry, namely Hecataeus' inability to convey his superior vantage point and change the tragic course of events when presenting his ideas in an oral context. Now since spoken performance, as scholars are emphatically agreed,⁴⁷ is a central component of Herodotean

⁴⁰ Cf. Hdt. 3.89-95. Perhaps, as Munn (2006) 214, n.132 notes, an indication that Hecataeus was familiar with Persian royal inscriptions, such as the Bisitun Inscription, which listed the satrapies and subjects of the Persian Empire from Darius onwards, cf. §3.1, n.40 below.

⁴¹ Cf., e.g., Fehling (1989) 203-4, West (1991) 154-7, Dewald (1998) 669, Lateiner (1989) 103: 'Herodotus does not exhibit personal animosity; even Hecataeus, though pilloried for errors in his writings, is treated respectfully as a statesman.'

⁴² Macan I.i 179, West (1991) 156, Kurke (2011) 379 all remark on the sacrilegious quality of his advice; Lloyd I 127 is non-committal. Cf. de Bakker (2007) 128, who unconvincingly reads Herodotus' later reference to the sanctuary's wealth (6.19.3) as a proof of the value of Hecataeus' recommendation.

⁴³ So, e.g., Lang (1968) 29, Solmsen (1974) 142, *contra* Waters (1971) 505. Pelling (2007a) 198 notes the equivalence between Hecataeus' advice with that of Croesus at 1.207.

⁴⁴ Irwin and Greenwood (2007) 34.

⁴⁵ Cf. Irwin (2007) 70.

⁴⁶ Munson (2007) 160-1.

⁴⁷ For Herodotus' lectures, see §6.3 below.

historiē, this rival *logopoios* starts to appear rather ineffectual within the Herodotean landscape. A similar passage at the close of Book Five may help clarify this passage for the reader.

As the revolt descends into its disastrous climax, Hecataeus the *logopoios* makes his second appearance as an archetypal Herodotean ‘wise adviser’ (5.125-6), this time advising Aristagoras (‘the architect behind the Ionian rebellion’, 6.1.1) where best to put to flight. Hecataeus proposes that Aristagoras should settle on the island of Leros, since he would easily be able to return to Miletus at a later date from this position. But once more Hecataeus’ advice goes unheeded, and, soon after Aristagoras heads towards his own choice of Myrcinus, he is killed by a group of Thracians (5.126.2). Combined with the earlier episode, these appearances give the modern historian a valuable glimpse into Hecataeus in his historical context, illustrating his status as a leading public figure and one of the most pre-eminent early *logoi*-makers (Aesop being the only other figure Herodotus refers to as a *logopoios* [2.134]).⁴⁸ And yet, just as the advice Hecataeus offered earlier in Book Five was not without its problems, here too, Hecataeus’ suggestion of the island of Leros as a temporary base is a surprising and indeed inadequate one, particularly, as various scholars have acknowledged, given the Persians’ mastery of the sea.⁴⁹ Moreover, Herodotus’ emphasis on his status as a *logopoios* in both passages might just be the clearest sign of a subtler, more implicit polemic against the statesman: Herodotus conducts *historiē*, and is not to be associated with *logopoiōi* like Hecataeus.⁵⁰ As we shall see, such a reading accords well with the overall impression that Herodotus’ work develops in relation to earlier prose traditions.

Moving away from Book Five to one of the most famous passages in Herodotus’ *Aigyptios logos*, the encounter between Hecataeus and the Egyptian priests at the temple of Amun in

⁴⁸ On Aesop, see §7.5 below. For different modern translations of *logopoios*, see Kurke (2011) 371, n.42, who also goes on to read the more negative implications of *logopoios* in Herodotus (esp.376ff.). In this context, I am unconvinced by Nagy (1990) 224, n.54, who argues that ‘it is the likes of Hecataeus that Herodotus has in mind when he used the word **logioi** in the first sentence of the *Histories* proper (1.1.1)’; Luraghi (2001b) 156-9, (2009) has convincingly demonstrated that in Herodotus’ text, the *logioi* are non-Greeks who are attributed as being wise or *sophos*, *non-specialist* local informants (though rightly noting that Greeks could too be more or less *logios*; *contra* Jacoby [1913] 216, who definitively regards *logioi* as men ‘from the ruling classes’). It is clear from the passages considered that *logopoios* is not being used as an attributive quality, but rather, as a disparaging epithet for Hecataeus’ professional status. For whether Herodotus would have accepted *logios* for himself, see Vannicelli (2001) 214–15.

⁴⁹ Macan I.i 267, West (1991) 156, Kurke (2011) 380, *contra* Nenci I ad loc., who reads this passage as confirmation that the Persians had no desire to control Leros and the other islands off Asia Minor.

⁵⁰ Similarly Thomas (2000) 267; for further discussion on this final point, see Kurke (2011) 376-81. *Pace* Murray (2001a) 34: ‘[Herodotus is] the last and greatest of the *logopoiōi*’. For Herodotus rather as a σοφός, see Fowler (1996) 86-7, Thomas (2000) *passim*, esp.283-5, (with modifications) Węcowski (2004) 157f., 162 (comparing him to Solon, cf., e.g., Redfield [1985]).

Karnak (2.143),⁵¹ the reader is furnished with one further example of Hecataeus as historical agent—not altogether surprising, given that we know Hecataeus travelled to and wrote about Egypt.⁵² But in contrast to the passages in Book Five, this polemical episode provides a much more overt picture of the un-Herodotean texture of Hecataeus’ researches. Hecataeus (once again referred to as a *logopoios*, 2.143.1) is said to have recited his own genealogy to the Theban priests, tracing his own lineage back sixteen generations to a god.⁵³ The Egyptians, as they did for Herodotus (2.142),⁵⁴ then recounted 341 generations of priests before their own day, showing and counting for him (ἄριθμούντες ὧν καὶ δεικνύντες) each of the statues erected by each priest in his own respective lifetime as proof of this much more sizeable genealogy (cf. Candaulus’ famous dictum at 1.8.2: ὧτα γὰρ τυγχάνει ἀνθρώποισι ἐόντα ἀπιστότερα ὀφθαλμῶν).⁵⁵ For this reason, Herodotus reports that the priests “would not accept from [Hecataeus] that a man could be descended from a god” (οὐ δεκόμενοι παρ’ αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ θεοῦ γενέσθαι ἀνθρώπων, 2.143.4).

Scholars have long argued over the historicity of this passage, which, by anyone’s standards, clearly contains a number of remarkable details. The principal objection is that Hecataeus could hardly have been as credulous as Herodotus portrays him to be, otherwise Hecataeus’ genealogical researches would have had no serious basis. However, it is important to remember that we know comparatively little about the accuracy of Hecataeus’ genealogical investigations, though several of the fragments include stories that many Greeks in Hecataeus’ own time would no doubt have found absurd.⁵⁶ Indeed, as I emphasised above, it is wrong to assume that Hecataeus’ methodological principles (like Herodotus’) are

⁵¹ The bibliography on this passage is not insubstantial. For present purposes, I have found the issues raised in the following (by no means univocal) accounts most useful: Heidel (1935) *passim*, Lloyd III ad loc., Fehling (1989) 77-84, West (1991), Nicolai (1997), Fowler (2006) 25-6, and especially, the recent contributions of Moyer (2002), (2011) 42-83, and Kurke (2011) 377-8.

⁵² Amongst the surviving fragments are a number of passages concerning Egypt, a few of which touch upon familiar *topoi* covered in Herodotus’ account, including: the outer regions of Egypt (*FGrHist* F 301), the sources of the Nile (F 302), and Egyptian *nomoi* (F 322). This passage constitutes one of Fehling’s ‘demonstrably false source-citations’ (1989) 77-84.

⁵³ Herodotus almost entirely avoids naming divinities as parents of human offspring, e.g., 2.43-5, 145.4; 4.51; 6.53.2; *pace* 7.61.3 (Perseus the son of Zeus and Danaë). Cf. the thoughtful remarks in Harrison (2000a) 88-9, rightly correcting the dogmatic views of Darbo-Peschanski (1987) 38 (‘Hérodote refuse catégoriquement d’admettre l’intrusion des dieux sous forme humaine dans le monde des hommes’.)

⁵⁴ Here Herodotus boasts that καὶ ἐμοὶ οὐ γενηλογήσαντι ἐμεωυτόν (2.143.1), which clearly reads as a droll dig at the inadequacies of Greek genealogical traditions, see Dewald (2002) 279, Fowler (2006) 43, n.33, Moyer (2011) 76, Kurke (2011) 378. Fehling (1989) 81-4 considers this episode a fiction; see further discussion in n.87 below.

⁵⁵ For the significance of the 341 generations of Egyptian kings and priests in 2.142-3, in terms of how Herodotus shaped chronological considerations within his *Histories* more broadly, see Vannicelli (2001). Cf. also Forrest (1969) 100 on Herodotus’ (and Thucydides’) calculations of time based on generations for earlier periods.

⁵⁶ E.g. a Vine which springs from the blood of a dog (*FGrHist* F 15), and a talking ram (*FGrHist* F 17).

flawlessly carried out throughout his work: the exiguous evidence rather points to a much less consistent picture. Nevertheless, there are indeed other, intricate details in this account which are unsustainable at the very basic level of historical accuracy.⁵⁷ So, whether one unreservedly believes that this meeting was reported by the Egyptian priests to Herodotus or not, it remains likely that Hecataeus had made some statement about his own descent in one of his own treatises, which Herodotus, and his audience, was familiar with.⁵⁸

More important for our investigation is the way in which Herodotus frames this entire episode around chiding Hecataeus' genealogical pretensions, reinforcing our perception of an underlying critical attitude towards Hecataeus in the *Histories*. Indeed we see Herodotus attempting to espouse authority by employing a rationalistic logic that relies on tangible evidence, in this case, the individually carved statues, in order to elucidate the illogicality of Hecataeus' grandiose claims about his own lineage.⁵⁹ Herodotus' rebuttal here also has to be seen in light of his knowledge that the Egyptians placed the time of the gods' direct role in human history much further back, leading Fowler to remark that '[Herodotus]' need to find an explanation for the Greek misunderstanding of its date (2.43-4, 53, 146) significantly implies that, in this passage at least, he assumes the same chronological boundary everywhere'.⁶⁰ Such a critical disposition as this is undoubtedly antithetical to the works of the mythographers and storytellers who largely collected and recounted different epic choric traditions.⁶¹ What emerges from this episode, then, is a clearer definition of what Herodotus' work *does not do*. As Fowler has recently put it,

⁵⁷ See West (1991) for a considered repudiation of many of the finer details in this account which she shows to be thoroughly remoulded by Herodotus, whom, she argues, aimed to evince the vast differences between Egyptian recorded history and the scanty record of the Greek past (154). For an even more cynical view on the authenticity of this passage see Fehling (1989) 77-83 (esp.79 n. 3). Certainly, Herodotus' inclusion of 345 surviving wooden statues which 345 priests apparently carved—each while in office—defies common sense, but note Moyer (2011) 65f. for a sensible solution.

⁵⁸ So Erbse (1979) 184.

⁵⁹ *Contra* Hunter (1982) 61-3, Evans (1982a) 143, both sceptical about the prevailing view that Herodotus is being polemical here. However, the latter is unpersuasive in suggesting that any joke present is more likely to have been taken directly from Hecataeus' *Periegesis*. Luraghi (2001b) 155, n.14 remarks that Herodotus' cynical attitude towards Hecataeus in this passage is mirrored in his reading of Aristaeas' arcane *Arimaspeia* (4.13, 16).

⁶⁰ Fowler (2011) 59, contrast now Calame (2013) esp.83-6. For Herodotus' distinction(?) between the age of heroes and the age of men, see important discussions in Vandiver (1991) 236, Darbo-Peschanski (1997) 25-38, Harrison (2000a) 197-207, Cobet (2002), Feeney (2007) esp. 68-80, Calame (2013) 72-7; cf. Williams (2002) 149-71, whose nuanced reading avoids straightforward assumptions of a *spatium mythicum* and *spatium historicum* in Herodotus, though his interpretation of the reference to Minos at Thuc. 1.4 (Μίνως γὰρ ῥ παλαιάτατος ὧν ἄ κοῆ ἴ σμεν ναυτικὸ ν ἔ κτήσατο) as proof that Thucydides 'invented historical time [as we know it]' (162) is somewhat strained; the rift between Herodotus and Thucydides and their views on mythical time is far less distinct, cf. Said (2007) esp.79, Zali (2011) *passim*.

⁶¹ For the origins of the term mythography, and a general discussion on the early mythographic works, see *EGM* xxvii-xxxviii.

one is tempted to see here a broader reference to all those who related divine stories, pointlessly peddling that about which all opinions are equally valid; that is, Herodotus is advising his audience ‘expect no mythography from me’.⁶²

The implications of such a point are therefore significant for Herodotus’ project as a whole. By referring to Hecataeus, an author that many amongst Herodotus’ audience might have had a passing knowledge of, Herodotus is able to demarcate the generic limits of *historiē*; Herodotus’ audience is led to understand that Hecataeus, resolutely defined as a *logopoios*,⁶³ is the negative example from which he and his superior project breaks free. But, as we shall see in a few moments, it must be borne in mind that Hecataeus’ (ground-breaking?) proem enunciates a similarly critical pose towards previous traditions.⁶⁴ Paradoxically, then, it is at this point in the *Histories* that Herodotus is most conspicuously critical of Hecataeus, and yet, in order to adopt such a stance, he employs a narrative technique that Hecataeus himself used to criticise his own predecessors.

The only other explicit reference to Hecataeus in Herodotus, purports to be taken from one of Hecataeus’ works, and is reported in a seemingly more objective manner than Hecataeus’ ostensible meeting with the Egyptian priests. The passage concerns the Pelasgians—those mythical founders of Greece—and the reason for their being driven out of Attica by the Athenians (6.137).⁶⁵ Here Herodotus states that he is unable to say whether the act was just or unjust. He then recounts two rival versions of this story, first, that of “Hecataeus, the son of Hegesander, who said in his *logoi* that they were unjust” (Ἐκαταῖος οὐ μὲν ὁ Ἡγησάνδρου ἔφησε ἐν τοῖσι λόγοισι λέγων ὀδύκως, 6.137.1).⁶⁶ According to Hecataeus, the Athenians were jealous (φθόρον) of the Pelasgians, who had managed to cultivate previously worthless land given to them by the Athenians, and ‘on no other pretext’, the Athenians forced them out (6.137.2). In the Athenian version of this story, however, the Athenians maintain that the Pelasgians not only acted hubristically towards them, but

⁶² Fowler (2009) 29. Cf. Fowler (2011) 59 who, in discussing Herodotus’ reasons for not fully probing into divine affairs, argues that it is both his piety and his acknowledgement that such a task lies beyond the bounds of *historiē*.

⁶³ Cf. Aly (1921) 18, 212-15, who similarly reads the term *logopoios* as a derogatory reference.

⁶⁴ Indeed Hecataeus is critical of more than one of his predecessors; for Hesiod, see: *FGrHist* 1 FF 13, 18, 19, 26; for Homer, see: FF 25, 27.

⁶⁵ Nowhere in his history do the Pelasgians speak for themselves, surprising given Herodotus’ penchant for appealing to local sources in many of his *logoi*. Luraghi (2001b) sees this discrepancy, however, as one which underscores how certain events can slip from memory, and as such, do not belong to any group (159-60). On the problems associated with the Pelasgian traditions as reported in Herodotus and elsewhere, see esp. the compendious discussion in Sourvinou-Inwood (2003b), illustrating how Herodotus’ discourse on Pelasgian myths allows him to ‘destabilise’ the Greek-barbarian dichotomy (144); cf. also Thomas (2001) 206f.

⁶⁶ *FGrHist* 1 F 127. For further references to this myth in antiquity, see Sourvinou-Inwood (2003b) 132, n.114.

emphasise that they were also caught in the act of planning an attack (ἐπιχειρήσιν) against the Athenians. For these reasons, the Athenians summate, the inferior Pelasgians were ordered to leave Attica (6.137.4). As is the case elsewhere in Herodotus, the narrator refuses to adjudicate between these rival versions,⁶⁷ instead opting simply to report both accounts. Even so, there is a strong sense in which Hecataeus comes off worst in this passage.⁶⁸ Not only is his one voice muted when pitted against the collective Athenian community,⁶⁹ but he also adopts an anti-Athenian line, which, as Macan noted in his *Commentary*, could hardly have served as a favourable advertisement for his work in Athens,⁷⁰ especially, we might add, given the bilious atrocities committed by the Pelasgians against the Athenians, namely the theft of a number of Athenian women, and the later murder of these Attic women and their offspring (6.138.1, 4).

But regardless of whether or not this episode represents a pointed attack on Hecataeus' erudition, yet again, as with the three other references to Hecataeus discussed already, Herodotus' representation of his predecessor's intellectual status is ambiguous more than it is flattering. As an aside, a subtle yet significant element which sets this particular example apart from the others we have been discussing is the explicit mention of Hecataeus' *logoi*—proof, therefore, of Herodotus' awareness and deployment of Hecataeus' written work. Indeed this represents one of the few times that Herodotus marks a clear distinction between a written and oral source.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Cf. 2.123.1, 130.2; 4.173, 195.2; 7.152.3, cf. Lloyd I 18f., Lateiner (1989) 79-80, de Jong (2004) 105.

⁶⁸ Pace Baragwanath (2008) 136-43, esp.138-9, 141, who, in focussing on conflicting motivations and shifting readerly sympathies for the Athenians and Pelasgians in chapters 6.132-9, argues that the repeated display of land hunger by Miltiades and the Athenians (cf. 'ἵμερον τῆς γῆς', 6.137.2; ἐκέλευον τοῦς Πελασγούς τῆν χώρην σφίσι παραδιδόναι, 6.139.3) predisposes the reader towards Hecataeus' version, though acknowledging that this is then complicated by the Pelasgians' heinous behavior in the following chapter, murdering a number of Attic children and their mothers (6.138.4). But given Herodotus' account of this later débâcle on the island of Lemnos, demonstrating how the Athenians have patently clear reasons for exacting revenge that go beyond simply a desire for land, it would be remarkable indeed if Herodotus was wholly receptive to Hecataeus' account on the Athenians' seizure of Hymettus, with its unerring insistence that the Athenians desired the land, and that 'on no other pretext' (οὐ δέμῖαν ἄλλην πρόφασιν, 6.137.2), the Athenians expelled the Pelasgians from the land. Cf., similarly, Sourvinou-Inwood (2003b) 136: '[the Pelasgians'] negative behaviour aspect was eliminated' by Hecataeus.

⁶⁹ Shrimpton (1997) 174.

⁷⁰ Macan I.i 391. Macan also proposes a less convincing possibility: That Hecataeus' version might have been accepted by good Athenians, intending to do penance for past sins.

⁷¹ So Connor (1993) 21 (n.14) who notes that writing is typically ambiguous in Herodotus, since it is regularly grouped with "oral" forms of expression.

2.4 “The Ionians Say”

It is now a commonplace that Herodotus does not cite his evidence in the empirical and exacting style of a modern academic.⁷² For instance, while he often demonstrates considerable knowledge of contemporary scientific thinking, he feels no obligation to quote a specific author’s theories or text. And just as, for instance, the medical sources that Rosalind Thomas has shown to inform Herodotus’ praxis go un-cited, many of the textual sources from which he learned of others’ travels and geographical or ethnographical inquiries are likewise unacknowledged. Indeed there are various passages, especially in Herodotus’ Egyptian *logos*, which explore similar subject matter to these earlier writers, and occasionally even run parallel to some of the earlier fragmentary prose works.⁷³ In such cases the fragments might even reveal one of the likely intended recipients of his extended polemic.

But before I further examine those Herodotean passages which serve as potential intertexts with prose writers, it is worth saying something more about the types of evidence that were at Herodotus’ disposal. In the second volume of his *Commentary on Thucydides*, Simon Hornblower has illuminated some of the inadequacies of recent scholarly analyses into the kind of historians that Herodotus, Thucydides, and Polybius were. In particular, he contends against Stroud’s (over)emphasis on the historian in antiquity being primarily a traveller/explorer,⁷⁴ not only pointing out the vast time difference between the fifth-century historians and Polybius, who was working in the second century—after the flourishing of Alexandrian and Pergamene scholarship, but, also, by showing that Thucydides himself demonstrates a clear awareness of his prose predecessors.⁷⁵ Hornblower is surely right here to emphasise the plurality of methodologies available, and techniques on display, even in the earlier historians’ works. Far from contesting the fairly jejune point that Thucydides buffeted

⁷² Indeed the same goes for Thucydides, who is sometimes erroneously labelled a scientific or ‘empiricist’ historian, cf. the famous article of Loraux (1980).

⁷³ For a comprehensive list of all potential Hecataean allusions within Book Two, see Lloyd (1975) 138-9.

⁷⁴ Stroud (1994) 267-304. Thomas (1992) ch.6 better illustrates Stroud’s point, noting that we should avoid excessively ‘bookish’ interpretations of ancient literature, by emphasising the ongoing importance of public performance for a wide range of genres even after Plato.

⁷⁵ Hornblower (1996) 20-23. At 1.21.1 and 1.97.2, Thucydides both times refers to those who composed prose works before him, thus demonstrating an explicit awareness of a more extended prose tradition; cf. Greenwood (2006) 57-8, who proposes that Gorgias is one of Thucydides’ anonymous *logographoi* at 1.21.1, cf. Crane (1996) 217-20, Rood (2006) 236. (Indeed, in the latter passage, alongside an undefined number of works focused on events before or during the Median War, Thucydides also lists Hellanicus’ *Athenian history* [ἐν τῇ Ἀττικῇ ξυγγραφῇ Ἑλλάνικος]; cf. Rood [1998] 230f. on the chronological difficulties presented by the reference to Hellanicus, who wrote until 407/6 [*FGrHist* 323a F 25-6].)

his account with the results of his own travels and oral communications,⁷⁶ Hornblower restates the equally valid point that Thucydides would have also been aware of those literary works which indubitably touched upon his chosen subject, and ultimately we should not be surprised that he used these too.⁷⁷ As this chapter, along with the others that follow, demonstrates, Hornblower's reading of Thucydides' historical methodology should also be applied to that of Herodotus and his own inquiries, which were, at least in part, influenced by or directed against important literary figures who wrote in both poetry *and* prose.

Though not explicitly cited by Herodotus, one of the most valuable of the numerous extant Hecataean fragments is the proem to Hecataeus' *Γενεαλογία*, since its literary effect resurfaces throughout the *Histories*. The passage in question summarises the nature of his work:

Ἐκαταῖος Μιλήσιος ὥς μυθεῖται. τὰ δε γράφω, ὥς μοι δοκεῖ ἀληθέα εἶναι. οἱ γὰρ Ἑλλήνων λόγοι πολλοί τε καὶ γελοῖοι, ὥς ἔμοι φαίνονται, εἰσί ν.

Thus speaks Hecataeus of Miletus: I write down those things which seem to me to be true, for the *logoi* of the Greeks, as they appear to me, are many and ridiculous. (*FGrHist* 1 F1).⁷⁸

Rejecting what other Greeks hold to be true, Hecataeus prefers instead to provide a singular and coherent account based on what he personally reckons to be true (ἀληθέα),⁷⁹ thus undermining the authority of popular Greek mythic traditions, and resultantly, many of his illustrious poetic predecessors.⁸⁰ Herein Hecataeus dissents from the narrative voice of the epic poet who solely relies on the all-pervasive muses, instead boasting of his ability to discern the reputable from the ridiculous (γελοῖοι). Not only this, but, as Robert Fowler notes, he also dissents from other prose writers such as Protagoras, who apply a more relativist criterion—i.e. I have my truth, you have yours. For Hecataeus' version of truth is

⁷⁶ Indeed, Thucydides explicitly appeals to these types of historical inquiry in his archaeology (1.22.1-2).

⁷⁷ Hornblower II 25.

⁷⁸ Corcella (1996) 295-301, offers an ingenious solution as to why Hecataeus shifts here from the third person to the first person, citing a clear precedent in the introductions of Near Eastern royal messages, which, Hecataeus was almost certainly familiar with. For the wider ramifications of Hecataeus' self-identification, see Yunis (2003a) 154; Bertelli (2001) 80-84; Lateiner (1989) 9-10; and for its panhellenic scope, Rood (2006) 230.

⁷⁹ Similarly, pre-Socratic authors such as, e.g., Empedokles (DK 31.B.114) and Xenophanes (fr. 1.14 W²), insist on recounting a *mythos* that is true and pure respectively; further discussion in Fowler (2011) 56.

⁸⁰ Of course, one did not have to write in prose in order to reject the accuracy of the poet, e.g. Pindar *O.* 1.28-30, *Nem.* 7.23, 8.32-3 (see further §4.3, n.73).

being presented as an authoritative one—one which he believes ‘will stand up to external testing.’⁸¹

But in spite of this significant intellectual shift, it is important not to underestimate the magnitude of the verb through which Hecataeus’ authority is generated: *μυθεῖται*. So in his self-consciously written presentation, it is speech validated by *mythos* through which Hecataeus writes, i.e. he does not use the corresponding verb form for *logos*: *legetai*. Though the emphasis on writing self-defined truths in the proem suggests a conceptual shift, the language Hecataeus uses to convey this message has little in common with the forensic opening to Herodotus’ work: Ἡροδότου Ἁλικαρνησέως ἱστορίας ἀπόδεξις ἦ δε.⁸² At least in this respect, Hecataeus’ style owes rather more to the epic poet, who likewise generates their authority through *mythos* and its cognates, than it does to the emphasis on *historiē* in Herodotus’ self-presentation.⁸³

Bearing in mind these subtle distinctions, certain passages in the *Histories* closely mirror this Hecataean technique of critiquing current-held beliefs amongst the Greeks, particularly in the most overtly ethnographic and anthropological sections of the text.⁸⁴ At the beginning of Book Two Herodotus argues that a story told about Psammetichus is one of many foolish Greek stories (Ἕλληνες δὲ λέγουσι ἄλλα τε μάταια πολλὰ, 2.2.5).⁸⁵ Further on in his Egyptian *logos* (2.44f.), Herodotus refers to various pieces of evidence (τεκμήρια)⁸⁶ which show that Heracles was in fact a very ancient Egyptian god who predates the Greek hero Heracles, son of Amphitryon (2.44.5). After concluding that Heracles was thus indeed of

⁸¹ Fowler (2001) 102. Hecataeus may be dissenting from other voices too, e.g. Naddaf (2005) 102ff. explores his familiarity with Anaximander’s Γῆς περίοδος and *pinax* or *map*, cf. DK 12.A.6-7 and the observations of Purves (2010) 108-12.

⁸² On Herodotus’ formal opening, see the thoughtful discussion in Asheri (2007) 7-8, who convincingly translates it to read: ‘This is the exposition of the enquiries made by Herodotus of Halicarnassus’, cf. also Erbse (1956) and Nagy (1987). For other introductions in ancient historiography, see Marincola (1997) 271-5, and (in prose works more broadly) Węcowski (2004) 151.

⁸³ So Fowler (2011) 54, for whom this is clear evidence that the ‘status of *mythoi* as such was not yet called into question at the end of the sixth century’; for Hecataeus’ Hesiodic style, see Jacoby (1956) 20f. In contrast to Hecataeus’ use of *μυθεῖται*, Herodotus insists on reporting a *logos* or *logoi* throughout his work; a further point of contact, then, with Sophistic figures such as Protagoras, see further Morgan (2000) 54-6, Fowler (2011) esp.60, and (more generally) Dihle (1962), Thomas (2006) 67ff., (2011) esp.239-42.

⁸⁴ Cf. Marincola (1987) 133. For further (potential) crossover in terms of content between Herodotus and Hecataeus, see Armayor (2004) *passim*, esp.330-2.

⁸⁵ Ἕλληνες δὲ λέγουσι ἄλλα τε μάταια πολλὰ. Lloyd II 8 f. argues that this story is likely to have derived from Hecataeus since he shows a clear interest in the earliest human generations (cf. *FGrHist* 1 F 13-16). For other potential allusions, cf. Munn (2006) 80, n.90, suggesting Hecataeus’ contemporary Hipponax; Fowler (2011) 47, noting Pherecydes of Athens as another possibility (*EGM* F 17).

⁸⁶ For the use of *τεκμήρια*, and other terms used for proof in Herodotus, see esp. Corcella (1984) 42f., Thomas (2000) ch.6, esp.181-2, 190-209.

Egyptian origin, Herodotus adds that ‘the Greeks say many other ill-considered things’ (λέγουσι δὲ πολλὰ καὶ ἄλλα ἀνεπισκέπτως οἱ Ἕλληνες, 2.45.1) in addition to this story of Heracles’ birth, before expanding on another Greek *mythos* about Heracles which he considers ‘simple’ (εὐήθης...ὁ μῦθος, 2.45.1). These passages bear a striking resemblance to the sentiment and syntactic architecture of Hecataeus’ proem—particularly in Herodotus’ emphasis on ‘many Greeks’—and clearly illustrate that, like Hecataeus, Herodotus saw his project as a record of his own δόξα. Referring to personal opinion thus necessitated a critical reading of those Greek traditions circulating in both written and spoken accounts, which in Herodotus’ context, undoubtedly included Hecataeus’ works.⁸⁷

Both authors’ ideas à propos the physical geography of Egypt sometimes converge as well. Near the beginning of Book Two, Herodotus discusses the formation of the country (2.5)—a topic specifically treated by Hecataeus (*FGrHist* 1 F 301).⁸⁸ Here he argues in favour of the Egyptian priests’ view (καὶ εἴ μοι ἐδόκεον λέγειν περὶ τῆς χώρας, 2.5.1)⁸⁹ that much of the land, which was a marsh during the time of Min (Egypt’s first ruler), was a δῶρον τοῦ ποταμοῦ (‘gift from the river’)—a memorable phrase found already in Hecataeus.⁹⁰ He also applies *opsis* to buffet this section of his account, however, as he notes that this ‘is clear to see (ὁ δὲ ντ), at least for someone with sense, even if they have not been told about it’ (2.5.1). Thus, by reducing the necessary perspicacity required on behalf of the researcher, this comment is clearly meant to undermine the originality of an important Hecataean argument.⁹¹ It is tempting to see this, then, as an opaque recognition of Hecataeus’ geographical investigations which is simultaneously used to lend an authoritative voice to Herodotus’ account and to destabilise Hecataeus’ critical acumen; all of which has the effect of bolstering the legitimacy of Herodotus’ own inquiries.

⁸⁷ Fehling is strikingly inconsistent on the point of Herodotus’ source-citations. He concludes that ‘there are no sources other than himself [Herodotus] for entire accounts, only for individual items of data’ (259), and yet, he earlier concedes that where Herodotus is using other sources[!], he expects the reader to know the original story since he ‘confines himself to adding supplementary remarks’ (249), thus implying that, on more than one occasion, he does not just rely on others’ accounts merely for individual items of data. For a more extended critique of Fehling’s by no means simplistic, but nonetheless de-contextualised Herodotus, see esp. Cobet (1974); cf. also Dewald and Marincola (1987) 26-32, Hornblower (1987) 17ff., Pritchett (1993) *passim*, esp.10-143, and Fowler (1996) 80ff. (with further bibliography at n.125).

⁸⁸ Note the interest in sedimentation amongst other geographers such as Xanthus (*FGrHist* 765 F13). For Xanthus, an author whom according to Ephorus (but preserved by Athenaeus) gave Herodotus his ἄφορμαί (‘starting point’, *FGrHist* 70 F 180), and his *Lydiaka*, see further Pearson (1939) 109-37, and (on his relationship with Herodotus) Fowler (1996) 64.

⁸⁹ Herodotus often uses words such as δοκέω when presenting a γνώμη such as this, cf. Lloyd I 86f.

⁹⁰ An unmodified, and unacknowledged, reference from Hecataeus’ text, see Lloyd (2007) 246.

⁹¹ Groten (1963) 81, n.2.

Moreover, while no reference is made to him, Hecataeus appears to be the original voice behind a number of other, ethnographical passages.⁹² For instance, Herodotus most likely drew on Hecataeus' descriptions of the crocodile, hippopotamus and the phoenix (cf. *FGrHist* 1 F 324), although it is less clear as to how much of these passages are merely, as Porphyry claims (*FGrHist* 1 T 22), a near re-duplication of what Hecataeus had said. At 2.77.4, Herodotus mentions the Egyptians' consumption of *cyllestes*, loaves made from emmer, and wine made from barley (κριθέων), both items also recorded by Hecataeus (*FGrHist* 1 FF 322-3). Much later in Book Two, after he has signalled his use of non-Egyptian sources for the remainder of his Egyptian *logos* (2.147.1), Herodotus includes a particularly remarkable passage concerning the so-called floating island of Chemmis (2.156), which, he tells us, lies in a deep and wide lake near the temple at Buto. Though he claims that it was the Egyptians who circulated this story (but note that he does not claim to have spoken to them on this topic himself), one cannot fail to recognise the almost-identical (albeit less sceptical) version of this story in Hecataeus (*FGrHist* 1 F 305). The likelihood that Hecataeus is his source of information here is certainly enhanced when one considers Herodotus' subsequent remarks: αὐτὸς μὲν ἔγωγε οὐ τε πλέουσιν οὐ τε κινηθεῖσαν εἶδον, τέθηπα δὲ ἀκούων εἰ νῆσος ἀληθέως ἐστὶ πλωτή (2.156.2). *Opsis*, a characteristic feature of Herodotean *historiē*, is being used to undermine the marvellous stories told by his predecessor. This complex admixture of dependence, silent correction and (explicit and implicit) polemic in these passages, as we have seen, is *the* distinctive tenor of Herodotus' relationship with Hecataeus. As Nenci remarks fittingly in his commentary on Book Five: '[Erodoto] a lui attinge spesso senza citarlo, com'era prassi nella storiografica antica, e citandolo soltanto quando è in aperta polemica con le sue posizioni'.⁹³

Much scholarly ink has been spilt in dealing with those passages in which Herodotus makes a statement such as “the Scythians say” or “the Persians say”, i.e. whether these authorial comments are best read as literal source-citations or indications of knowledge particular to a place or people.⁹⁴ This is certainly not the place for a full exposition on this complex issue;⁹⁵ however, let us consider just one of those passages in which Herodotus tells us that his information is derived from what “the Ionians say”. The passage in question is an extended

⁹² *FGrHist* 1 FF322-3, 328, 334-5, 358. In spite of the caveats of Lloyd I 131, noting that Herodotus probably gained his ethnographical information from his own travels, this is no reason to suppose that he did not compare his own researches against those of his predecessor.

⁹³ Nenci I ad.36.6.

⁹⁴ Cf. Boedeker (2012) 29ff., who sensibly remarks on Herodotus' use of this trope: '[it] allows the historian to foreground his own 'objective' interest in reporting the past and what people say about it, coupled with an awareness that his information is often unreliable [cf.7.152.3]' (30).

⁹⁵ See Luraghi (2001b) for a fine discussion with further bibliography.

polemic directed against current Ionian views on Egyptian geography (2.15-18).⁹⁶ Amongst his criticisms, Herodotus rebukes the popular view that the Nile was ἔπτά στομοῦς (cf. Ps. Scyl., 1.c), instead regarding it as πεντὰ στομοῦς (2.17.6). Two chapters previous to this, he mocks the Ionian view that Egypt only consists of the Delta (2.15), a view which Jacoby showed to be held by Hecataeus.⁹⁷ So we can see that while he generically refers to the Ionians in this part of his *logos*, it is obvious that Herodotus is expressly referring to those with authoritative views on Ionian geography, and very likely, the work of Hecataeus himself. To us this might all appear convoluted, but to Herodotus' audience, presenting one's sources as things that "speak" was probably less surprising.⁹⁸ As Giangiulio puts it in his case study on Cyrenean history, 'I would surmise that Herodotus is giving a sort of summary reference, succinctly conveying his conception of the nature and the fundamental origin of the information he had at his disposal'.⁹⁹

Outside of Herodotus' Egyptian *logos*, there are additional opaque instances, which could possibly illustrate further Herodotean engagement with, or polemic specifically directed against Hecataeus. In his Scythian *logos*, Herodotus specifically designates the Melanchlainoi as a non-Scythian tribe, whereas Hecataeus had earlier called them a Scythian tribe (*FGrHist* 1 F185).¹⁰⁰ Near the end of Book Four, he offers a collection of notes about the outer regions of the known world, but states that he has no definite information on western Europe (ἔγω μὲν οὐκ ἴσμεν ὡς λέγεται),¹⁰¹ and that he has 'not been able to find anyone who has first-hand information (οὐ τὸ πτεῶν) about whether there is a sea beyond Europe' (4.115.1-2).¹⁰² Though disappointing in scope, there are in fact a number of Hecataean fragments which refer to cities and tribes in Spain and on the Riviera; for example, one fragment cites 'Calathe, a city not far from the pillars of Heracles.'¹⁰³ The fact that Herodotus makes no reference to these various names and peoples, and that he rejects the quality of all the circulating information regarding the west of Europe, is a strong

⁹⁶ Cf. Lloyd II 78-91.

⁹⁷ Jacoby (1912) 2678ff, cf. Lloyd I 129ff.

⁹⁸ Evans (1982a) convincingly notes that even if Hecataeus is at the heart of Herodotus polemic in this section, 'Hecataeus' geographical notions, like his map, belonged to a school of Ionian *savants*' and as such 'Herodotus was strictly accurate when he wrote "the Ionians say"' (146); see also Macan II lxxi-ii; cf. Hedrick Jr. (1993) 22 for a useful list of passages in which written things speak.

⁹⁹ Giangiulio (2001) 137.

¹⁰⁰ Read as a polemic against Hecataeus by, e.g., Pearson (1939) 93-4, cf. Corcella ad.553-4, with further discussion and examples.

¹⁰¹ He *is* aware of a story about the Eridanus River which flows into the northern sea, but is highly sceptical of its existence and (rightly) rejects the name Eridanus as a Greek invention, see Asheri (2007) 503, who notes that ἤρι ('early in the morning') is an epic adverb, found in a number of composite names. For earlier traditions, see: Hesiod *Theog.* 338; Pherecydes (*FGrHist* 3 F 74).

¹⁰² Cf. 2.29.1; 4.16.1. On Herodotus and autopsy see Schepens (1980) 33-93; cf. also Marincola (1997) 101 n.190, arguing that historians more broadly avoid using autopsy, unless they are claiming to improve on their predecessors' contributions. I am not wholly convinced by this.

¹⁰³ *FGrHist* 1 F 39, see also FF38, 45-9.

indication that, as Pearson has noted, he does not want ‘his readers to be misled by the dogmatic manner of Hecataeus.’¹⁰⁴ Yet again, were we to be without these few tantalising excerpts on western Europe, suggesting that Hecataeus is one of the intended recipients of Herodotus’ polemic in this section would be untenable.

While these cases do not help to establish many of Herodotus’ possible sources of information, they do clearly illustrate a thoroughly un-modern way of citing sources; indeed, to a modern researcher, these Hecataean allusions are nothing less than an unacknowledged use of another author’s work. Given the role played by chance that these few fragments should have survived (particularly since so much of Hecataeus’ written output is now lost), it would be naïve to assume that they present a complete picture of Hecataeus’ influence on Herodotus’ work.¹⁰⁵

2.5 The Limits of Cartography

Having considered both explicit and implicit allusions to Hecataeus and prose traditions, let us finish this chapter by considering two other episodes which raise further questions vis-à-vis Herodotus’ relationship with sixth- and fifth-century geographic discourse. The aforementioned passage in which Herodotus elaborates on the formation of Egypt (2.5) provided just one instance amongst many in the *Histories* in which Herodotus refers to his own autopsy, or others’ first-hand knowledge, in order to reject standard Greek views.¹⁰⁶ Perhaps the most well-known of these is his contemptuous rejection of those map makers who attempt to show that a) the ocean flows round a spherical earth, and b) that Asia and Europe are of equal size (4.36f.):

γελῶ δὲ ὁ ρέων γῆς περιόδους γράψαντας πολλοὺς ἤδη καὶ οὐδένα νοονεχόντως ἐξηγησάμενον: οἱ Ἰκεανόν τε ῥέοντα γράφουσι πέριξ τῆν γῆν ἐοῖσαν κυκλοτερέα ὡς ἀπὸ τόρνου, καὶ τῆν Ἀσίην τῆ Εὐρώπῃ ποιούντων ἴσην. ἐν

¹⁰⁴ Pearson (1939) 34.

¹⁰⁵ The ancient tract by Pollio entitled *On the Thefts of Herodotus* almost certainly accused Herodotus of stealing whole *logoi* from Hecataeus.

¹⁰⁶ Book Three offers a particularly splendid example in which this is inverted; it is precisely the lack of sight that is the root cause of ignorance. Phaidymiē (‘Shiny’), the daughter of the Persian nobleman Otanes and one of the members of the false Smerdis’ harem, when quizzed by her father about the true identity of the man who lies at her side in bed, responds meekly: οὐτε γάρ τὸν Κύρου Σμέρδιν ἰδέσθαι οὐδαμᾶ οὐτε ὅστις εἴη ὁ συνοικέων αὐτῆ εἰδέναι (3.68.4). Hence Herodotus shows that the false Smerdis, who we are told neither descends from the acropolis nor summons a Persian nobleman into his sight (3.68.2), is acutely aware of the need to inhibit sight in order to maintain his bogus rule, thus reinforcing the primacy of *opsis* as a way of acquiring knowledge in Herodotus. For good discussions, see Demont (2009) 193-5, focusing on the double verification of both Otanes’ and Herodotus’ inquiry here, and Purves (forthcoming), whose analysis is part of a larger inquiry into interior scenes in Herodotus.

ὁ λίγοισι γὰρ ἔγω δήλωσω μέγαθός τε ἔκαστης αὐτέων καὶ οἷη τις ἔστι ἔς γραφῆν ἔκαστη.

I laugh when I see the many men who have drawn maps of the earth up until now, not one of whom has described it sensibly. They draw the river Ocean flowing around a circular earth, as if by a compass,¹⁰⁷ and they make Asia and Europe equal in size. For I will show in a few words the proportions of each of them, and how each should be outlined. (4.36.2).

This scathing attack on schematic depictions of the earth clearly evokes the opening to Hecataeus' *Γενεαλογία* discussed above, with Herodotus similarly referencing his own laughter (*γελάω*) and the many senseless Greek theories (*γράψαντας πολλοῦς...οὐδένα νοοεχόντως*),¹⁰⁸ as well as his transition away from others' views towards his own (*γὰρ ἔγω δήλωσω*).¹⁰⁹ And indeed, the fragments further strengthen our reading of a pointed allusion to Hecataeus, since they indicate that he depicted a circumambient Ocean on his own map (*FGrHist* 1 F 18, 36, 302).¹¹⁰

Of course, we hardly need reminding that Hecataeus was not the only figure concerned with depicting the earth. In a much-cited testimonium (DK 12.A.6), Agathemerus, following Eratosthenes, records that:

Anaximander the Milesian, pupil of Thales, first dared to draw (*γράψαι*) the inhabited world on a writing tablet (*πίνακι*). After him, the Milesian Hecataeus, a much-

¹⁰⁷ On Herodotus' criticism of the reliance on mathematical instruments, see the salutary discussion in Purves (2010) 111-12, who well goes on to show the different complexions of the verb *graphein* in this passage, used negatively to denote map-makers' drawings, and then positively in order to describe Herodotus' own superior verbal exposition (*δήλωσω... ἔς γραφῆν*) (128).

¹⁰⁸ An expression that recalls Heraclitus' critique of Hecataeus, that is, his lack of *νόος*, see above p.21. Cf. also Herodotus' description of Xerxes' attempts to obscure the true number of Persian dead after Thermopylae as *γελοῖον*.

¹⁰⁹ Boedeker (2000) 107, Rösler (2002) 88-9.

¹¹⁰ So Jacoby (1912) 2702-7, Jacob (2006) 130f., (more broadly) Corcella ad.36-45; *contra*, though not entirely ruling out Hecataeus, Thomas (2000) 78-9, 215-6, who appears to miss the linguistic intertexts between the two writers. Anaximander of Miletus, the first map-maker according to Eratosthenes (as preserved by Agathemerus and Strabo), also produced a circular image of the earth (DK 13 A10, B5); see further Naddaf (2002) 32f., (and for its relationship with other works by Anaximander) Purves (2010) 109, n.35. Pearson (1939) even suggests that this was the very *πίναξ* that Aristagoras used to try and gain the support of king Cleomenes in the Ionian Revolt (28), Armayor (2004) 324f. suggests Hecataeus' corrected version. For an excellent discussion on Anaximander and early Greek cartography, see now Purves (2010) 97-117, cf. Munn (2006) 184-8.

travelled man, *corrected it* (ἀ νή ρ πολυπλανή ς διηκρί βωσεν); and hence the object was to be marvelled at (θαυμασθῆ ναι).¹¹¹

Whether Hecataeus simply criticised or modified this map is not entirely clear, but his objection to Anaximander's version shows that Herodotus' polemical persona is a fairly widespread technique used in intellectual discourse during the fifth century; he was part of a rich tradition in which people were refining their practices, and trying to outdo the achievements of their predecessors, so as to elicit their own *thōma*.¹¹² Agathemerus' developmental sketch thus reinforces the obvious point that Hecataeus did not exist in a vacuum and that others were no doubt lying behind Herodotus' mordant excursus.¹¹³ Indeed Munn even comments on how Anaximander's thought, characterised by 'geometric simplicity and cosmogonic oppositions', betrays the kind of schematic viewpoint that Herodotus is at pains to correct.¹¹⁴ But while it is prudent to map out the wider circle of figures that were propounding such ideas about the earth, Herodotus' sardonic riff on Hecataeus' famous proem indubitably sensitises his audience to the disparities between his own historical project and other, two-dimensional cartographic works, best exemplified by his Ionian predecessor. Such a contrast implicitly suggests that Herodotus has replaced Hecataeus, the latter now reduced to one of the impotent, 'many Greeks' that he himself originally disparaged.

Just a few chapters later, Herodotus reiterates his surprise at others' methods of mapping Libya, Asia, and Europe (θωμάζω ὧν τῶν διουρισάντων καὶ διελόντων Λιβύην τε καὶ Ἀσίην καὶ Εὐρώπην, 4.42.1),¹¹⁵ since the differences in size between these continents are considerable. He then proceeds with his own description of the three continents' varying proportions. Libya, he writes, is surrounded by the sea, other than where it borders Asia. Rather than produce a cartographic or mathematical description to support his argument, he

¹¹¹ For a conjectural reconstruction of Anaximander's and Hecataeus' maps, see Munn (2006) 187, 215 respectively.

¹¹² On Herodotus' mode of argument and polemic, and its resonances in contemporary philosophical and medical writers, see Thomas (2000) 213-21. Whilst Thomas clearly illustrates the importance of these works on his project, we might well question her central proposition that Herodotus is especially polemical when espousing controversial ideas (esp. 217f.).

¹¹³ To these we may add Damastes of Sigeum, though note that Agathemerus' testimonium which specifically records (*FGrHist* 5 T 4): 'Δαμάστες ὁ Σιγείεϋς τὰ πλείστα ἐκ τῶν Ἡκαταίου μεταγράψας Περὶ πλουῦν ἔγραψεν. One might question from this whether Herodotus believed that other thinkers had even improved on Hecataeus' work.

¹¹⁴ Munn (2006) 186. Cf. Jacob (2006) 130f., who reads this is a clear marker of an evolution in Greek rationality, since Herodotus subscribes to 'methodical research that forbids inventing a line for unknown shores' (p.131).

¹¹⁵ Note the change from 36.2, with the addition of Libya as a third continent—a view popular in Herodotus' time (cf. 2.16). Thomas (2000) 80-6 focuses primarily on the influence that the contemporary *nomos-physis* antithesis exerts on Herodotus' account of the different continents.

refers to a story about the Egyptian king Neco who was ostensibly the first to discover this (πρώτου τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν καταδέξαντος, 4.42.2), precisely because he had sent out a Phoenician sailing crew that circumnavigated all of the southern sea before returning to Egypt (4.42.3-4).¹¹⁶ From here he describes a failed circumnavigation of Libya by Sataspes the Achaemenian; Darius' discoveries concerning Asian geography, having sent out an expeditionary force led by Scylax; and finally the widespread *aporia* regarding both the specific geography of Europe and the etymology of the three continents' names (4.43-5).¹¹⁷ Concluding this lengthy excursus, he remarks piously, ταῦτα μὲν νῦν ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον εἰρήσθω: τοῖσι γὰρ νομιζομένοισι αὐτῶν χρησόμεθα (4.45.5).

The combined force of this episode is not to be underestimated. Herodotus swiftly demonstrates how overly stereographic, symmetrical thinking is not part of the historian's *ordre du jour*—even if we might detect such modes of thinking elsewhere in his *Histories* (such as when the Egyptians are imagined as the polar opposite of the rest of mankind, 2.35-6).¹¹⁸ His rather more cumbersome description of the continents, reliant on information gained from those with direct experience (such as the Phoenician sailing crew [4.42.2] and Scylax of Karyanda [4.44.2])¹¹⁹—an approach which in turn limits what he is able to say about the under-explored continent Europe (ἡ δὲ Εὐρώπη πρὸς οὐδαμῶν φανερὴ ἐστὶ γνωσκομένη, 4.45.1]) reaffirms the limitations of cartographic evidence, and the importance of providing the reader a panoptical, multi-subjective account that does not misrepresent the miasma induced by *historiē*.¹²⁰ In this sense, Branscome is wrong to argue that Herodotus is merely criticising contemporary map-maker's attempts to depict the earth, rather than rejecting maps *tout court*;¹²¹ his altogether different approach to geography sheds a fundamental theoretical opposition to maps, which falsely reduce the complexity of the world to the blink of an eye.¹²²

¹¹⁶ Throughout this excursus Herodotus gives reports that describe various aspects of the journeys people took in order to theorise about geography; Purves (2010) (esp.144-58) well characterises this as a more 'hodological' approach to geography.

¹¹⁷ For 'correct naming' in the latter half of the fifth century, see Thomas (2000) 84-5, 230.

¹¹⁸ On 'Herodotus' taste for symmetry', see Redfield (1985) 103-5, and *passim*, Hartog (1988).

¹¹⁹ Potentially an indication that Herodotus knew Scylax's (mostly lost) report of his voyage undertaken for Darius; cf. *FGrHist* 709 F1-7.

¹²⁰ Similarly, Meier (1987) 44. Corcella 555 has also shown that Herodotus' description of Olbia, which seems to be at least partially constructed from Olbian sources (cf. 4.18.1; 24; 78.3), is on the whole fairly accurate; and as such, Corcella argues, it is likely that he went there in order to gain first-hand experience in order to confirm and contradict those Greek sources—Hecataeus and Aristaeus of Proconnesus included—which described the outer regions of the *oikoumenē*. On the poet Aristaeus and his *Arimaspea*, an important source for a considerable portion of Herodotus' Scythian logos, see further Corcella 548ff., West (2004a), Marincola (2007) 65-6.

¹²¹ Branscome (2010) 9.

¹²² See rather the excellent discussion in Purves (2010) esp.145ff.

This extended polemic against map-makers must necessarily be read in conjunction with another cartographic scene (5.49-51): Herodotus' (in)famous depiction of Aristagoras' (failed) attempt to inveigle Sparta into supporting the Ionians, so that they might march against the Persians in order to liberate themselves from slavery (ῥ' ὑσασθε...ἔ κ δουλοσύνης, 5.49.3),¹²³ carrying a 'map of the earth' (γῆς περί οδος, 5.49.1) to aid his plight.¹²⁴ Following some initial, grave invocations, Aristagoras employs powerful rhetoric, stating the Persians would be easy to defeat (εὐπετέως, εὐπετέεσ, 5.49.3-4)¹²⁵, before showing how the Asians all live next to one another, deictically showing various places on his map (πίνακι),¹²⁶ thus minimising the geographical distance between Sparta and Susa. He finishes by reiterating that the Spartans would 'easily (εὐπετέως) assume the rule of all of Asia' (5.49.8). However, as Purves notes, Cleomenes' subsequent decision to ponder Aristagoras' appeals and give an answer in two days' time limits the 'spellbinding ability [of the map] to stop narrative time'.¹²⁷ The effects of this rupture are clearly felt when, after making a 'false step' by revealing the truth (τὸ ἔόν) in their subsequent meeting, observing that the journey from the Ionian shore to Susa would take three months, Aristagoras is swiftly despatched by the Spartan king (5.50.2-3). Still not dissuaded, Aristagoras makes one last indecorous attempt by means of monetary persuasion, attempting to bribe Cleomones with a sum of 50 Talents, but once again failing after Cleomones' daughter shrewdly compels her father to part company with the Milesian (5.51). And so it transpires that Aristagoras' map, like the *logopoiος* Hecataeus' ethnographic advice at 5.36, fails to persuade his interlocutors.

But just as Herodotus provides his own exegesis on existing knowledge concerning the continents in Book Four, similarly, he proceeds here with his own elaborate description (ἔχει γὰρ ἀμφὶ τῆ ὁδῶ ταύτῃ ὧδε, 5.52.1) of the journey that Aristagoras had almost entirely erased by the use of his map. His account provides much more thorough information

¹²³ For this episode I have found the following especially valuable: Munson (2001) 209, Harrison (2007) 44-5, Pelling (2007a), Branscome (2010), Purves (2010) 118-58, esp.132-40; cf. Hollmann (2011) 214, and the useful summary in Dewald (1998) 671-2.

¹²⁴ Cf. the similar mockery of the γῆς περίοδος (v.206) in Aristoph. *Nu.* 206-17.

¹²⁵ Bettalli (2005) 235: 'Aristagora...non manca di sottolineare la debolezza militare della fanteria persiani'. See also the remarkably similar scene at 9.90.2-3, where Hegesistratus ('army-leading'), son of Aristagoras ('best-speaker', but *probably* not the one in Book Five, cf. Pelling [2007] 182, n.12), (successfully) persuades the Spartan king Leutychidas to join the Greek alliance before Mycale, arguing that the sight of the Greek fleet would rouse the Ionians into rebellion against the Persians, so that they would easily (εὐπετέως) quash any Persian attack. For the sophisticated narrative patternation here, see further Pelling (2007a) 182, (2011) 13. For a wider, though not exhaustive, investigation into names which convey a negative, positive, or ironical meaning for the referent in Herodotus, see Hollmann (2011) pp.143-62, rightly tracing onomastic wordplay as far back as Homer (144, n.227), cf. the general remarks in Thomas (2000) 83.

¹²⁶ See Purves (2010) 135f. on this scene as an ekphrasis.

¹²⁷ Purves (2010) 136.

concerning important junctures on the Royal Road,¹²⁸ listing the distance travelled in each stage, as well as a number of remarkable topographical and geographical features *en route* (5.52-4),¹²⁹ so that, yet again, the direct experience of the traveller emerges as a more trustworthy source than the deceptive map. Indeed, after describing the Royal Road, he remarks that Aristagoras had spoken correctly (ὁρθῶς) in giving a time of three months for the journey, but immediately undermines this by adding that for those wishing for more specific calculations, ἔγωγε καὶ τοῦτο σημαίνω (5.54.1).¹³⁰ And so he ends his account resoundingly: ‘I say’ (λέγω) that the total distance of the journey is 14,040 furlongs, adding three days onto Aristagoras’ (imprecise) figure (καὶ οὐ τῶ τρισὶ ἡμέρησι μήκυνεται ἡ τρίμηνος ὁ δόξ, 5.54.2). Hence Herodotus’ more accurate version serves to replace that of his rival, an implicit indication also that his own textualised account is superior to the oral account offered by Aristagoras.¹³¹

To review: Herodotus’ polemic against map-makers in these two passages is another way in which the historian demarcates the boundaries of his own literary activity. Whilst his description of the continents betrays a more piquant criticism of maps *qua* maps than does his report of Aristagoras’ failure to persuade the Spartans (although the latter passage’s emphasis on the manipulation of maps certainly suggests their limitations as speechless evidence), both combined represent a much more profound fissure than Branscome’s view that ‘[in these passages] map-makers are in a sense Herodotus’ rivals as investigators in the field of geography’ would suggest.¹³² The virtuoso critique on display surely implies a much less collegial attitude; for Herodotean *historiē* renders such prose works unsuitable for serious geographical exegesis, and entirely incompatible with his own contribution to ‘the vast field of memory’.¹³³

2.6 Herodotus *Historiē*

This chapter began by noting the lack of transparent references to prose writers in Herodotus’ finished work—a point that clearly diminishes in force, however, once Herodotus’ more nuanced relationship with prose traditions begins to unravel. In the earlier books especially, we have uncovered numerous points of contact between Herodotean research and prose writing in terms of intellectual interests. The multitude of passages in

¹²⁸ For possible Persian sources behind Herodotus’ account, see e.g. Lewis (1985) 116-7, Moggi (2005) 204-5. For similar emphasis on itineraries elsewhere in the *Historiēs*, see Harrison (2007) 45f.

¹²⁹ Purves (2010) 144-5. Branscome (2010) 14f. focuses on the disjunction between the personal agenda of Aristagoras and the impersonal inquiries of Herodotus, cf. Harrison (forthcoming) 22.

¹³⁰ On Herodotus’ use of ἔγωγε as an indication that it is now he who speaks, see de Jong (1999) 228; cf. Branscome (2010) 33-4 on the egocentrism of this passage.

¹³¹ Branscome (2010) 29.

¹³² Branscome (2010) 9.

¹³³ Grethlein (2010) 149.

which the inquiries of Hecataeus, and a host other early Greek thinkers, are either demonstrably, or very likely, dovetailing with Herodotus' own investigations ultimately militates against any under-qualified notion that Herodotus was, at least for the most part, an "oral" historian working with primarily oral traditions.¹³⁴ In fact, the slight references to prose writers or their works in the *Histories* itself obscures what is clearly a highly nuanced appreciation of earlier prose researches in areas, including, but not limited to, ethnography, philosophy, geography, and the past.

The cross-pollination of others' methodologies in Herodotus' work, such as the primacy of *logos*; the rejection of foolish stories; the need to establish a persuasive authorial persona; and the consideration of the new—the last of these so well illustrated in the famous fragment of Hippias of Elis which heads this chapter, further demonstrates the connectedness between Herodotus and earlier/contemporary researchers. So while the fragmentary remains of many of the authors surveyed clearly limits our ability to locate all the places in which an earlier thinker's ideas forms the basis of Herodotus' knowledge, the complex interplay with other genres and ideas that we find in his work throws into sharp relief the inadequacy of impressionistic interpretations that read his seemingly inconsistent approach to citation as a mendacious attempt at deceiving his audience.¹³⁵

Thinking about Hecataeus, arguably his most significant prose predecessor, while our investigation has unearthed a much more thorough awareness of Hecataeus' researches than the paltry citations to the pre-eminent intellectual would suggest, the knowledgeable reader is clearly led to see that Herodotus' (often oppositional) inquiries include a wide range of topics, a substratum of these by Hecataeus. Herodotus is not attempting to conceal his reliance on Hecataeus, but rather to bolster his own intellectual credentials, since the reader is assumed to understand what is clearly authoritative evidence.¹³⁶ Nevertheless, as Candaules reminds Gyges at the outset of the *Histories* (1.8.2), autopsy is the best way to establish the truth—a methodological principle which re-surfaces elsewhere in Herodotus' work. So even where Herodotus is seemingly reliant on Hecataeus, he will often include some piece of first-hand knowledge, not to obscure the provenance of his information, but rather to extend his own critical acumen. His use of Hecataeus therefore fits into a more general pattern which is constant throughout the *Histories*, namely: Herodotus, who does not

¹³⁴ So Clarke (1999) 62: 'we should not be surprised to find accounts of Herodotus' debt to Hecataeus...the ground seems to have been cleared for [Herodotus] by his predecessor'.

¹³⁵ So Fehling (1989).

¹³⁶ Luraghi (2001b) esp.146-50 makes a number of pertinent remarks concerning Herodotus' audience, noting that a group or community do not literally "speak" in the *Histories*, Herodotus merely represents local knowledge in a way that his audience would have been familiar with.

automatically prioritise a written document *per se*,¹³⁷ will always appeal to the most knowledgeable source where possible (cf. 2.77.1); and here it has been shown how such a critical pose in fact led him to rely on a disparate array of both written and spoken sources.

Thus we are reminded of Bellow's aperçu on the prevalence of ideas in human society. Herodotus' work is littered with thoughts and ideas that, far from emerging in a vacuum, are closely linked—though, importantly, not identical—with a broad range of individuals and their own attempts at understanding the world. The polemical spirit underlying many of Herodotus' allusions towards such figures (a spirit that will reverberate throughout this study), is one of the chief ways in which Herodotus the historian asserts the authority of his new genre, delineating more clearly for the reader the contours and uniqueness of his own historiographical enterprise. This is not to say that Herodotus rejects *toto caelo* his prose predecessors' ideas and their methods; his procedure is an altogether subtler one. For what makes Herodotus' project so distinctively Herodotean is his self-conscious engagement with the problems of evidence and the need to apply criteria of truth to all that he reports.¹³⁸ Such a critical spirit is manifestly present in the myriad works that were potentially at his disposal, yet none of them appear to have developed this into the form of inquiry which Herodotean *historiē* encapsulates.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Luraghi (2001b) 153; Connor (1993) 22-3.

¹³⁸ Compare Fowler (2006) 38.

¹³⁹ For Herodotean *historiē* and its affinity to scientific forms of 'inquiry' in the fifth and early fourth century, see further discussion in Lloyd I 82-4, and Thomas (2000) esp.161-7, 262-74, who reminds the reader that *historiē* is first found in Herodotus and hence, that the concept of early Ionian *historiē* is a modern one (167); *pace* Fowler (1996) 80: 'he brought the old science of ἰστορίη, critical inquiry, up to date...and applied ἰστορίη itself to new subjects.' In contrast, other scholars have insisted rather on the importance of the archaic (especially Homeric) *histōr* ('arbitrator') vis-à-vis Herodotus' conception of his work, e.g. Darbo-Peschanski (1987) esp.137-53, Lateiner (1989) 84, Connor (1993), Nagy (1987), (1990) 250-62, 318-22, Munson (2001) 217-31, cf. Dewald (2002), who investigates the *histōr* as the critical voice in Herodotus' text, without necessarily connecting this to a Homeric precedent. Bakker (2002) esp.13-19, 29-32, whose analysis I find most persuasive, similarly avoids the scientific overtones of the term, and focuses on how, for Herodotus, *historiē* revolves around the presentation of conflict and difference. For the transition from *historiē* to history, see Hornblower (1987) 8-12, Fowler (2006) 33, and a number of elegant observations in Hartog (2000), who rightly broadens the debate in order to show that 'Herodotus *historei* but he also *semanei*' (395)—a point that brings Herodotus' work closer to the Oracle who also *semanei* (e.g. DK 22.A.93) and by extension, to the authority of oracular knowledge (see below ch.7 *passim*).

Chapter 3

The Inscribed Landscape

Φοί νικες δ' εὔρον γράμματ' ἀλεξίλογα.

— Kritias¹

With inscribed objects, it is sufficient for Herodotus that they have been cited to prove a case, he does not consider whether or not the proof is good. Nor does Herodotus scrutinize inscriptions in order to deduce from them the events of the past; if there is no story attached by his informants to an inscribed object there is no sign that Herodotus will be interested in it.

— Robin Osborne²

3.1 The Epigraphic Habit

Documentary evidence is of great value to the historian, sometimes allowing them to uncover instances of rhetoric or invention in the literary record; however, they must then balance this with the knowledge that even the most sober of documents might be inaccurate or serve its own rhetorical purposes.³ In a passage that reveals a great deal concerning his methodology, Plutarch alludes to this paradox:

τοὺς μὲν οὖν χρόνους ἐξακριβῶσαι χαλεπὸν ἔστι, καὶ μάλιστα τοὺς ἐκ τῶν Ὀλυμπιονικῶν ἀναγομένους, ὧν τὴν ἀναγραφὴν ὀψέφασιν Ἰππίαν ἐκδοῦναι τὸν Ἡλεῖον, ἀπ' οὗ δὲνὸς ὁρμώμενον ἀναγκαίου πρὸς πίστιν. (Plut. *Num.* 1.4).⁴

So according to Plutarch, interpreting more ancient periods is an especially difficult process due to the chronological inaccuracies of certain lists, and the unreliable accounts of earlier researchers like Hippias of Elis. While there is no comparable discussion of evidence in Herodotus, such concerns can be detected, as we shall see, in Herodotus' use of inscriptions—albeit in a more embryonic form than Plutarch's explicit observations.

¹ DK 88 B.2.10.

² (2002) 512, cf. Thomas (1989) 90.

³ Cf. Luraghi (2001a) 9.

⁴ For this passage and Plutarch's generally limited application of first-hand research, reliant rather on earlier sources, see Higbie (1999) 43-6. Of course, Plutarch famously uses epigrams to criticise what he considers an unfair treatment of the Corinthians in Herodotus, see *De mal. Herod.* 39, 42; cf. further discussion at §5.5 below.

The origin of epigraphy is a topic which continues to provoke scholarly debate.⁵ In a recent article, Frances Pownall has argued that, contrary to the prevailing view that Aristotle was the first to recognise the value of inscriptions as historical documents, Theopompos of Chios had already identified this potential in his critical analysis of inscribed, Athenian imperial records.⁶ One of the principle purposes of this chapter will be to show that Herodotus foreshadows the kind of sophisticated epigraphic methodologies employed by later writers such as Theopompos and Aristotle, even though he cannot be held to have followed this through with the same consistency or comprehensiveness (his interest in epigraphic materials being more diverse).⁷

The contexts in which one might have encountered publicly displayed inscriptions in the ancient Greek world were manifold, and the range of inscribed records is no less impressive. Indeed, the significant—albeit largely incognito—influence of Herodotus’ prose predecessors’ works on his text, stands in rather stark contrast to the much more open, and fairly substantial, discourse he develops in relation to the numerous, inscribed monuments, dedications and other physical materials throughout the *Histories*.⁸ Such objects, which were increasingly littered throughout the Greek- and non-Greek world in the fifth century BCE, play a memorable role in Herodotus’ account of how the Greeks and non-Greeks came to war with one another. These written records represent another valuable evidential source for the itinerant historian; indeed, just as I shall explore in following the chapter, the way in which the historian studiously consults the text of Homer in order to aid and support his attempt at establishing the truth about Helen and the Trojan War (§4.3 below), similarly here I investigate how Herodotus seeks, and then incorporates inscriptional evidence into his text, so as to validate further a range of *logoi*—some recent, others more remote—that he feels compelled to (re)present to his audience.

⁵ For a general survey of the Greek historians and their (infrequent) use of inscriptions, see: Finley (1983) esp.205-8, Marincola (1997) 103-5, Higbie (1999) 54-65, and Sickinger (1999) 176-82, Petrovic (2007a) 49-57. On other literary evidence suggesting expectation of some epigraphic literacy by the fifth century BCE, see Day (2010) 59-63.

⁶ Pownall (2008) 119-28; for the standard view that Aristotle is the first to use inscriptions for historical argument, see Thomas (1989) 90-1, Higbie (1999) *passim*, esp.65-78.

⁷ Two of the Theopompan fragments point towards a comparative critique of inscriptions, suggesting a somewhat familiar relationship with public documents in his work, see Pownall (2008) 121-2.

⁸ For Herodotus’ use of inscriptions see principally Volkmann (1954); West (1985), (1992); Pritchett (1985) 163-76, (1993) 144-91; Fehling (1989) 146-56; Fabiani (2003); cf. also Raubitschek (1961); Dillery (1992); Higbie (1999) 56-9; Osborne (2002) 510-3; Petrovic (2007a) 50-3, 55-7; de Bakker (2007) 44-5, 59-60, 66; Livingstone and Nisbet (2010) 30-9, 46-7. For possible knowledge of Persian inscriptions in Herodotus (particularly—though by no means exclusively—at 3.89-97, 5.52-3, 7.61-98), see Tozzi (1975), Lewis (1985) 116-17, Evans (1991) 140, Moggi (2005) 203-4, Flower (2006) 277, and now esp. Harrison (forthcoming) *passim*; (more sceptically) Murray (2001) 36 and West (2007), (2011). The use of inscriptions is also part and parcel of a much wider appeal to monuments and other objects in Herodotus, see further Dewald (1993), cf. Hedrick Jnr. (1993), (2002) 22-3.

Herodotus' inclusion of inscribed items, including pyramids, tombs, engraved *agal mata*, votives, and a range of other memorials, provides a clear illustration of the diverse epigraphic practices we have been discussing above.⁹ In addition, Herodotus is unusual amongst the Greek historians for his inclusion of various epigrams. Indeed the citation of epigrams, alongside other epigraphic materials, notably votive offerings and monuments, is a surprisingly recurrent practice in Herodotus' work; and this is not just restricted to the earlier books, where Herodotus is typically more willing to divulge the provenance of his information. But whilst it is evident that Herodotus cites a fairly impressive range of inscriptions, it is less certain as to how they function in his text. Are they nothing more than decorative objects, supplementary furnishings for an oral or written tradition? Is Osborne right to suggest a relatively unreflexive application of inscriptions in Herodotus, who apparently displays no interest in those inscriptions which do not come armed with an arresting story? Certainly, some of Herodotus' appeals to inscriptions can be seen to function in this manner (cf. my discussion on 2.102, 106 at §3.4 below). But this in itself betrays an important detail which is rarely adequately expressed: For Herodotus, an inscription can validate, and lend unique authority to, a particular *logos*.

In exploring these questions this chapter consists of four main sections. In the first I will briefly introduce the different types of inscriptions which appear in the *Histories*, and discuss further the problems encountered when applying too rigid an analysis—particularly one which views Herodotus as if he were a twenty-first-century epigraphist. Secondly, I explore the few valuable inscriptions in Book One, focussing particularly on how Herodotus projects the difficulties in ascertaining the truth behind (often deceptive) epigraphic sources. Though not always explicit about his use of such evidence, it is clear, at least from the various inscribed materials which he does refer to, that Herodotus often gleans a great deal of historical information from the written text and/or the monument accompanying it. Next, I analyse the way in which he refers to various inscribed materials throughout his Egyptian *logos*, primarily to reinforce his view of the Egyptians' extended history in comparison to the Greeks'. In the final section, I then look at Herodotus' inscribed epigrams and show that deriving historical information from these items is only one aspect of Herodotus' more complex engagement with epigram. This will lead me to show that a far more nuanced understanding of inscriptions prevails in the *Histories*—both as valuable pieces of evidence, and as ornamental items. But for all their potential value as historical evidence, Herodotus

⁹ For the vast quantities of inscriptions by the end of the fifth century, see (for Athens) Thomas (1989) 34-94; cf. the broader discussion in Harris (1989) 65-114 on the spread of literacy in the classical period, (noting the large quantity of Athenian inscriptions at pp.74-5).

also illustrates how one must contend with the various subjectivities and ideologies that colour the various inscribed voices which his text allows to speak perpetually.

3.2 Cited Inscriptions: An Inventory

Before I move on to a closer analysis of Herodotus' critical application of inscriptions, it is necessary to begin by addressing the historian's general attitude towards these materials. The inclusion of twenty-four separate inscriptions in the *Histories*—fourteen of which are quoted verbatim—certainly suggests that Herodotus valued such records as apposite to his historical inquiries.¹⁰ And yet, the problems that surround his rather uneven use of documentary evidence acts as a strong caveat against drawing any peremptory conclusions. For example, why is it that an author, who, in a highly affecting passage, artfully incorporates a triad of commemorative inscriptions specifically set up for those who fought and died at Thermopylae within his text, should elsewhere neglect to record—or even mention—the existence of numerous other written dedications to those who fought in the other Persian War battles? And given Herodotus' penchant for autopsy as a rhetorical tool of narrative proof,¹¹ why does he not provide references to direct observation of inscribed records more consistently? These problems, and others,¹² thus complicate any investigation of Herodotus' methodological approach towards documentary evidence; and just as with his use of other written materials, it is clear that establishing rigid, definite conclusions cannot possibly accommodate the remarkably diverse and obscure approach of our first historian.

Of the twenty-four inscriptions which Herodotus explicitly refers to, there is an almost-equal weight between Greek and non-Greek: twelve are written in a Greek script, eleven in a foreign script, and one is bilingual, written on separate marble pillars in Greek and Assyrian letters (γράμματα Ἀσσύρια, 4.87.1).¹³ This rightly makes scholars less than comfortable, especially given the preponderance of inscribed materials in the Greek world—many of

¹⁰ Cf. the useful discussion in Fabiani (2003) 163-7, who well notes that all non-Greek inscriptions are erected by monarchs, whereas the bulk of the Greek inscriptions are erected by a collective group (p.166). This number compares rather favourably to later Greek historians, who include far fewer epigraphic documents. For inscriptions in Thucydides, see esp. Lane Fox (2010), cf. Hornblower (1987) 88-92, Higbie (1999) 59-62, Smarczyk (2006), Petrovic (2007a) 53-5, Hornblower III 446-8; cf. Higbie (1999) 62-5 for fourth-century historians (principally Theopompus of Chios and Philochorus of Athens).

¹¹ For a comprehensive survey of Herodotus' use of autopsy, see Schepens (1980) 33-93. Herodotus only explicitly appeals to personal observation for a select few of the inscriptions he records (cf. 2.106, 5.59-60), although I discuss throughout this chapter other cases where Herodotus' use of (e.g.) ekphrasis implicitly suggests that he has seen an inscription for himself.

¹² Note especially the Themistoclean inscription at 8.22 (§3.5 below), an impossibly-verbose inscription which scholars do not accept as a literal transcription or the original(?) record.

¹³ Greek inscriptions: 1.51.3-4; 4.88; 5.59, 60, 61, 77.4; 6.14.3; 7.228.1-2, 228.2, 228.3-4; 8.22.1-2, 82.1 (cf.9.81.1). Non-Greek inscriptions: 1.93.3, 187.1-2, 187.5; 2.102.4-5 (cf.2.103.1 and 106.1), 106.3-4, 125.6, 136.3-4, 141.6; 3.88.3; 4.91; 7.30.2. Bilingual inscription: 4.87.

which would have proved relevant to his study.¹⁴ However, it is worth bearing in mind that no known author preceding Herodotus appears to have treated inscriptions as things worthy of commemoration in literature, a fact which reinforces Herodotus' very ingenuity in overcoming what appears to be a distinct void germane to all his predecessors' works. Surely, then, this unparalleled use of epigraphic materials—not entirely surprising given Herodotus' much admired proclivity for originality—should lead us to expect a jagged, or even surprising, application of inscriptions.

This originality has not satisfied all scholars working on Herodotus. In a much-cited article on Herodotus' epigraphic sources, Stephanie West writes:

The confident assurance of his historical reconstructions is bluff; though we may admire his fertility in speculation, he has quite failed to consider whether the conclusions which he draws from the epigraphic data represent the only, or the most probable, way of accounting for the facts.¹⁵

So West views a significant proportion of Herodotus' observations related to epigraphic records as being at best perfunctory, and at worst, deeply troubling.¹⁶ Clearly affected by Fehling's earlier criticisms of Herodotus' historical method,¹⁷ West imagines an author who typically dismisses epigraphic data in favour of oral traditions, and who ultimately fails fully to comprehend the value of inscribed materials as historical data. In some senses, it is unsurprising that West should have uncovered so many anomalies,¹⁸ indeed even the most casual reading of the *Histories* would show that Herodotus' use of inscribed records fails to conform to the rigorous methods of the contemporary study of epigraphy. But while West has elucidated a number of problems and inconsistencies in Herodotus' approach to one of his many source materials, it is important to remember that the paucity of extant epigraphic records cited by Herodotus (a mere three out of the twenty-four), make it impossible to offer a judicious assessment of his ostensibly unpredictable conclusions against the cold hard facts. Thus whilst not entirely avoiding the question of Herodotus' reliability and accuracy as a critical authority, this chapter is primarily focussed on exploring the types of epigraphic data Herodotus includes within his ἱστορίης ἀπόδεξις, and what information he gleans

¹⁴ So West (1985) 302.

¹⁵ West (1985) 303.

¹⁶ For a thorough repudiation of West's criticisms, see Pritchett (1993) 144-187.

¹⁷ Fehling (1989) esp. 133-140.

¹⁸ West is especially troubled by his less-than-accurate description of the serpent column (8.82.1 and 9.81.1), but see esp. Pritchett (1993) 147-8, who convincingly argues against West's 'picayune' objections.

from it, rather than assessing his commitment to a quasi-modern form of citation (cf. my general discussion at §1.1 above).

3.3 Falsehoods and Deceptions: Inscriptions in Book One

Herodotus' first mention of an inscribed item is included in his Croesus *logos*. Amongst the multitudinous items Croesus is said to have dedicated to the Delphic oracle, Herodotus mentions that he offered 117 ingots of gold, from which was cast a lion, originally weighing 570 pounds (1.50).¹⁹ Further on in this extended inventory of dedications, Herodotus lists two *perirrhantēria*—one golden, one silver, but, intriguingly, then adds that the golden *perirrhantērion* was falsely inscribed (ἐ πηγέγραπται) 'from the Lacedaemonians' (1.51.3). This, he supposes, 'is the work of a particular Delphian, whose name I know but will not record (οὐ κ ἐ πμνή σομαι, cf. 2.123.3; 4.43.7), as he was intent on flattering the Lacedaemonians' (1.51.4).²⁰ Following on from this, is a line which scholars have rarely paid much attention to, in which he refers to further, minor dedications by Croesus, 'which are not inscribed' (οὐ κ ἐ πί σημα).²¹ This particular choice of phraseology suggests that some of Croesus' dedications were, in comparison, signed—an additional, if largely forgettable, feature maybe, but one that the reader is understood to appreciate as an indication of Herodotus' exhaustive personal research.²²

Though not especially key to the overall development of the narrative, this unambiguous assertion by the narrator of the *perirrhantērion*'s bogus epitaph clearly reminds Herodotus' readership that he is an incredulous researcher, who is not easily deceived by false assertions. And it is significant, not to mention surprising, that he should adopt such a definite position regarding his first piece of inscribed evidence, particularly given his

¹⁹ Cf. also 1.92.1. On the Croesan dedications, see Parke (1984) 209-32. For an illuminating parallel in which a monument is dedicated by one individual, but inscribed by another with a different nationality, see Pritchett (1993) 145-6. For the lively interest in inscriptions attached to dedications that went back to legendary persons, see Hedrick Jnr. (2002) esp.22-3, Day (2010) 64, n.151.

²⁰ Although impossible to say why Herodotus should here admit that he knows something, but will omit it from his text, it is surely possible that he did so in order to reassure his audience of his own abilities as a researcher, and, simultaneously, to avoid offending the Delphians. For similar statements elsewhere in Hdt., see 1.95; 2.123; 3.65; 4.43. Incidentally, the corresponding reassurance 'ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν παῖς, δι' οὗ τῆς χειρὸς ῥέει τὸ ὕδωρ, Λακεδαιμονίων ἐστί' ('but the boy through whose hand the water runs is a genuine Lacedaemonian gift', 1.51.4) serves both to appease the Spartans and to strengthen the audience's overall impression of his own familiarity with the Delphic treasures, so HW I 74.

²¹ So HW I ad loc.: 'without an inscription', Legrand I ad loc.: 'pas de marques', Asheri I ad loc.: 'without inscriptions', *contra* Stein ad loc.: 'indistinguishable', Powell s.v. ἐπίσημος: '[not] remarkable'.

²² So HW I 75.

reticence elsewhere in assuming such a dogmatic tone.²³ The effect will no doubt have felt even more conspicuous for his immediate audience, for whom writing was far less ubiquitous than it is today.

So the *ersatz* status of the very first inscribed item to appear in the *Histories*—itself embedded within a narrative which scholars have regarded in a number of ways as being paradigmatic for the rest of Herodotus’ work,²⁴ serves as a clear indicator to his audience of the narrator’s willing engagement with, and inclusion of, inscribed records. And this is coupled with his unwillingness to accept uncritically all that is stated by these soundless voices which were increasingly inhabiting the Greek and non-Greek world. It serves as a decisive statement for the role of the narrator in the *Histories*, who, against several modern readings of his historical method,²⁵ by no means passively records all that is reported and/or discovered through his inquiries. His statement also helps to demystify such writings for his reader, as they work side-by-side with more familiar forms of communication in his text.

The golden tripod at Delphi, which details all those who opposed the Persians mentioned at 8.82.1 and 9.81.1 presents a similar case of implied autopsy;²⁶ for Herodotus relates in the latter passage that the tripod ‘stands on the brazen three-headed serpent, which sits very close to the altar’, before describing additional treasures and their dimensions. The inclusion of specific contextual information espouses an image of empirical research and develops Herodotus’ authoritative persona, as well as reinforcing Herodotus’ methodological preference for *opsis* over *akoē*. And as we shall see, implicit or explicit autopsy is a recurrent theme that underlies many of Herodotus’ epigraphical allusions.

The two other inscriptions from Book One are both tomb engravings: the first for the Lydian king Alyattes (1.93.3),²⁷ and the other for Nitocris of Babylon (1.187).²⁸ His account of Alyattes’ tomb (σῆμα) very much picks up on the hyper-critical perspective he adopts with

²³ Cf. 2.123.1; 7.152.3. West (1985) has remarkably little to say on this inscription, but note HW I 75: ‘it is interesting to see H. Exercising his critical faculty on the Temple records’, cf. similarly Fabiani (2003) 168.

²⁴ Kindt (2006), Pelling (2006b), (with the Cyrus *logos*) Sewell-Rutter (2007) 12.

²⁵ E.g., FGE 233: ‘[on Hdt. 7.228] Herodotus has *naively reported what he was told* [my italics], not noticing that this inscription is not what he says it is, an epitaph...It was not Herodotus’ custom to read and copy inscriptions, and it is not known whether he every saw the actual epigrams at Thermopylae. If he did see them, it appears improbable that he made copies of them for use in his *History*.’ It goes without saying that this study finds no support for such a naïve Herodotus.

²⁶ Cf. Macan II 764, who reads this as an almost certain case of autopsy.

²⁷ For a possible poetic inspiration behind Herodotus’ interest in Alyattes’ tomb, cf. Hipponax 42 W² (line 2: ἰθὺ δὶὰ Λυδῶν παρὰ τὸ ν Ἄττά λεω τὺ μβον).

²⁸ West’s near-total avoidance of these two inscriptions in her important discussion is unfortunate, especially given the strong links, both in terms of theme and content, which they establish with other inscriptions he records. On Nitocris’ inscription, cf. Dillery (1992).

the seemingly Spartan dedication that he (successfully) uncovers as a forgery. The tomb is singled out as being a structure of enormous size, ‘inferior only to the monuments (ἔργων) of Egypt and Babylon’ (1.93.2).²⁹ Numerous labourers contributed to its construction, and in order to commemorate this, stone pillars are erected above the burial mound, detailing the specific contributions of each group of workers. The measurements on these pillars, Herodotus reveals, show that the courtesans (παίδισκέων)³⁰ made the greatest contribution—an unsurprising detail, however, given that ‘all the daughters of the common people of Lydia adopt the role of a prostitute’ (τοῦ γὰρ δὴ Λυδῶν δὴ μου αἰ θυγατέρες πορνεύονται πᾶσαι, 1.93.4). Herodotus here seems to be once again rallying against the expectations of his audience(s), for whom the arcane and luxurious Oriental monarchies are demystified, or even undermined.³¹ And just as Herodotus implies personal observation of the Croesan *perirrhantērion*, it is noteworthy that he should finish his description of Alyattes’ tomb by incorporating its dimensions, as well as a geographical oddity, namely that the tomb is positioned close to a large stretch of water named Lake Gygæa.³² These ekphrastic remarks serve not only as an elegant finish to his description of the tomb, but also help to reassure the audience that the narrator can personally vouch for the authenticity of the material he is recounting. It is impossible to say for certain, but it is worth speculating whether his original audience may even have interpreted these remarks on the tomb’s location and dimensions as sound proof of personal autopsy.

The second inscribed tomb that Herodotus describes has been of especial interest to a number of scholars, particularly due to its status as an unreliable piece of writing.³³ This tomb is for the Babylonian queen Nitocris,³⁴ who, after having her sepulchre erected in the upper parts of one of the gates into the city, has the following message inscribed upon it:

²⁹ For the archaeological evidence for Alyattes’ *sēma*, see Asheri I ad.93.2, with further bibliography.

³⁰ Here I use the translation given by Rawlinson (1897) I 56.

³¹ Herodotus incorporates stories concerning courtesans for other monuments: 2.126 (Cheops’ daughter), 134 (Rhodopis). Asheri I ad loc. remarks on the amusing effects of this statement for a Greek audience.

³² Cf. Homer *Il.* 20.392.

³³ So Steiner (1994) 136-42. Baragwanath (2008) 62-4 offers an altogether different reading, focussing in the main on how Nitocris is mentally attuned to the future and hence able to read human motivations. Cf. Payen (1997) 66-9, who reads ainetic conventions in the shaping of this story.

³⁴ No oriental text refers to a royal figure with this name, but for several alternative possibilities as to what might have directed Herodotus’ version, see Dillery (1992) 30-1, Pritchett (1993) 172-3, Asheri I 204. The tomb is also referred to in Strabo (13.4.7), who notes that some called it a ‘monument of prostitution’ (πρόρνης μνημα).

If there be one among my successors on the throne of Babylon who is in want of treasure, let him open my tomb, and take as much as he chooses,—not, however, unless he be truly in want, for it will not be for his good.³⁵

Herodotus then reports that the tomb was left untouched until the Persian king Darius came to Babylon, and, after being appalled by the now-defunct status of this gate and by the wasted booty buried within, he ordered it to be opened, only to discover a second written message (γράφματα), stating: “if you were sated with what things you have, and were not greedy for more, you would not be opening the coffins of corpses”.³⁶ Herodotus finally concludes this remarkable passage αὖ τη μὲν νυν ἡ βασιλεια τοιαύτη τις λέγεται γενέσθαι (‘such, then, is said to be the nature of this queen’, 1.87.5).

While Nitocris cannot be easily related back to any reliably documented—and therefore certainly historical—individual, Herodotus’ account of her use of the inscribed word in fact compliments the earlier passages discussed above. Like when Herodotus shows that the true significance of the golden *perirrhantērion* cannot be identified by a cursory reading of the inscribed message attached to the vessel, so, too, the true contents and meaning of Nitocris’ tomb cannot be discerned from the tempting, but misleading, inscription borne upon it. And just as Herodotus’ audience may well be shocked to learn that Lydian courtesans were chiefly responsible for the erection of Alyattes’ impressive tomb—so clearly evinced by Herodotus’ extended reflection on this phenomenon, here it is implied too that Herodotus’ audience might find it hard to believe that such a queen could have existed, hence Herodotus’ reserved qualifications which bookend the excursus. So, as Baragwanath notes, Nitocris’ use of writing contradicts Steiner’s view of its’ tyrannical nature in Herodotus, the inscription instead assuming a ‘subversive and rebellious’ mode,³⁷ in which the tyrannical behaviour of the Persian king is anticipated and jibed by the percipient Babylonian. The whole Nitocris *logos*, with its focus on correct and incorrect readings of an inscription, serves as a compelling metaphor for the role of the Herodotean narrator, who, unlike Darius, is not so easily fooled by arcane inscribed messages.

³⁵ The fine translation of Rawlinson. The beginning of this inscription (τῶν τις ἐ μᾶ) is not unusual for a Babylonian funerary inscription, cf. Asheri I 206.

³⁶ Gammie (1986) 182 reads this focus on Darius’ greed as the central point of the *logos*. Cf. Dillery (1992), who argues that the entire anecdote has a characteristically Greek colouring, noting verbal similarities with Greek oracles; similarly Asheri I 205, who, following Dillery, cites a similar passage concerning Xerxes opening the tomb of Belus, only to discover an inscribed stele stating τῶ ἀ νοίξαντι τὸ μνημα καὶ μὴ ἀ ναπληρώσαντι τῆ ν πύελον οὐ κ ἔ στιν ἄ μεινον (Ael. *VH* 13.3).

³⁷ Baragwanath (2008) 63.

Thus there is clearly a recurring motif which is common to these three inscriptions that feature in Book One, namely, the very slipperiness of the written word; and Herodotus ensures from the outset that we recognise this elliptical quality, as it can result in deviant mis-readings—or worse still, as in the case of Darius, moral and ethical transgressions. But it is equally striking that Herodotus should opt for these epigraphic moments in his text to reassure his readers that he is capable of unearthing any incongruities and complexities which are, to him and his audience, a salient characteristic of writing.³⁸ In this way, Herodotus' inclusion, and treatment of, inscriptional materials in the opening book of his work serves an important, rhetorical function, aiding the narrator in his quest to espouse an accurate and authoritative voice.

It is clear from these early references to inscribed materials, which Herodotus selectively places in his narrative, that historical information may well be gleaned from the inconsistent information which they may recount. Though many of the points which he makes from these written records are of only marginal importance within the overarching narrative of how Greeks and non-Greeks came to fight one another—a question which Herodotus' digressive account never loses sight of—, it is nonetheless clear that individual points concerning historical individuals, and their motivations, do benefit from his exploitation of inscribed records.

3.4 Thematic Inscriptions

Beyond the first book of the Histories, there are a further nineteen passages which incorporate an inscribed item. Four of these passages specifically include epigrammatic verses, a small but important cluster of stanzas that I will consider in the next section of this chapter. A significant proportion of the non-Greek inscriptions which Herodotus explicitly quotes are Egyptian (five out of eleven)—hardly surprising given the especial attention he devotes to that region. And all of these inscriptions occur in the second, historically-minded half of his Egyptian *logos*, several of them immediately following on from his famous pronouncement on the provenance of his Egyptian material (2.99.1, cf. §1.2 above).

The first two Egyptian inscriptions occur in some of the most challenging passages in Herodotus' entire text, proving immensely difficult to reconcile with surviving materials and other, native traditions. Both passages are embedded within an extended *logos* that delves into the spectacular career of the previously-undocumented Egyptian king, Sesostris, whom

³⁸ Cf. the famous criticisms of writing in Plato: *Phdr.* 274b-8e; *Prt.* 329a; *Sph.* 231d-3b; see the useful discussion in Thomas (2003) 167ff.

Herodotus dates two generations before the Trojan War to the time of the pharaoh Proteus.³⁹ While Herodotus' Sesostris is seemingly unhistorical, Lloyd notes that he is demonstrably based on genuine historical personages, namely Senwosret I and Senwosret III from the Twelfth Dynasty (c.2000-1780), who in fact ruled some four hundred years prior to the date of Herodotus' Sesostris.⁴⁰

To begin his Sesostrian *logos*, Herodotus reiterates that his information is derived from the Egyptian priests,⁴¹ who read aloud 'from a papyrus' (ἐκ βύβλου) the names of 330 monarchs, of which only eighteen were not Egyptian, but Ethiopian (2.100.1). A little further on Herodotus then states that the majority of these rulers left no memorial for the priests to display (τῶν δὲ ἄλλων βασιλέων οὐ γὰρ ἔλεγον οὐδεμίαν ἔργων ἀπόδεξιν καὶ οὐδὲν εἶναι λαμπρότητος, 2.101.1),⁴² qualifying his decision to focus rather on the prolifically successful Sesostris for the next ten chapters. Subduing nations as far afield as the Arabian Gulf, Herodotus' Sesostris ostensibly raised an army which then subjected every nation on its path back to Egypt (2.102). In recognition of those of his opponents who fought valiantly, Herodotus reports that Sesostris would then raise a pillar (στήλας) inscribed with his name and country, along with a brief account of the strength of his own victorious armed forces; those, however, who were deemed to have fallen too easily were, in contrast, ridiculed. For not only would he erect the same inscribed pillars, but he would also supplement them with an image of 'female genitalia' (αἰδοῖα γυναικῶς, 2.102.5), intended as a clear sign of their inferiority in battle.⁴³

Herodotus then further elaborates on Sesostris' impressive military achievements in Scythia and Thrace, the total extent of Sesostris' conquests he supposes, ἐν μὲν γὰρ τῇ τούτων

³⁹ For a thoroughly sceptical review of the Sesostris inscriptions, see West (1985) 297-302, in which she advances many of the concerns raised by Fehling (1989) 15-17, 98-101, cf. Sayce (1883) 179, Armayor (1980) 53-74. See also West (1992), offering a more forgiving interpretation of Herodotus' account. For a more general overview of Herodotus' account of Sesostris, see Lloyd III 16ff.

⁴⁰ Lloyd (2007) 313.

⁴¹ Herodotus derives a great deal of information from the Egyptian priests, Lloyd (2007) 230f. At various points he mentions priests at Thebes, Memphis and Heliopolis (the latter, he states, are said to be the most knowledgeable of all Egyptians, 2.3). For the general significance of the priestly accounts on the creation of the *Histories*, according to Herodotus, see esp. 2.100.1, 147.1.

⁴² Note the verbal correspondences here with the proem: The priests cannot speak of a memorable *apodexis* or *ergon* for the majority of Egyptian kings; thus, in turn, the majority of Egyptian kings go *aklea* in Herodotus.

⁴³ For the *realia* behind this passage, see West (1992) 118 with further bibliography at n.9. Cf. 2.141.6, where the Egyptian king Sethos also erects a statue after defeating the Arabians and Assyrians (with the aid of field-mice); Herodotus records that the statue shows the king holding a field mouse and includes a reverent inscription to the gods. For good discussions on the Egyptian origins of this object, see Lloyd III 104-5 and Pritchett (1993) 115-6.

χώρη φαίνονται σταθεῖσαι [αἰ] στῆλαι, τὸ δὲ προσωτέρω τούτων οὐκέτι.⁴⁴ Then after an intriguing ethnographic digression on the origins of the Colchians (2.104-5), Herodotus returns to the topic of Sesostri's campaigns and the stelae he erected in various places (2.106-110). Here he expatiates on his knowledge of Sesostri's exploitation of public writing, appealing to his own personal autopsy of some of these records, which, from the extent of Sesostri's campaigns, would naturally have made a significant imprint on the physical landscape. As it is a stunning exposition of Herodotus' historical method, we shall record the passage in full:

As to the pillars which King Sesostri of Egypt erected in these places no longer appear to be there, but I myself saw them in Palestinian Syria with the inscriptions I mentioned and the female genitalia. Also in Ionia, there are two figures of Sesostri carved in the rock, one on the route from Ephesus to Phocaea and the other between Sardis and Smyrna. In both places a man is carved, four cubits and a span high, with a spear in his right hand, a bow in his left, and other equipment to match—for it is in fact both Egyptian and Ethiopian. From one shoulder right across his breast to the other shoulder runs a carved inscription in Egyptian hieroglyphs, which states: “I took this land with the power of my shoulders”. It is not indicated here who he is and what country he is from, but it is clear from elsewhere. Some people who have seen these carvings reckon that the figure is Memnon, *but in so doing they depart considerably from the truth* (πολλὸν τῆς ἀληθείης ἀπολελειμμένοι). (2.106).⁴⁵

Herodotus thus legitimates the story recounted by the priests by inserting his own personal observation (ἐν δὲ τῇ Παλαιστίνῃ Συρίῃ αὐτὸς ὤρων ἐούσας). The hieroglyphic inscriptions incorporated within these carved images of Sesostri enable him to affirm the true extent of Sesostri's power, and in the process of doing so, to reject a separate tradition which (erroneously) ascribes the carved figures to the Egyptian figure Memnon. In terms of his methodology, Herodotus here places considerable emphasis on these Sesostrian stelae, as they form an especially compelling proof of his more general belief that (i) Sesostri's career has been considerably more monumental than the vast majority of Egypt's rulers, and (ii) the Egyptians' achievements are unmatched by the rest of mankind—even imperialising Persians like Darius, who is reminded by the priest of Hephaestus at the end of Herodotus' Sesostri *logos* that Sesostri conquered even more territories than him (Darius having failed

⁴⁴ Cf. Asheri (1990) 151-2: ‘It is easy to realize that when he writes about Sesostri he is really thinking about Darius.’

⁴⁵ Herodotus' reliefs are normally connected with the Karabel reliefs, for which see Hawkins (1998).

to defeat Scythia) (2.110.2-3).⁴⁶ Clearly the inscriptions cannot be detached from the monuments themselves in this excursus, but in combination they occupy a privileged place in the overall narrative, and distinctly colour his subsequent presentation of other Greek and non-Greek rulers.

Moving away from these Sesostrian monuments, the next inscription Herodotus includes in his Egyptian *logos* is engraved on the pyramid of the troublesome Pharaoh Cheops (Khufu of the Fourth Dynasty) (2.124-5). Herodotus advances an intricate picture of Cheops' monumental structure, including an elaborate description of the method employed in its construction. Then, no doubt in part to re-emphasize the spectacle that was this pyramid, Herodotus reports that 'there are Egyptian letters engraved on this pyramid (γραμμὰ τῶν Αἰ γῶπτι ὧν ἐν τῇ πυραμί δι), detailing how much was consumed in radishes, onions and garlic by the workers', adding that, 'the interpreter who translated the writing to me said that 1600 talents of silver was paid' (2.125.6).⁴⁷ He later concludes this passage by contemplating the money also spent on the labourers' bread and clothing, as well as the vast time it would have taken to construct the underground section of the pyramid. Though no comparative evidence supports that somebody could have read an inscription directly inscribed on a pyramid to Herodotus, as he so distinctly claims, it does not therefore mean that Herodotus has thus fabricated this inscription. It is not so far-fetched to suppose that Herodotus simply misremembered the precise location of the inscription. Moreover, although the content of the engraving is equally unlikely as Herodotus reports it, it is certainly possible, as How and Wells suggest, that it could have more simply been a mistranslation of hieroglyphs, perhaps by an unreliable guide whom Herodotus puts too much trust in.⁴⁸ And in spite of these complications, resounding from this passage is Herodotus' distinct and memorable inclusion of an inscribed record in order to bolster the overall monumental impression he wishes to espouse; by drawing upon an obscure, epigraphic detail, he is able to inflate the size of the workforce to gigantic proportions, and in doing so, strengthen the reader's impression of Cheops' permanent achievement, which yet again feeds into his wider views on the impressive history of the Egyptian nation.

⁴⁶ For the contemporary significance of Sesostris' inflated exploits, i.e. Egypt being occupied by Persia, see Haziza (2009) 132.

⁴⁷ καὶ ὡς ἐμὲ εὔμεμνησθαι τὰ ὀρμηγεύς μοι ἐπιλεγόμενος τὰ γράμματα ἔφη, ἐξ ακόσια καὶ χίλια τάλαντα ἀργυρίου τετελεσθαι. This is the only instance in which Herodotus stresses his reliance on a native tongue to translate a foreign language, though it is clear that he will have relied on translators elsewhere. For Herodotus' limited knowledge of other languages, see Harrison (1998), who emphasises the scarcity of polyglot Greeks in Herodotus' age, cf. Thordarson (1996) 52-4; for Greek attitudes to foreign languages see also Momigliano (1975) 7-8, 18-9.

⁴⁸ So HW I 229, cf. Lloyd III 70-1 ('the *hermēneus* was either an extremely bad philologist or a bare-faced liar, probably the latter'). For the *hermēneus* in Egypt, cf. 2.164.1.

A few chapters later, Herodotus refers to a second pyramid inscription, this time of the Pharaoh Asychis (2.136.4). Asychis, according to Herodotus, wished to excel all Pharaohs before him by constructing a pyramid out of bricks, inscribing the following message on it:

μή με κατονοσθῆς πρὸς τὰς λιθίνας πυραμίδας: προέχω γὰρ αὐτέων τοσοῦτον ὅσον ὁ Ζεὺς τῶν ἄλλων θεῶν. κοντῶ γὰρ ὑποτύπτοντες ἐς λίμνην, ὅτι πρόσσχοιτο τοῦ πηλοῦ τῶ κοντῶ, τοῦτο συλλέγοντες πλίνθους εἴρυσαν καί με τρόπῳ τοιούτῳ ἐξέποιήσαν.

Clearly evoking the familiar Greek practice of inscribing an epitaph in the first person, this inscription, as Steiner argues, fundamentally differs from its Hellenic counterpart, in as much as it fails to include the names of the architect and occupant of the spectacular tomb.⁴⁹ In ignoring such details, the engraving renders the individual Asychis himself obsolete, as he is silenced by the dominant voice of the behemoth structure which houses his corpse.

But regardless of the improbability that such an epitaph could have been inscribed in the non-Greek world, it does not automatically follow that this most un-Egyptian record is largely meaningless in Herodotus' text. On the contrary, by quietly subverting an increasingly typical form of written commemoration in the Greek world, and then attaching it to a monumentalised, Eastern monarch, Herodotus not only regurgitates the writer-tyrant motif which is endemic throughout the *Histories*,⁵⁰ but, less obviously, he also challenges his audience's preconceptions, as Greek and non-Greek forms of commemoration are more closely aligned than most might have presumed. Asychis' tomb, then, provides another striking example whereby the narrator carefully incorporates an inscription in order to guide—and even manipulate—his audiences' view of the people behind the historical events that he presents.

Like the Sesostris inscriptions, these two passages show once again how Herodotus seeks to develop this central narrative of the enduring and prestigious history of the Egyptians by coalescing the spoken accounts of the Egyptian priests (which are themselves partially derived from written records) with the many monuments and—if available—inscriptions, perhaps which he has himself encountered through autopsy. And while these Egyptian inscriptions often present considerable difficulties and incongruities, it should not be

⁴⁹ Steiner (1994) 137.

⁵⁰ Ibid. (1994) esp.127-66.

underestimated how important Herodotus deems the use of writing for the Egyptians, a nation that he recognises as having used more than one script (ἰ ρὰ and δημοτικὰ , 2.36.4).⁵¹ Indeed, perhaps the most difficult or incongruous of all Herodotus' inscriptions is in fact the final one cited in his monumental work (8.22). The engraver is none other than the Athenian general Themistocles, who is attempting to gain the full support of the unstable Ionians, as they have failed to offer absolute loyalty towards the Greeks against their Persian aggressors. Themistocles, we are told, writes a fairly lengthy exhortation, 'inscribed onto a rock face' (ἐ ντά μνων ἐ ν τοῖ σι λί θοισι γρά μματα), which Herodotus then proceeds to quote in full.

ἄ νδρες Ἴ ωνες, οὐ ποιέετε δίκαια ἐ πὶ τοῦ ς πατέρας στρατευόμενοι καὶ τῆ ν Ἑλλάδα καταδουλούμενοι. ἀ λλά μάλιστα μὲ ν πρὸ ς ἡ μέων γίνεσθε: εἰ δὲ ὑ μῖ ν ἐ στι τοῦ το μὴ δυνατὸ ν ποιῆ σαι, ὑ μεῖ ς δὲ ἔ τι καὶ νῦ ν ἐ κ τοῦ μέσου ἡ μῖ ν ἔ ζεσθε καὶ αὐ τοῖ καὶ τῶ ν Καρῶ ν δέεσθε τὰ αὐ τὰ ὑ μῖ ν ποιείειν. εἰ δὲ μηδέτερον τούτων οἶ όν τε γίνεσθαι, ἀ λλ' ὑ π' ἀ ναγκαίης μέζονος κατέζευχθε ἢ ὥ στε ἀ πίστασθαι, ὑ μεῖ ς δὲ ἐ ν τῶ ἔ ργω, ἐ πεὰ ν συμμίσγωμεν, ἐ θελοκακέετε μεμνημένοι ὅ τι ἀ π' ἡ μέων γεγόνατε καὶ ὅ τι ἀ ρχῆ θεν ἡ ἔ χθρη πρὸ ς τὸ ν βάρβαρον ἀ π' ὑ μέων ἡ μῖ ν γέγονε. (8.22.1-2).

The message he inscribes is substantial in length and tone, more reminiscent of an oral address than a typical Greek prose inscription,⁵² thus leading scholars to deduce that Herodotus cannot possibly be reporting the message exactly as he read it, if indeed he did read it.⁵³ Whilst it remains unlikely that Themistocles could have inscribed the message which is reported back to us, it should not be ruled out that some sort of engraving was made, the content of which Herodotus must have then acquired from one of his informants. Here we have the clearest instance of an inscription which has not been subjected to Herodotus' preferred method of personal autopsy; for whilst the text is reported back to the

⁵¹ West (1985) 297, n.93 is not only unimpressed with the lack of interest he shows in the two scripts, but also adds that he ought to have referred to three scripts: Hieroglyphic, Hieratic and Demotic. The former criticism is somewhat unfair, however, as he mentions the two distinct scripts merely as an afterthought, in a passage which is chiefly focused not on Egyptian writing habits, but on the antithetical relationship between Greek and Egyptian culture. And West's latter point, though of course correct, should not undermine Herodotus' central recognition that Egyptians practiced polygraphy.

⁵² Bowie ad loc. notes especially that the opening address ἄ νδρες Ἴ ωνες is typical of a speech, but not of formal Greek prose inscriptions, cf. similarly Macan II ad loc., who is sceptical that such an inscription was ever carved, and Steiner (1994) 153-4, noting the similarities with Leutyichides' message at 9.98.2-3.

⁵³ See West (1985) 285-7. Fabiani (2003) 165 and Bowie ad loc. note that this is the only verbatim report of a Greek prose inscription in Herodotus, but Bowie adds that it is 'fairly plain that there were no such inscriptions' (though subsequently remarking that this form of communication with the Ionians is a striking conceit, 'befitting the trickster Themistocles'). Cf. also Harris (1989) 80, n.74: an instance of a 'freely invented text'.

reader as it was apparently written (τὰ δε ἔ λεγε...ταῦ τα ἔ γραψε surely rules out the possibility that Herodotus is merely providing the gist of the Themistoclean message, cf. de Bakker [2007] 44), it must be kept in mind that it is done so without the same kind of personal assurances that Herodotus offers with other inscriptions (cf. 2.106.1; 5.59). Moreover, as Boedeker notes, the inscription forces an important strategic and moral issue: ‘with Themistocles’ inscription, Herodotus expresses what he believes must have been at stake in the confrontation between mainland Greeks and the Greeks in Xerxes’ armada’.⁵⁴ So the point here is that like various speeches (e.g. Solon’s quasi-Herodotean advice to Croesus in Book One),⁵⁵ the inscription serves to make important points developed over a larger section of his narrative, namely: Themistocles as Odyssean trickster;⁵⁶ Greek disunity; real (or paranoid) fear of Medism; and the crucial role of Athens in the War. This passage thus illustrates the need to avoid one-size-fits-all patterns which govern the whole of the *Histories*, and shows the different modes by which inscriptions may be cited by Herodotus. There is little here of the forensic approach which we have seen with the Sesostrian stelae (cf. also below on the Cadmeian inscriptions); Herodotus’ allusions to inscriptions are not purely empirical, they may also serve literary purposes.

3.5 Herodotus as *Epigrammatopois*

The previous sections of this chapter have demonstrated that it is much too simplistic to claim that Herodotus displays little appreciation—as a methodological principle—of the multifarious inscribed materials which he includes in his text. Moreover, the notion that he cannot possibly have personally encountered these items as a reader, or that he did not read them satisfactorily, proves equally difficult to reconcile with the directed and artful way they feature in his work. These two points prove especially pertinent when we consider Herodotus’ use of epigrams.

As mentioned earlier, Herodotus is the first extant author explicitly to cite an inscribed epigram (or even to use the term ἐπίγραμμα), quoting eight in total.⁵⁷ This bias towards

⁵⁴ Boedeker (2000) 101-2. Note also Fabiani (2003) 166, commenting on Themistocles’ message ‘a favore della causa ellenica e non per motivi personali’.

⁵⁵ For Solon as alter ego of Herodotus, see Bischoff (1932) 39, Redfield (1985) 102, Shapiro (1996), Moles (1996) 263-5, Marincola (2007) 45, Barker (2009) 191-3.

⁵⁶ Indeed, after repeating the inscription Herodotus adds that Θεμιστοκλέης δὲ ταῦ τα ἔ γραψε, δοκέειν ἐ μοί, ἐ π’ ἀ μφότερα νοέων, ἵ να ἦ λαθόντα τὰ γράμματα βασιλέα Ἴωνας ποιήση μεταβαλεῖν καὶ γενέσθαι πρός ἐ ωπτήων, ἢ ἐ πείτε ἀ νεειχθῆ καὶ διαβληθῆ πρός Ξέρξην, ἀ πίστους ποιήση τοῦς Ἴωνας καὶ τῶν ναυμαχιέων αὐ τοῦς ἀ πόσχην. Cf. Baragwanath (2008) 63, noting the correspondence with 1.187.5, showing how both Darius and Xerxes are undermined by deceptive, publicly-displayed writing (cf. §6.2 for further discussion on the sense of continuity between these two leaders).

⁵⁷ 4.88; 5.59-61, 77; 7.228. Page nevertheless remarks on Herodotus’ lack of epigrammatic references (*FGE* 192-3), a not entirely fair remark given Herodotus’ indisputably significant contribution to the

epigrammatic inscriptions is in itself a peculiar feature of Herodotus' work, particularly given that epigrams accounted for only a small proportion of the inscribed records which littered the Greek *poleis* in the fifth century. However, as Livingstone and Nisbet have already noted, inscribed epigrams are exceptional in their frequent emphasis on the formation of an individual voice—one which proudly asserts the epigram's ability to recount *logoi*.⁵⁸ Perhaps Herodotus, who displays no preference for written over oral testimonies, was more persuaded, by the vibrant narratives offered in many inscribed epigrams; indeed as we will see, Herodotus cites a number of striking—at times incendiary—epigrammatic verses, which possess a clear authorial voice. Whatever one makes of this Herodotean quirk, what can be said from the outset is that his willing inclusion of various epigrams undoubtedly aided the development of the genre—even if it would truly emerge as a serious, literary form some time later, during the Hellenistic period.⁵⁹

The first epigram he quotes is a self-commemorative poem commissioned by Mandrocles of Samos,⁶⁰ who sets up a painting with adjoining inscription (ταῦτα γραψάμενος ἀνέθηκε ἔς τὸ Ἡραῖον, ἐπιγράψας τάδε, 4.88.1), after being handsomely rewarded by Darius for building a bridge over the Bosphorus (4.87-89).⁶¹ The epigram runs:

Βόσπορον ἰχθυόεντα γεφυρώσας ἀνέθηκε
 Μανδροκλῆς Ἡρῆ μνημόσυνον σχεδῆς,
 αὐτῷ μὲν στεφάνον περιθείς, Σαμίοισι δὲ κῦδος,
 Δαρείου βασιλέος ἐκτέλεσας κατὰ νοῦν.

Having bridged the fish-abundant Bosphorus,
 Mandrocles dedicated the record of his floating bridge to Hera,
 Having won a crown for himself—and kudos for the Samians,

early application of epigram in literary works. For ἐπίγραμμα, see 5.59, 7.228 (bis), cf. Petrovic (2007b) 77.

⁵⁸ Livingstone and Nisbet (2010) 23. Bing (2002) *passim* argues against the notion that many people read these inscribed epigrams, maintaining that this is simply an assumption of modern scholarship; Livingstone and Nisbet rightly question Bing's hypothesis, noting that 'the expectations voiced in the inscriptions themselves, and the clear assumption of ancient writers from Herodotus onward that inscribed epigrams are significant and interesting, weighs heavily on the other side' (27, n.14), see further Day (2007) 32, n.16.

⁵⁹ On epigrammatic innovations during the Hellenistic period, see Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004); for a broader overview of epigram and its development, see now Bing and Bruss (2007).

⁶⁰ Whilst Herodotus makes no mention of personal observation, his noticeable affinity to all things Samian has long been recognised, and his unpredictably extensive focus on Samian affairs certainly supports the view that he spent some time there. Indeed he later refers to—but does not quote—a separate Samian inscription that lists the names of those Samians who did not flee, and joined the battle against the Phoenicians (6.14); cf. further Irwin (2009), Pelling (2011).

⁶¹ See the sceptical remarks in Fehling (1989) 137-8, 184; West (1985) 281-2 is more measured.

In fulfilling the wishes of King Darius. (4.88.2).⁶²

So, in a passage that follows on directly after Herodotus refers to Darius' own erection of two pillars, detailing the size of the various peoples who accompanied him,⁶³ Mandrocles too commissions (γραψάμενος) an inscription,⁶⁴ set alongside the painting of his bridging of the Bosphorus. Here Herodotus states that 'this, then, is how the engineer created a memorial (μνημόσυνα) of the bridge' (4.88.2), clearly acknowledging that this, though by no means the only way in which one could have done so, was a legitimate way for Mandrocles to commemorate his achievement.

With no obvious reason to suspect Herodotus of foul play here, scholars have said remarkably little about this inscription. But Herodotus in fact attaches considerable weight to this passage; certainly, the painting and inscription offer a striking visual and written record respectively of the significant moment when the hegemonic Persian king Darius first stepped into Europe. Indeed Herodotus clearly signposts this moment as an important one in his narrative, since immediately following on from this he boldly states that Δαρεΐος...διέβαινε ἔς τὴν Εὐρώπην 'thus Darius crossed over into Europe' (4.89.1). Hence the epigram temporarily slows down the narrative, and encourages the reader to reflect on the significant moment when Darius precipitated an international war.⁶⁵

Another striking feature of this epigram is the way in which the meaning is radically transformed. For while the inscription was originally celebratory, commemorating the achievements of the Samian architect, Herodotus' account alters future readings of the text, as it is now a melancholic image of the Persian onslaught, thus eliciting a much more sober response in its Herodotean context. In this way, the Mandroclean inscription is emblematic of the Persians' transgression in Herodotus' text, and illustrates once again the extent to

⁶² = 'Simonides' IV *FGE*, though Page does not refer to any citation to establish a firm Simonidean link.

⁶³ Darius is reported to erect two other inscriptions: (i) 4.91, in which he honours the river Tearus before boasting of his fine character and imperial grandeur (cf. the Achaemenid parallel cited by Corcella ad loc.), and (ii) 3.88.3, an inscription erected at the outset of his reign, describing his acquisition of power with the support of his horse (see esp. Pritchett [1993] 173-9). Neither inscription has been located, but both reflect a knowledge of Persian royal inscriptions, cf. Asheri II ad.3.88.3, West (1985) 296-7, and (more broadly) the bibliography listed above at n.8. Fehling (1989) 134 does not deny the first of these inscriptions.

⁶⁴ The same verb is used at 7.228 where Simonides sets up an inscription for the seer Megistias. Here however, unlike the Simonidean commission, common sense does not dictate that Mandrocles also wrote the epigram, cf. Corcella ad loc.

⁶⁵ Cf. Xerxes' survey of his troops crossing the Hellespont at 7.44. The Herodotean theme of non-Greek rulers ominously crossing rivers of course begins with Croesus and the Halys river, 1.75.2f., cf. Cyrus and the Araxes: 1.208, Xerxes and the Hellespont: 7.55; note also Cambyses crossing the waterless desert in Arabia: 3.4. For the "river motif", see esp. Immerwahr (1966) 293-4, 316f., cf. Wesselmann (2011) 68 with n.158.

which Herodotus shapes inscriptional items in his text, so that they appear more substantial and significant than outside his work. And like elsewhere, Herodotus' assumes a pedantic pose regarding the location of the inscription, implying personal authority: τοῦ δὲ Βοσπόρου ὁ ἄλιος τὸν ἔξενε βασιλεὺς Δαρεῖος, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκέει συμβαλλομένῳ, μέσον ἐστὶ Βυζαντίου τε καὶ τοῦ ἐπιστόματι ἱεροῦ (4.87.2). Such a nuanced application in turn not only shapes the reader's understanding of the events narrated, but also how they visualise the past: the image of Darius crossing the Bosphorus is filtered through the image of Herodotus' text surveying Mandrocles' dedicatory painting and accompanying epigram.

The only other instance in which Herodotus explicitly quotes just a single epigram is a passage in Book Five which covers the Athenians' defeat of the Boiotians and the Chalcidians in 506 BCE (5.72-78). The significance of this epigram is especially pronounced in modern scholarship, as it is one of only three inscriptions cited by Herodotus that remains extant—albeit in a highly fragmentary form, and thus allows for at least some close comparison between Herodotus' version and the original document.⁶⁶ (Such an exercise is unfortunately complicated, however, by several factors: the incompleteness of the extant inscription [with variant readings based on two stones]; and, the fact that Herodotus almost certainly relied on the later, re-inscribed rendering of the original sixth-century engraving⁶⁷—a version which did not entirely replicate the precise order and wording of the original inscription.⁶⁸)

This section narrates the Fourth Dorian Invasion of Attica in 506 BCE—the first having occurred in the distant past, the second and third much more recently (511 and 510 BCE).⁶⁹ After recalling the recently exiled Cleisthenes back to Athens, the Athenians seek an alliance with the Persians, fearing the enmity of the Spartan king Cleomenes. Cleomenes, indeed enraged by their actions, mobilises various groups from the Peloponnese, ready to attack the Athenians. However, realising the injustice of their machinations, Herodotus informs us that the Corinthians decide to set off back home, quickly followed by the Spartans, and then all

⁶⁶ See 'Simonides' III *FGE=IG I³* 501 A and B. For the difficulty in delimiting the similarities and differences between the inscription(s) and the Herodotean version, see Kaczko (2009) 112-4. Such problems are certainly not to be limited to Herodotus; e.g., there are also discrepancies between one of the treaties recorded by Thucydides (5.47) and the partially preserved inscribed copy of it (*IG I³* 83) (though Hornblower III ad loc. emphasises the insubstantiality of the differences).

⁶⁷ So Nisbet and Livingstone (2010) 33, cf. Petrovic (2007a) 52, who notes that no other written source cites the original version either.

⁶⁸ Nisbet and Livingstone (2010) 33ff., note especially: 'this inscription thus provides a striking example of the adaptability of epigram and its capacity, even in its inscribed form, to be reused to fit new occasions and new contexts' (35), cf. n.59 above.

⁶⁹ As Dewald (1998) 676 notes: This inventory of invasions would have had especial relevance for many of Herodotus' immediate audience, as Attica had been invaded in 446, 431, 430, and 428 BCE.

the remaining allies (5.76). Determined to exact some sort of revenge, the Athenians simultaneously fight against Chalcis and Boiotia on the very same day, victorious in both battles (5.77.2). The subsequent defeat of the Chalcidians and Boiotians thus represents the inaugural military victory of the newly democratic Athenian state—a momentous triumph for the freedom-loving Athenian democracy (as fashioned by Herodotus at 5.78, though see n.72 below).

In order to commemorate this defeat, Herodotus records that the Athenians make three distinct gestures.⁷⁰ First, they hang the chains originally used for the Chalcidian and Boiotian prisoners on the Acropolis; secondly, they set aside a tenth of the enemies' ransom and have a four-horse bronze chariot constructed, positioning it prominently in the entrance of the Propylaia (the gateway to the Acropolis); and finally, they commission an epigram which is then inscribed on the chariot. The quoted epigram consists of the following winged words:

Ἔ νθεα Βοιωτῶν καὶ Χαλκιδέων δαμάσσωτες,
παῖδες Ἀθηναίων ἔργασιν ἐν πολέμου,
δεσμῶν ἐν ἄχλυόντι σιδηρέῳ ἔσβεσαν ὕβριν
των ἰππους δεκάτην Παλλάδι τάσδ' ἔθεσαν.

Conquering the strength of the Boiotians and the Chalcidians,
The sons of Athene fought hard in battle,
They quenched their pride with the dark oppression of iron,
Offering a tenth to Pallas by means of this Chariot.⁷¹

These epigrammatic verses provide a lucid account of the grandiose statement that the Athenians wished to make after their victory, but also serves to focus the attention of the Herodotean reader, preparing them for the following chapter, in which the narrator speaks overtly of the virtues of democracy (5.78).⁷² It is worthy of note too that while Herodotus once again falls short of citing his own autopsy, his preceding remark (5.77.3) that the chains (which hung by the inscription) αἱ περ ἔτι καὶ ἐς ἐμὲ ἦσαν περιεοῦσαι, κρεμάμεναι ἐκ τειχέων περιπεφλευσμένων πυρὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ Μήδου surely acts as a qualifying statement,

⁷⁰ Herodotus' inclusion of three, distinct parts of the Athenians' commemorative response is far from accidental; I explore below further his propensity for citing small clusters of dedications elsewhere in the *Histories*.

⁷¹ Indeed this is an especially fitting epigram, acutely capturing the significance of the Athenian victory and the subsequent respect shown to their patron goddess.

⁷² Perhaps the reader is meant to detect a sense of irony here? For Herodotus extols the virtues of Athenian democracy immediately following its successful military defeat of two Greek *poleis*, whose prisoners are kept in fetters until being freed for a ransom of two minae (5.77.3). Paradoxically, then, freedom-loving democracy emerges out of the oppression of fellow Greeks.

adding a sense of verifiability, and hence, personal authority to the account. And the very fact that he does not cite the older form of this epigram, evidence that it had not been committed to some sort of oral tradition, further suggests that it must have been personal autopsy which lies behind Herodotus' quotation.⁷³ These factors, combined with the fact that his version conforms almost exactly to the separate, epigraphic evidence only further dispels the view that he invented all of his sources, but rather encourages us as readers of Herodotus to try and make sense of those passages in the *Histories* which are more problematical, due to the lack of verifiable evidence and/or the seemingly implausible nature of a particular account.

A little prior to this Atheno-centric excursus, which culminates in the narrator reflecting on the virtues of democracy (that is, *isēgoriē* ['equality of speech'] and *eleutheriē* ['liberty']), Herodotus displays the fruits of his investigations into the history of the Greek language (5.57-61), offering his own explanation as to its origins.⁷⁴ This is a passage that has long been one of the most contentious and widely debated from the *Histories*,⁷⁵ not least because Herodotus dates the formation of the Greek script to several generations before the Trojan War, a thesis which finds little support in more recent researches into the genesis of the Greek alphabet.⁷⁶ At the heart of Herodotus' etymological *logos* is a triad of epigrams, each building on and supporting Herodotus' central proposition (5.57), namely that the

⁷³ Similarly Petrovic (2007a) 52.

⁷⁴ A topic which interested many intellectual figures even before Herodotus. Indeed the scholiast on Dionysius Thrax reports a wide range of authors who theorised on the origins of the Greek alphabet, including Pythodorus, Phillis, and the Milesians Anaximander, Dionysius, and Hecataeus (*FGrHist* 1 F20) (N.B., also, Andron [*FGrHist* 10 F9]). For further discussion of Greek ideas on the introduction of the Greek alphabet, see esp. Jeffery (1967), cf. Jacoby (1913) 439 (assuming an Ionic origin of Herodotus' account), West (1985) 294, Harrison (1998) 22f. with n.96. For our own understanding of the history of the Greek alphabet, see principally Jeffery (1990), J.M. Hall (1997) 143-53, cf. Naddaf (2005) 103-4, and various earlier references listed in *OCD*³ s.v. Alphabet, Greek.

⁷⁵ Extensive concerns are raised in West (1985) 290-5; Fehling (1989) 133-140 confidently asserts that these cannot be genuine inscriptions, tentatively suggesting that Herodotus derived his view of Cadmus from Eumelus or Stesichorus (140); Guarducci (1967) classes the inscriptions as false, concluding that 'si tratta perciò di «falsi» antichi, creati (è lecito ritenerlo) per dare lustro al santuario di Tebe' (489). Similarly Powell (1991) states that the three tripods are 'forgeries, inasmuch as they pretend to be donations of the Bronze Age heroes Amphitryon, Skaios, and Laodomas' p.6, n.7. But compare the more favourable suggestions in Volkmann (1954) 59-62; Day (1994) 40: '[p]erhaps early in the sixth century, the local authorities inscribed them, probably as labels to explain an oral tradition'; Pritchett (1993) 116-21, who cites Pausanias' reference to an inscription of Heracles in the same temple (10.7.6), convincingly arguing that priests may have commissioned pseudo-archaic inscriptions which people commonly accepted to be historical (even if we may deem such things historical frauds); and Higbie (1999) 59 with n.43, suggesting the difficulties Herodotus may have faced in reading these inscriptions, and citing a similar inscription in the Lindos Chronicle. For a useful overview of the issues presented by these epigrams, see now Livingstone and Nisbet (2010) 31-2.

⁷⁶ See esp. Jeffery (1990) *passim*; Powell (1991) 5ff. maintains that Phoenician writing is a clear precursor to- and influence on the Greek alphabet.

Gephyraioi (whom, he argues, were Phoenician, not Eritrean)⁷⁷ were amongst the original Phoenicians that accompanied Cadmus to Boiotia, and, that amongst many other things, they introduced the alphabet to the Greeks, who then adapted this script to suit their own spoken language.⁷⁸ Indeed, he asserts that it was the Ionian neighbours of the émigré Phoenicians who adopted the language (5.58.1-2), changing the shape of a few letters, but still τὸ δίκαιον ἔφερε, ἐσαγαγόντων Φοινίκων ἐς τὴν Ἑλλάδα, Φοινικῆα κεκλήσθαι ('they call these letters Phoenician, which is only right, since it was the Phoenicians who brought their script to Greece', 5.58.2).

Not content with just citing these cultural linkages between Phoenicians and Greeks as adequate corroboration of his central theory, Herodotus unveils other, supplementary proofs. So he states that 'I have seen some of these Cadmeian writings' (εἶδον δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς Καδμήια γράμματα),⁷⁹ engraved on three dedicatory tripods in the sanctuary of Apollo at Thebes.⁸⁰ The first of these is inscribed: Ἀμφιτρυῶν μ' ἀνέθηκ' ἐνάρων ἀπὸ Τηλεβοάων ('Amphitryon dedicated me from the spoils of Teleboai', 5.59). What is immediately apparent is that this is the first self-reflexive epigram which Herodotus cites, actively drawing the reader closer to the object that is being dedicated. Indeed the next verse, which Herodotus meticulously quotes as being recorded in hexameters (ἔξαμέτρῳ τόνῳ, 5.60), also speaks in the first person:

Σκαῖος πυγμαχέων με ἐκηβόλω Ἀπόλλωνι⁸¹
νικήσας ἀνέθηκε τεινερικαλλῆς ἄγαλμα.

⁷⁷ The language here is quintessentially Herodotean, as he states that the Gephyraioi 'according to their account, originated from Eretria. But, *as I have discovered through my own inquiries* (ὥς δὲ ἐγὼ ἀπαυνοθανόμενος εὐρίσκω), they were Phoenicians'; cf. Gray (2007) esp.210-12, whose article well brings out the wider significance of this episode in Herodotus' long analeptic pendant (5.57.1-97.3) midway through Book Five. On *analepseis* in Herodotus, see de Jong (2002).

⁷⁸ Herodotus, of course, being essentially right, cf. Nenci I 239-40, noting that the discovery in 1963 of 32 inscribed cylinder-seals in Boiotian Thebes 'confermano le notizie erodotee'. On the pervasiveness of Greek accounts which emphasise the barbarian origins of the Greek alphabet, a trope that persists in Roman culture, see Woolf (1994) 84.

⁷⁹ Cf. my discussion above on 2.102-10, where at 2.106 Herodotus similarly interjects with a statement of his own autopsy of inscribed objects, further confirming the central premise that Sesostris was an exceptional pharaoh. Marincola (1997) 101, n.190 notes that this is, in fact, the sole explicit statement of autopsy in Greece in the whole of the *Histories*, arguing that autopsy is used precisely because Herodotus is being polemical with other Greek theorists (i.e. Hecataeus and Dionysius of Miletus, *FGrHist* 1 F20 and 687 F1 respectively). While it is indeed likely that Herodotus is being polemical here, Marincola's explanation does not fully explain the problem of why Herodotus does not refer to his own autopsy in other polemical passages in the later books; for one can hardly maintain that this is the only instance of polemic in the more Hellenocentric books!

⁸⁰ For other tripods in early Greek culture, see Papelexandrou (2005) esp.9-64, cf. 34-7 for the Cadmeian inscriptions in Herodotus. For a comparable (archaic) epigram which displays considerable verbal similarities to the epigrams in Hdt.5.59-61, see *CEG* 326, cf. further discussion in Day (2010) 33ff.

⁸¹ Day (2010) 131 n.2 cites other epigraphic (e.g. *CEG* 338) and literary (e.g. *Il.* 16.513) examples which show that this is a common formula for Apollo.

Scaius, the victorious boxer, dedicated me to you,
Far-shooting Apollo, to be a beautiful *agalma* for your temple. (5.60).⁸²

And, following this, Herodotus records the lines of the third inscribed tripod (once again noting that it is a hexametric verse),⁸³ which runs:

Λαοδάμας τρίποδ' αὐτὸς ἐυσκοπῶ Ἀπόλλωνι
μουναρχέων ἀνέθηκε τέϊν περικαλλῆς ἄγαλμα.

King Leodamas himself dedicated this tripod to you,
Clear-sighted Apollo, to be a beautiful *agalma* for your temple.⁸⁴ (5.61.1).

While only the first of these two additional verses speaks in the first person, both epigrams are consistent in their specific address to you, compelling you the reader to temporarily play the role of Apollo.⁸⁵

Stephanie West has uncovered several puzzling features in this digression, and cites Herodotus' quotation of these epigrams as a clear instance of his failure to live up to the role of epigraphist.⁸⁶ While many of West's manifold concerns are indeed difficult to shake off, particularly Herodotus' belief that there was a distinct relationship between the early Boiotian script and Ionic,⁸⁷ it is not my intention here to offer an *apologia* for Herodotus, or even to attempt some sort of textual reconstruction which better fits current scholarly views on the development of the early Greek alphabet. I do however wish to make two vital points. First, Herodotus is almost certainly touching upon a controversial issue in tackling the history of the Greek alphabet, as can be inferred by his remark that 'the Greeks, as far as I can tell (ὥς ἐμοὶ δοκέειν), *did not have the alphabet* before Cadmus' (58.1).⁸⁸ And in

⁸² See Day (2010) 124-9 on the problems of translating the term *agalma* as 'statue', 'dedication', etc.

⁸³ Such fastidiousness is a common occurrence in Herodotus' text, cf. e.g. 1.23, where Herodotus notes that Arion διθύραμβον πρῶτον ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἢ μεῖζ' ἴδμεν ποιήσαντά τε καὶ ὀνομάσαντα.

⁸⁴ On the predominantly sacred context of much early public writing, especially written laws, see Thomas (1995) 73.

⁸⁵ On Greek inscriptions and the silent reader, see esp. the important contributions in Svenbro (1993) chs.2-3 and *passim*; cf. also (more broadly) Knox (1968) 421-435.

⁸⁶ West (1985), note especially: '[Herodotus] has turned an ingenious but ill-founded speculation into what purports to be sober epigraphical scholarship' (294-5). Powell (1991) is less condemnatory, allowing Herodotus some margin for error: 'Herodotus was wrong about Kadmos...Herodotus' story is a legendary account of the historical fact that the alphabet did come from Phoenicia. Because Kadmos was the famous legendary migrant from Phoenicia, it was logical to assume that he brought with him Phoenicia's most celebrated export' (9-10).

⁸⁷ West (1985) 293; on early Greek scripts, see Jeffery (1990).

⁸⁸ Clearly Herodotus is behind Hyginus' mythological account of first inventions, *Fab. 277.2*: Has autem Graecas Mercurius in Aegyptum primus detulisse dicitur, ex Aegypto Cadmus in Graeciam...

order to consolidate his own contribution to this debate, Herodotus displays the full range of his inquisitorial powers, citing various aspects of contemporary Ionian literary culture which support his belief that the Greek script is derived from Phoenician. But not satisfied with just this, he extends this with evidence adduced from personal autopsy of the Phoenician-derived writings (cf. 2.44, where he states that he had been in Phoenicia), ultimately drawing on these three inscribed epigrams as further testimony that the Greek script is profoundly indebted to Cadmus. By the end of this excursus, the reader is overwhelmed with various types of proof. In this way, the example of the Cadmeian writings is another case where Herodotus can be seen to construct an elaborate historical argument—in this case, concerning the true origins of the Greek alphabet—partly by appealing to epigraphic records.⁸⁹ Indeed it is here more than anywhere else in his text that Herodotus most explicitly encourages his reader to view inscriptions as a substantive feature of the historian's tool box, with the potential to function as persuasive, historical evidence.⁹⁰

Secondly, it is striking that Herodotus seeks to offer an historical—as opposed to mythical—account regarding the roots of the Greek written language. While patently unaware of other early scripts like Linear B, and their own potentially substantial influence on the Phoenician language, Herodotus is determined to uncover a verifiable explanation which avoids ascribing this significant technological change to a mythical figure such as a Palamedes,⁹¹ Orpheus, etc., as other authors had done before him.⁹² His application of the Cadmeian inscriptions is thus inextricably part of a broader rationalising agenda that can be detected elsewhere in his work. Incidentally, it is also worth noting that Herodotus introduces these paleo-Hellenic inscriptions in a relatively uncontroversial manner, suggesting that he and his audience were relatively comfortable with the notion that the Greek alphabet had a substantial history—a notion that may of course bespeak the Greeks' collective amnesia about the precise origins of their language. As Rosalind Thomas notes, his use of these inscriptions is 'less a sign of naive credulity than an interesting attempt to illuminate really

⁸⁹ A point that even West concedes (1985, p.292).

⁹⁰ Cf. Nenci I ad.59: 'le tre iscrizioni greche delle quali è stato ritrovato anche il testo epigrafico provano la assoluta fedeltà erodotea all'originale.' Hornblower III ad.6.55.1 cites this excursus as the closest parallel to Thuc. 6.54-9, which, he argues, shows Thucydides adducing inscriptions in a manner not dissimilar from a modern historian.

⁹¹ For Palamedes as the inventor of the alphabet, see Hyg. *Fab.* 277.1: Palamedes autem Nauplii filius inuenit aequae litteras undecim, (though Simonides and Epicharmus of Sicily are also credited with inventing four and two letters respectively); cf. the pervasive focus on writing in Euripides' *Palamedes*, see Torrance (2010) 219-22.

⁹² As already noted by HW II 26; cf. Pelling (2007a) 197, who makes a number of comparisons between the structure of this passage and of the *Histories* more broadly, and well remarks on the demythologised nature of this passage ('no Prometheus, no Palamedes, no Musaeus, even if there is a Cadmus...it is all on a human level'), and the similarly 'Phoenician-rich' prologue ('no metamorphosis into a bull, no Golden Fleece, no divine beauty contest'; see further West (2002) 8-15 on demythologisation in Herodotus' opening chapters, cf. Thomas (2000) 268.

distant periods from which—unlike the recent past—little oral tradition survived'.⁹³ Herodotus' attempted rationalisation of the Greek alphabet thus stands as a sincere, if unsatisfactorily brief, excursion into the Greeks' more extended past, and illustrates an acute awareness of the value of inscriptions as documentary evidence.

The final passage I wish to consider here also includes three dedicatory epigrams, but this time functioning rather as commemorative tokens for those Greeks who heroically died at Thermopylae.⁹⁴ Amongst the tributes paid to those who fought, Herodotus lists both physical and spoken μνημόσυνα ('memorials'). There is a lion which commemorates Leonidas (7.225.2), symbolic in its echoing of his name and immense valour; a series of spoken 'sayings' by the Spartan Dieneces (7.226), who, after being told that the gargantuan enemy will block out the sun with their arrows, merely quipped that this was good news, as the battle would be fought in the shade; and lastly (7.228), a series of inscribed epigrams, paying tribute to those who died during the battle and those who died before Leonidas dismissed the others.⁹⁵

The first, dedicated to those who fought and died at Thermopylae, reads:

μυριάσιν ποτὲ τῆ δὲ τριηκοσίαις ἔ μάχοντο
ἔ κ Πελοποννάσου χιλιάδες τέτορες.

Three million were once stood here;
They fought against four thousand from the Peloponnese.

Next, a Spartan-centric one:

ὦ ξεῖν' , ἄ γγέλλειν Λακεδαιμονίοις ὅ τι τῆ δὲ

⁹³ Thomas (1989) 90.

⁹⁴ Higbie (2010) 185 discuss' the significance of commemorative epigrams in the decades following the Persian Wars, as they provided clear evidence of whether a city or individual actually fought. Cf. also 6.14.3, where Herodotus reports that those Samians who stayed and fought at the battle of Lade in 494 BCE were honoured with an inscription of their names and their fathers' names, which stood 'on a stele in the agora'. Given Herodotus' familiarity with Samos, there seems no reason to doubt that he saw this item, cf. Nenci II ad loc., Fabiani (2003) 172 ('Erodoto...abbia sentito il bisogno di appoggiarsi a un documento epigrafico, che dimostra ancora una volta di avere per lo storico di Alicarnasso una fortissima capacità confermativa').

⁹⁵ = 'Simonides' VI, XXII *FGE*. This section of Herodotus is perhaps the most lucid indicator of the *Histories'* writeness, richly adorned with writing-related terms: ἔ πηγέγραπται γράμματα (7.228.1); ἔ πηγέγραπται (7.228.2); ἔ πηγράμμασι, ἔ πηγράμμα, ἔ πηγράψας (7.228.4), cf. Livingstone and Nisbet (2010) 35. For these three epigrams, see esp. Petrovic (2007b) 62-79, and the adjoining commentary at pp.231-5.

κείμεθα τοῖς κείνων ῥήμασι πειθόμενοι.

O Stranger! Go and tell those in the Peloponnese that
We lie here having followed their command.

And the third, dedicated to the Spartan seer Megistias, said to be commissioned by his guest-friend Simonides (in contrast to the first two, commissioned by the Amphictyones):⁹⁶

μνημα τόδε κλεινοῖο Μεγιστία, ὃν ποτε Μηδοί
Σπερχειὸν ποταμὸν κτεῖναν ἀμειψάμενοι,
μάντιος, ὃς τότε κήραξ ἐπερχομένας⁹⁷ σάφα εἰδὼς
οὐκ ἔτλη Σπάρτης ἡγεμόνας προλιπεῖν.

Here lies the memorial (μνημα) of the celebrated Megistias,
Who fell when the Persians crossed the Spercheius River;
A seer, who clearly envisaged his own fate,
Yet could not bear to leave the Spartan leader.

This second triptych of epigrams in Herodotus is especially evocative for the reader, not only because of its emotional restraint, almost entirely refusing to elaborate on the outcome of the soldiers' defiant heroism, but, also in its steady progression from the general to the specific, starting with the four thousand Peloponnesians and ending with Simonides' (self-composed?) epitaph for Megistias.⁹⁸ However, though not to the same extent as the Cadmeian inscriptions, there are a number of problems with the first of these lines. Herodotus has already informed the reader previous to this passage that both the Spartans and the Thespians fought at Thermopylae (7.226.1), and yet, the first of these three

⁹⁶ Page argues that for the Simonidean ascription 'Herodotus had no source but oral tradition' (*FGE*, 196); *pace* Sider (2007) esp.116-7 arguing that Simonides may well have published an original collection of epitaphs, to which he and others inserted additional poems. See also Vannicelli (2007) on the co-mingling of documentary and oral sources here, showing how the Spartanocentric traditions eclipse the deeds performed by non-Spartans at Thermopylae.

⁹⁷ Petrovic (2007b) 235 notes 'Das Bild der kommenden Keren is seit Homer vorhanden', citing *Od.*14.207-8 ('ἀλλ' ἦ τοι τὸν κήραξ ἔβαν θανάτοιο φέρουσαι | εἰς Ἄϊδαο δόμους').

⁹⁸ It seems clear enough that Herodotus' references to the commissioners of each epigram is strictly concerned with their financing; there is no reason to doubt that he assumes Simonidean authorship of all three epigrams. Cf. Molyneux (1992) 175-9, Petrovic (2007a) 53 and (2007b) 75ff., *contra FGE* 195-6, 231-4, West (1985) 287, n.41, both adamant that the first two epigrams are not Simonidean. Sider (2007) 122-3, takes a more measured approach, and judiciously concludes 'All we can say is that Simonidean authorship is consistent with what Herodotus says' (123).

inscriptions makes no reference to the Thespians.⁹⁹ Moreover, it is particularly noticeable that the narrator has painstakingly incorporated these particular epitaphic verses into his text, ultimately forming a neat triad, as Herodotus does in his exegesis on the three inscribed tripods he saw at the temple of Apollo in Thebes; such decorous selectivity pushes the reader to question why the Herodotean narrator opted for these particular lines, and indeed whether he (purposefully) ignored other possible commemorative inscriptions at Thermopylae—some of which have been quoted by later authors.¹⁰⁰ (Though it should be noted in this context that the second and third epigrams, which are both quoted *verbatim*, present no obvious textual difficulties; indeed Pritchett astutely notes that not even Plutarch would call them into question.¹⁰¹)

Regardless of the difficulties surrounding Herodotus' patently selective citation of inscribed records in this passage, it is nevertheless certain that the narrator aims to bestow a great deal of historico-cultural significance upon his chosen epigrams. Indeed his reference to the third, Simonidean epigram—a statement that can only elevate the status of the μνῆμα—well illustrates Herodotus' intention of capturing the reader's attention and adding weight to the epigraphic lines he so carefully incorporates.¹⁰² For whilst it remains the case that Herodotus and his contemporaries would have encountered epic and lyric poetry chiefly within a performative context, perhaps at a public festival or an élite *symposion*,¹⁰³ this reference to Simonides in connection with the Megistias epigram demonstrates that he was equally aware—and made use of—inscribed poetry.¹⁰⁴ This seemingly trivial anecdote in fact conveys a serious point to his reader: epigrams are desirable items, so much so that even a poet as celebrated as Simonides contributed to this relatively undistinguished genre (on

⁹⁹ HW II 230, posit that this epitaph simply refers to the 4000 Peloponnesians who fought at Thermopylae, which would then be quite accurate if one adds 1000 Perioikoi to the 3100 Peloponnesians Herodotus earlier adumbrates at 7.202, and even suggest—somewhat unbelievably—that Herodotus may have clumsily included the Thespians in this number. Page (*FGE* 232-3) is much more scathing, noting that Herodotus 'has seriously misled his audience...we are asked to believe that the Amphictyones approved, as a memorial designed to include the heroic Thespians, whose entire fighting-force was destroyed in the battle, an epigram which does not even mention them'. Contrast now the much less naïve Herodotus in Petrovic (2007a) 57, who (persuasively) argues that 'The obvious discrepancy between Herodotus' report of the Greek forces preparing for the battle and the epigrams invites the reader to probe the true merits of the single *poleis* in the battle of Thermopylae'.

¹⁰⁰ Note especially Strabo 9.4.2, who quotes an ostensibly-Simonidean epitaph for the Locrians who died at Thermopylae, and notes that it was τῆ πρώτῃ τῶν πέ ντε στηλῶν τῶν περὶ Θερμοπύλας ('the first of the five stelae at Thermopylae').

¹⁰¹ Pritchett (1985) 170.

¹⁰² It also has the related effect of elevating the status of inscribed epigrams, cf. Livingstone and Nisbet (2010) 46: 'the proposition that Megistias' epitaph is by Simonides has a number of important implications. It suggests that inscribed epigrams are worth collecting...if Simonides does it, there is no need for epigram to be a subordinated genre.'

¹⁰³ On the *symposion* as an aristocratic institution, see Schmitt-Pantel (1990) esp.15.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Petrovic (2007a) 50-1, who notes that Herodotus always quotes verse inscriptions, whereas he is rather more likely to paraphrase a prose inscription.

Simonides' cultural significance, see further §§5.2, 6 below).¹⁰⁵ The ultimate effect this has on Herodotus' Thermopylae *logos* is all the more striking; while each individual epigram is relatively uncomplicated stylistically speaking, the combined effect of the three epigrams together is more substantial.

Even from this rather limited number of epigrams that Herodotus openly integrates within his text (which of course may account for only a percentage of the total epigrams he in fact discovered whilst conducting his inquiries),¹⁰⁶ one can point yet again towards a much more complex, if inconsistent, use of inscriptions in his work than many have allowed. The epigrammatic triptychs which furnish his Cadmeian and Thermopylae *logoi* both take privileged positions—the former as conclusive evidence of the Greek language's Phoenician origins, the latter as a lasting commemorative for those Greeks who fought and died at Thermopylae. Used in an altogether different way, the Athenian epigram at 5.77, honouring the then nascent democracy, serves a more overtly political point in Herodotus' text, as it illustrates a significant victory for the Athenian democracy to the Herodotean reader, and complicates Herodotus' brief excursus on the virtues of democracy in the succeeding chapter.

3.6 Herodotus Epigraphist

To conclude, Herodotus' text provides a fairly substantial example of the breadth of inscribed records across the Greek and non-Greek world. Many different people—both individuals and communities—erect inscriptions, albeit for radically different ends. Hegemonic figures such as Sesostris and Darius use inscriptions to delineate the lands and peoples which they have subjugated; these inscriptions are used to set up physical boundaries between the free and non-free. Indeed one further instance of this that we have not discussed is that of Croesus, whose inscription erected at the border between Phrygia and Lydia—a monument Xerxes and his army pass *en route* to the Hellespont—'demarcates the boundaries by way of the *grammatōn*' (7.30.2). And as we have seen above, various Greek *poleis* utilise the medium for more commemorative purposes, often to promote the honour of a group

¹⁰⁵ And this practice was by no means limited to Herodotus' text, as the many references to inscribed verses in Plutarch's *De malignitate Herodoti*, written in the first century, makes patently clear. Higbie (2010) 187, n.9 acknowledges the *communis opinio* that the Megistias epigram (7.228) is the only certainly Simonidean epigram in the corpus, cf. Sider (2007) and Livingstone and Nisbet (2010) 45-7 for further discussion.

¹⁰⁶ Aside from the additional epigrams that Pausanias saw at Thermopylae, note also the epitaphs accompanying the graves of the Plataiamachoi (Paus. 9.2.5-6). Indeed, Herodotus states that he had learnt the names of the three hundred Spartiates, but will not list them (7.224.1); surely his knowledge derives from the stele which Pausanias says was erected at Sparta listing the names of the fallen soldiers (3.14.1).

endeavour (6.114.3, 7.228, 8.82.1 [cf. 9.81.1]), or as a lasting tribute for an outstanding individual (e.g. Megistias, 7.228.3).

And beyond these examples, there are other ways in which inscriptions are used by our historian; for they also provide Herodotus the opportunity to establish new ways of settling controversial issues/trouncing the theories of his predecessors.¹⁰⁷ His account on the Phoenician-derived Greek alphabet is distinct in its departure from mythological explanations, instead focussing on the humans who were responsible for its inception and its development, and it is in part the antique inscriptions that he credits having seen for himself in Thebes which enables Herodotus to construct this rationalised, mini-history of writing, thus persuading his audience of its Cadmeian origins. And earlier in Book Two, Herodotus is able to show that Sesostrius in fact conquered more lands than any leader, once again validating his version by appealing to several Sesostrian monuments—some of which were inscribed. As Herodotus re-contextualises the inscription within his work, the inscription is often granted a greater significance, proving key to a particular episode or theory, thus transcending its' original setting. Hence Herodotus' analytical eye magnifies such objects, making them agents in his investigation of the causes into Greek and non-Greek enmity.

Regardless of the significant scholarly cautions which have been levelled against Herodotus, the different strands of this chapter have all worked towards showing that Herodotus' understanding of inscriptions is more cohesive and sophisticated than has been appreciated in the bulk of modern scholarship.¹⁰⁸ For Herodotus, inscriptions are decorous and ornamental, and they can certainly work under this guise in his text; but their power is by no means simply explained in purely aesthetic terms, as Herodotus is equally interested in the profound and challenging messages which they often convey. Indeed, a number of the passages discussed have illuminated the manner in which the narrator discovers and then (often obliquely) relates to his audience, a dynamic, metaphorical relationship between the revelatory character of these ambiguous epigraphic materials, and his own role as critic of the past. And perhaps most importantly of all, many of Herodotus' epigraphical allusions are inextricably bound with the rhetoric of autopsy: Herodotus may confirm a particular *logos* by reference to an inscription, which either implicitly or explicitly, assures the reader of its truth value. Such a diverse application of inscriptions of course reinforces the point that Herodotus' work is not that of a modern historian, but in this emphasis on inscriptions seen, Herodotus anticipates the beginnings of epigraphic scholarship.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Fabiani (2003) 170-1.

¹⁰⁸ However, note the excellent remarks in Fabiani (2003) 179-82, ('È per questo che di esse egli compie un utilizzo mirato e consapevole, tanto consapevole da riuscire a modulare il loro uso in base al tipo di conoscenza e di attendibilità che esse erano in grado di fornire' p.182).

Chapter 4

Herodotus' Great War

τὴν ποίησιν ἄπασαν καὶ νομίζω καὶ ὀνομάζω λόγον
ἔχοντα μέτρον.

— Gorgias of Leontini¹

We are saddled with a culture that hasn't advanced as far as science. Scientific man is already on the moon, and yet we are still living with the moral concepts of Homer.

— Michelangelo Antonioni²

Memory is firmly in the realm of the symbolic, fixing in language for all time what has gone before and given it meaning: without such monumentalization, events are literally meaningless.

— Don Fowler³

4.1 Herodotus, Poets, and the Past

As we discovered in chapter two, Herodotus scarcely quotes a prose author by name—a gap which undoubtedly leads many to question how far such figures impacted his project, and indeed where he stands in the tradition of writing about the past in a prose, rather than poetic, metre.⁴ This dearth of prose figures in the Herodotean work is somewhat negated, of course, by the multitudinous references provided by a range of later writers, to (mostly) un-extant prose authors writing shortly before or at the same time as Herodotus.⁵ Indeed our investigation into Herodotus' relationship with other prose figures has revealed that he is by no means unaware of other prose works dedicated to all manner of inquiries; but, as is best illustrated by his criticisms of the geographer Hecataeus and (un-named) map-makers (2.143-5 and 4.36 respectively), he is pointedly critical of earlier prose works vis-à-vis their accuracy, and thus their more limited authority in comparison to historiographical research.

¹ Gorg. DK 9.B.11.

² in Samuels (1987) 19.

³ (2000) 166-7.

⁴ Certainly Dionysus of Halicarnassus can think of no work, shaped with the same scope and panoptical vision as the *Histories* that predates Herodotus (*De. Thuc.* 5). On Herodotus and early prose writers, see ch.2 *passim*; cf. Fowler (1996), (2006); Schepens (2007) 39-47.

⁵ See esp. Fowler (1996). Clarke (2008) esp.185-91, ch.6, is more cautious. *Pace* Jacoby (1913) *passim*, for whom local historiography arises out of universal historiography.

In contrast to the paucity of explicit references to prose authors, Herodotus lists some fourteen poets by name.⁶ Indeed Herodotus' monumental work demonstrates a close affinity to a variety of poetic genres, from the grandiloquent Homeric epics, to the rather more ascetic elegiac couplet. While it is not possible here to explore every aspect of Herodotus' extensive engagement with the myriad different poetic works that helped inspire his project,⁷ the next three chapters offer a wide-ranging analysis of his relationship with earlier poetry, looking at specific figures or genres that are especially important in the formation of early historiography. The present chapter explores Herodotus' attitude to the distant past as commemorated in epic poetry, chiefly addressing a number of passages which form allusive and intertextual relationships with his most famous predecessor, Homer.⁸ The next chapter examines his use of more recent poetic works, namely Simonides' elegy for those who fought at Plataea, which sought to monumentalize contemporary events, elevating them to the level of the heroic past. The third and final chapter on Herodotus' poetic sources considers the impact of the tragedians on Herodotus' conception of history, examining how far they shaped his version of the events of 490-79 BCE. This necessarily focuses most acutely on the oldest extant drama, Aeschylus' *Persae*, a work which informs significant parts of Books Seven to Nine of the *Histories*, along with Aeschylus' great successor Sophocles, whose profound insights into *la condition humaine* denote a complex interrelationship between tragedian and historian.

The citation and evocation of earlier poetry reveals an important historiographical tactic on Herodotus' part, since he is able to extend his own authority by engaging closely with his poetic predecessors. However, as much as the discursive persona that Herodotus establishes with earlier poets reveals his own superior understanding and appreciation of Greek intellectual discourse in prior times, this same persona also reveals the limitations of these works' ability to convey an accurate portrait of the past, thus throwing into sharp relief the superiority of his own genre, circumspect as our author is to the various epistemological constraints placed on humanity.⁹

⁶ Aeschylus (2.156), Alcaeus (5.95), Anacreon (3.121), Archilochus (1.132), Arion (1.32), Aristaeus of Proconnesus (4.113-6), Hesiod (2.53; 4.32), Homer (2.23, 53, 116-7; 4.29, 32), Olen of Lycia (4.35), Phrynichus (6.21), Pindar (3.38), Sappho (2.135), Simonides (5.102; 7.228), Solon (5.113). All but Anacreon are explicitly recognised for their literary activity, cf. Verdin (1977) 55. West (2004b) 80 also remarks on his debt to poetry for myriad events within recent memory.

⁷ For a general overview of this topic, see West (2004b), Marincola (2006), with further bibliography.

⁸ Note the sixth-century regulation that Homer alone was to be recited at the Panathenaea, cf. Isoc. *Paneg.* 159, Plato *Hipparchus* 228B.

⁹ Cf. *Pi. Pae.* 6.51-8, where the author acknowledges that some things cannot be known. For an inventory of passages wherein Herodotus expresses ignorance, see Lateiner (1989) 69-72.

4.2 The *Histories* and Epic

It has been long been recognised—and no doubt was recognised even more so amongst his contemporary audience—that Herodotus’ prose manner displays a profound debt to earlier epic poetry.¹⁰ This is no more clearly expressed than in Pseudo-Longinus’ famous remark that Herodotus is *homērikōtatōs* (“most Homeric”).¹¹ And to this we may now add the recently-discovered Salmakis inscription from the mid-to-late second century BCE, declaring Herodotus τὸν πεζὸν ἐν ἰστορίαισιν Ὅμηρον.¹² It is remarkable, then, that such a striking sobriquet as this should not have subsequently encouraged a more extensive investigation into Herodotus’ relationship with Homer than has generally been the case.¹³ Indeed until more recently, critical analyses had not proceeded very far from Dionysius of Halicarnassus’ unsophisticated observation that Herodotus ‘wished to provide variety (ποικίλην) within his text by imitating Homer’.¹⁴

This notion that Herodotus mimicked Homer for purely stylistic reasons is undoubtedly a much too simplistic picture, however, as evinced by the prolific number of recent studies that have addressed various questions relating to Herodotus’ debt to the language and content of the Homeric corpus, as well as epic poetry more broadly.¹⁵ So Christopher Pelling has explored various *topoi* from Herodotus’ work which can be used to elucidate current understandings of Homer and the epic cycle during the fifth century.¹⁶ Focussing specifically on Herodotus’ reading of Homer in the Helen *logos*, de Jong illustrates the way in which Herodotus reinforces the characteristic elements of his own research procedure (*akoē*, *opsis*, and *gnōmē*).¹⁷ Other scholars have centred more acutely on exploring the inclusion of

¹⁰ For the far-reaching impact that the epic tradition exerted on Greek historiography, see above all Strasburger (1972); Hornblower (1994a) 7-15, 64ff.; Marincola (2007).

¹¹ [Longinus] *Subl.* 13.3. Cf. also Plutarch’s remarks on Herodotus’ bard-like delicacy and smoothness coupled with his lack of true knowledge (*De mal. Herod.* 43), a critique which transforms Longinus’ positive appeal to Homer, instead referring to Homer as a way of classing Herodotus as one of the lying poets, Kurke (2011) 385.

¹² See principally Isager (1998).

¹³ On Homeric intertexts in Herodotus, see Wesselmann (2011) 37ff., Pelling (2006a), (2013) 7-13.

¹⁴ Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 3 (ποικίλην ἐβουλήθη ποιῆσαι τῆν γραφὴν Ὀμήρου ζηλωτῆς γενόμενος).

¹⁵ The bibliography on Herodotus’ relationship with Homer has expanded exponentially in the last twenty years, but the following works should be consulted at the first instance: Jacoby (1913) 491ff., 502-4, Aly (1921) 263-77, Strasburger (1972); Huber (1965); Neville (1977); Hunter (1982) esp.52-65; Stambler (1982) 210-12; Fornara (1983) 62-3, 76-7; Lang (1984) 37-51; Woodman (1988) ch.1; Huxley (1989); Griffin (1990); Erbse (1992) 122-32; Moles (1993) 97; Hornblower (1994a) 65-7; Romm (1998) 13-18; de Jong (1999); Pelling (1999) 332-5, (2006a); Graziosi (2002) 111-118; Grethlein (2006), (2010) esp.151-8; Baragwanath (2008) 35-54; Marincola (2006b), (2007); Barker (2009) 138-43; Kurke (2011) 382-5, 394; cf. now Sammons (2012), and the contributions by Saïd, de Jong and de Bakker in Baragwanath and de Bakker (2012).

¹⁶ Pelling (2006a).

¹⁷ de Jong (2012).

Homeric allusions and parallels in Herodotus' monumental work.¹⁸ For instance, Grethlein has focussed on the tendency of various individuals or communities to cite Homeric *exempla* in order to legitimise present actions, and how this is contrasted with Herodotus' much more critical appeals to this mode of memory, 'namely to highlight issues of his own time'.¹⁹ The result of these analyses is a rather more nuanced understanding of the relationship between Homer and Herodotus, as Boedeker puts it: 'it is no exaggeration,...to say that without Homeric epic's sustained narrative of great deeds behind it, the *Histories* would not exist at all; and without its variegated reflections of epic style, it would be a very different work.'²⁰

In contrast to the chapter which follows, where I examine Herodotus' opaque relationship with Simonides' extensive poetic output—particularly the recently-discovered “new Simonides”, this chapter principally explores the various passages in the *Histories* which provide an explicit or implicit reference either to Homer's poetry or indeed to the poet himself. In particular it will be shown that Herodotus intentionally sets about to demonstrate his impressive knowledge of the Homeric works; and this, in a remarkable passage, even leads him to include a detailed critique of Homer's work in terms of the history it conveys. In addition, Herodotus shapes his narrative in a way that reflects the similarities and differences between the epic world and the reality of 480-79 BCE. But first I will begin with a brief re-examination of the much-discussed opening chapters of Herodotus' monumental *logos*, showing how it is here that he quickly establishes his authority as an accurate authority on past events—both recent and not so recent—by consciously paying homage to the cultural achievements of his epic predecessor, and simultaneously, by rejecting the methods of the effaced epic poet, whose *logos* is wholly reliant on the Muse.²¹

Though no explicit mention of Homer occurs until 2.23 (a passage in which Herodotus contends that Homer 'or some other poet' invented the name Ocean, see §4.3 below), there are a number of clear, epic influences and Homeric allusions which precede this reference—and this is no more true than in the *Histories*' opening chapters. Indeed it hardly needs to be reinforced here that Herodotus' proem is heavily indebted to that of the *Iliad*, with its focus on preserving 'the great and marvellous deeds displayed by Greeks and non-Greeks alike, so that they may not be without their glory (ἀ κλέῃ)'²², and in Herodotus' stated intention of

¹⁸ E.g. Jacoby (1913) 502-4, Hornblower (1994a) 65-9, Boedeker (2002) 100-9, Grethlein (2006), Saïd (2012) *passim*.

¹⁹ Grethlein (2010) 158-87 (quote at p.184), cf. (2006).

²⁰ Boedeker (2002) 109.

²¹ For an overview, see Marincola (1997) 3ff.

²² Cf., e.g., *Il.* 9.189, 524; *Od.* 1.338; see further Fornara (1971) 35, Marincola (2006) 17; cf., e.g., Leonidas' desire for κλέεσσι at Thermopylae (7.220.2). Most striking of all, as noted by Bakker (2002) 27, is the close verbal parallel between Hector's speech concerning the future at *Il.* 22.304-5 and the

seeking to establish the causes of the Persian Wars.²³ Comparisons to the beginning of the *Odyssey* are also clearly felt, notably when Herodotus writes at the end of his prologue that he will ‘traverse alike the small and great cities of mankind’ (ὁ μοί ὡς συμικρὰ καὶ μεγάλα ὄσ τεα ἄνθρώπων ἐπεξιών, 1.5.3), no doubt intended to evoke the description of Odysseus at the outset of the *Odyssey*: ‘he saw the many cities of mankind’ (πολλῶν δ’ ἄνθρώπων ἴδεν ὄσ τεα).²⁴ Indeed the persona Herodotus constructs in many ways resembles the Homeric Odysseus: he travels unto the ends of the known world in order to inquire about mankind; and he often recounts the results of his (and others’) travels to his audience,²⁵ just as Odysseus reports his travels at various points in the *Odyssey* (most memorably when he is at the court of Alcinous, king of the Phaeacians, in Books Nine to Twelve).²⁶

Alongside these Homeric references to *kleos* and ‘the cities of men’, Herodotus incorporates other verbal allusions to Homer in his work. When the Egyptian king Psammenitus is reduced to tears by the sight of a companion’s spectacular fall into destitution ‘on the threshold of old age’ (ἐπὶ γήραος οὐδῶ, 3.14.10), many of Herodotus’ readers cannot but fail to recall Priam’s speech in the *Iliad*, when he laments his many losses ‘on the threshold of old age’ (ἐπὶ γήραος οὐδῶ, 22.60).²⁷ Although ‘on the threshold of old age’ may have already become a proverbial formula, perhaps even by the time of Homer, the thematic overlap between Psammenitus’ and Priam’s stories—each losing a son and witnessing the derision of a daughter—bolsters the likelihood that Herodotus had this specific passage in

Herodotean proem (μὴ μὰν ἀσπουδί γε καὶ ἀκλειῶς ἀπολοίμην | ἀλλὰ μέγα ῥέξας τι καὶ ἐσομένοισι πυθέσθαι).

²³ For the extensive bibliography on the poetic and epic heritage in Herodotus’ prologue, see further Vandiver (2012) 152, n.33, and Saïd (2012) nn.58-65 with text. I have found the following contributions especially valuable: Erbse (1956); Fornara (1971) 35; Drews (1973) 88-90; Race (1982) 111; Ayo (1984); Nagy (1987) 183-4, (1990) 218-21; Vandiver (1991) 114-124; Pelliccia (1992) 74-80; Moles (1993) 92-8; Calame (1995) esp.78-80; Węcowski (2004) esp.150-3, 155-8; Saïd (2012) 102-5; cf. Munson (2001) 30-2, who observes various important narrative features of Herodotus’ opening, programmatic statement, which, ‘signals at the outset the tensions and complications of the *Histories* themselves, torn between unity and dispersion, fact and meaning, diachrony and synchrony, syntaxis and parataxis’ (30).

²⁴ So, e.g., HW I ad loc., Moles (1993) 92-8, Pelling (1999) 332-3, Harrison (2003) 242, (2006b) 145, Marincola (2006) 14, (2007) 13-5, Chiasson (2012) 123. Węcowski (2004) 155 reads the focus on ‘both great and *small* cities alike’ as an astonishing move away from the more narrow epic focus on grandeur and glory.

²⁵ An obvious example being the Athenian lawgiver Solon, who leaves Athens to ‘see the world’ (1.30.1), spending some time with Amasis in Egypt, before staying in Croesus’ palace in Sardis (1.29-33). The bibliography on this famous passage is too numerous to recount here, see Asheri I 97-9 for further directions.

²⁶ For a thorough investigation into the relationship between Herodotus and Odysseus, see Marincola (2007) esp.13-5, 30-1, 35-9, 45, 52-67, cf. Nagy (1990) 231-3.

²⁷ So HW I ad loc., Huber (1965) 33, Marincola (2003) 645, Pelling (2006a) 87-9, esp.88 with n.35, (2013) 7-8. On Psammenitus’ tears as an example of the ‘laughter, tears and wisdom’ motif found elsewhere in Herodotus, see Flory (1978) 149.

mind.²⁸ Elsewhere, when the Phocaean leader Dionysius urges the Ionians to face the Persians, imploring to his men that ἐπὶ ξυροῦ γὰρ ἀκμῆς ἔχεται ἡμῖν τὰ πρήγματα, ἄνδρες Ἴωνες (‘our fate rests on a razor’s edge, men of Ionia’, 6.11.2), Herodotus is likely to be alluding to a passage in the *Iliad*, in which Nestor attempts to rouse Diomedes into action, so as to avoid the destruction of the Achaeans (10.173-6).²⁹ And before the Ionian engagement, immediately after the Athenians are persuaded to join the Ionian Revolt in Book Five, Herodotus writes that αὖται δὲ αἰνέες ἀρχὴ κακῶν ἐγένοντο Ἑλλησὶ τε καὶ βαρβάροισι (‘These ships [that they sent] were the beginning of evils for the Greeks and non-Greeks alike’, 5.97.3, cf. 6.98.2). This choice of expression, of course, picks up on *Iliad* 5.62-4: ὃς καὶ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ τεκτῆνατο νῆας ἐΐσας | ἀρχεκάκους, αἱ πᾶσι κακὸν ἦ Τρώεσσι γένοντο | οἷ τ’ αὐτῶν (‘[Phereclus] also built for Alexander the seemly ships, the beginning of evils, those [ships] that were the affliction of all Trojans, and of his own self’).³⁰

But while these Homeric allusions, coupled with Herodotus’ prefatory remarks, reveal that his work is inextricably connected to the structure and content of the Homeric epics—a point which applies equally to his more austere rival, Thucydides,³¹ this is not to say that Herodotus considers his work entirely consonant with that of an epic poet, or that he thus avoids issuing any sort of criticism of his celebrated predecessor.³² One thinks here of the “historicizing” prologue, in which the gods’ connivances are elided in the demythologised stories recounted by the Phoenicians and Persian *logioi*.³³ Indeed many scholars have read his decision to avoid passing judgment on the (ostensibly) Persian and Phoenician *logoi* with which Herodotus starts his *logos* (1.1-5), instead preferring to write about Croesus, ‘the first

²⁸As already argued by Pelling (2006a) 88.

²⁹ See further Boedeker (2002) 101-2, Scott (2005) ad loc., and Hornblower (1994a) 66-7, who notes that this is Herodotus’ sole use of the distinctly Homeric verb ἡγορόωντο (‘they spoke’), cf. *Il.* 4.1. For another possible source behind Herodotus’ use of razor’s edge, cf. ‘Simonides’ XII *FGE* (=Aristid. *Or.* 28.66 ~ Plut. *De mal. Herod.* 39): ἀκμῆς ἔστηκον ἂν ἐπὶ ξυροῦ Ἑλλάδα πᾶσαν | ταῖς αὐτῶν ψυχαῖς κείμθα ῥοθιάμενοι.

³⁰ See esp. van der Veen 92ff., Scullion (2006) 195-6. For other uses of this expression in fifth-century literature, see Nenci I ad loc.

³¹ Moles (1993) esp.99-103.

³² For the reception of Homer in archaic and classical Greek literature, see Richardson (1993) 25-35, Graziosi (2002) *passim*. See also Baragwanath (2008) 35-54 on the Homeric background of Herodotus’ work.

³³ The view of Harrison (2000) 33 (‘Quite simply, he felt no need in the Proem to mention the presence of gods’) surely underestimates the historiographical significance of this passage; *contra* Fowler (2010) 327: ‘the move is revolutionary, and programmatic. It marks the beginning of history, and therefore of historiography’, Rood (2010) 48. See also Arieti (1995) 9-11, who argues that the Phoenician *logioi*’s contemptuous attitude to Greek mythic traditions indicates a negative portrait of the Persians in Herodotus, since they have no concern with preserving the *kleos* of Greek traditions (unlike Herodotus).

man whom I know to have instigated unjust deeds (ἀ δίκων ἔργων)³⁴ against the Greeks' (1.5.3),³⁵ as a rejection of mythical aetiologies.³⁶ While it is difficult to sustain such a view for all of Herodotus' work, particularly given the extensive inquiries Herodotus conducts later in Book Two about the truth of Helen's whereabouts during the Trojan War (see §4.3 below), it is certainly the case that Herodotus explicitly prefers to discuss events and present explanations that are verifiable and robust, so that they may hold firm upon close scrutiny,³⁷ unlike *exempli gratia* certain Homeric passages which Herodotus explicitly labels as invented.³⁸ As Robert Fowler puts it: '[in Herodotus] A critical space is opening up between ancient and modern: the old tales cannot deliver what is required because they are not verifiable.'³⁹ The *Histories*' beginning thus signals that Herodotus is not merely an imitator or compiler: Herodotus is preparing the reader for the conflicting traditions that have made his task as researcher and narrative artist so challenging.

And, of course, the authority of Herodotus' account differs in one important sense fundamentally from the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*—the latter works derived from the omniscient Muses, while the more limited account of Herodotus relies on the fruits of his personal inquiries.⁴⁰ A clear illustration of how this affects each work can be seen midway through Book Seven, when Herodotus turns to indicating the vast size of the Persian army (7.60ff.)—an excursus undoubtedly modeled on the Iliadic "Catalogue of Ships".⁴¹ In a fairly extraordinary passage within this section, Herodotus states that the Persians and Medes and Sacae all served on the enemies' ships, before adding that although each contingent had its

³⁴ Similarly, Herodotus uses the formula ἀρχὴ κακῶν at 5.97.3, for which see Pelliccia (1992) 79, Munson (2007) 152-3; cf. *Il.* 1.6, 5.62-3, 11.604; Thuc. 2.12.3 (see p.79 above).

³⁵ This interest in tracing firsts reverberates throughout Herodotus: 1.5.3, 6.2, 23, 94.1, 163.1; 2.188.2; 6.112.3; cf. Harrison (2000a) 75, (2003) 243; and, in early prose writing more broadly, see Fowler (1996) 73-4.

³⁶ See, e.g., Momigliano (1966a): 'he definitely decided that if you want to know something about the causes of the Persian wars, you must not look at Greek myths, you must not look at Homer' (114), cf. also Shimron (1973), Flory (1987) 38-41, Ayo (1984) 32, Lateiner (1989) 38, 42, Thomas (2000) 268, Luraghi (2001b) 156; cf. further examples listed in Węcowski (2004) 154, n.64.

³⁷ Baragwanath (2012b) 36-7, Zali (2011) 64-5. See differently Dewald (2002) 270-1, who in rejecting the idea that Herodotus opens up a *spatium historicum*, argues rather that in distancing himself from these opening *logoi* he establishes a binary opposition of narrative voices: the authorial "I" and the voice of the *histōr*.

³⁸ Cf. 2.21, 116.1-2; see Fowler (2011) esp. 46-8, 59.

³⁹ *Ibid.* (2011) 46. Fowler's sensitive reading of Herodotus and early philosophers, clearly demonstrating how they problematised the Greek myths, provides a compelling reassessment of the *mythos* to *logos* paradigm. On *mythos* and *logos* in Herodotus, see also Nickau (1990) 84ff. (followed by Saïd [2007] 78), who rightly argues against *mythos* connoting a false story concerning the gods in the 420s, proposing Hecataeus as the original source for both passages in which Herodotus applies the term *mythos*; and now Wesselmann (2011) *passim*, cf. 1-43 for a general discussion.

⁴⁰ On the similarities and differences between the Homeric and Herodotean narrator, see the excellent discussion in de Jong (1999) 220-9. Cf. de Jong (2012) 141-2, comparing the authority of the Egyptian priests in the Helen *logos* to that of the Muses in the *Iliad* (e.g. 2.485).

⁴¹ *Il.* 2.484-785, see, e.g., Thomas (2000) 238-9.

own native leader, ‘I will not make mention of them, since it is not necessary within the confines of my history’ (τῶν ἐ γώ, οὐ γὰρ ἀναγκαίη ἐξέρομαι ἐς ἰστορίας λόγον, οὐ παραμέμνημαι, 7.96.1). This bold assertion by the narrator in the first person, implying that he has curtailed the recording of superfluous or extraneous details within his *logos*, in fact has a clear precedent within the earlier Homeric “catalogue”. At the beginning of Homer’s description of those Greeks who went to Troy (*Il.* 2.484f.), the narrator re-invokes the Muses, since ‘you are everywhere and know everything’ (ἴστέ πάντα), but then also remarks on his own ignorance a few lines later, stating that ‘as for the rabble, *I am not able to speak of* (μυθήσομαι) or name them’ (*Il.* 2.488). So it appears, then, that unlike his epic predecessor, who is reliant on external authorities, Herodotus is personally able to vouch for the details which he records regarding the size of the army who fought against Hellas, so much so that he has to select those materials which he deems as being most relevant within his *logos*. But the obtrusive way in which Herodotus points to his own certain knowledge, a notable feature of the *Histories*, clearly points back to Homeric first-person interjections like this; indeed the poet adds just a few lines later that ‘I will now speak of the captains of the ships and number them all’ (ἀρχοῦς αὖ νηῶν ἐρέω νῆας τε προπάσας, *Il.* 2.493).⁴²

4.3 Competing Traditions

Let us move away then from these broader considerations, as we turn to analyse Homeric influence in the *Histories* in more detail. Andrew Ford has recently argued that in contrast to his somewhat gnomic appreciation of lyric poetry, Herodotus displays a real expertise in epic poetry, and this knowledge is derived from having conducted a close and studious analysis of the epic texts.⁴³ And indeed, it is in one of the most well-known passages from the second book of his *Histories* (2.112-120),⁴⁴ in which Herodotus provides a masterful exposition of competing Trojan War traditions, that we can more than glimpse both his appreciation—and use of—Homer as a fixed (one might even contend, written) text.⁴⁵ For it is here that Herodotus most clearly illustrates his belief that regardless of its poetic nature, Homer’s poetry nevertheless offers a narrative based on real, historical events.⁴⁶ This section of the

⁴² Cf. 7.20.2 where Herodotus makes an explicit distinction between the (superior) size of Xerxes’ army with other historical examples, including the forces of Menelaus and Agamemnon at Troy.

⁴³ Ford (2002) 148.

⁴⁴ On this passage, see useful remarks in: Fornara (1971) 19ff.; Neville (1977); Hunter (1982) 52-65; Lloyd III 43-52; Fehling (1989) 59-65; Vandiver (1991) 124-32; Pritchett (1993) 63-71; Austin (1994) 118-36; West (2002) 31-9; Graziosi (2002) 113-8; Corcella (2006) 44-5; Grethlein (2010) 151-8; Sammons (2012); and now, the contributions of de Jong, and de Bakker in Baragwanath & de Bakker (2012).

⁴⁵ For an overview of the role Homeric tradition plays in Herodotus’ Egyptian *logos*, see Lloyd I 121-3.

⁴⁶ On Herodotus’ firm belief in the Trojan War, partially affirmed by his Egyptian sources, see, *inter alia*, Hunter (1982) 53f., Vandiver (1991) 127, Stadter (2004) esp.33-8, Grethlein (2010) 153, and

Egyptian *logos* has long been recognised as an extraordinary section of the *Histories*, particularly since Herodotus attempts to disprove the commonly held belief that the “real” Helen was held captive in Troy.⁴⁷ He begins somewhat emphatically, stating that the Egyptian priests, those learned authorities whom he ostensibly consults for much of his Egyptian *logos*,⁴⁸ told him (ἔλεγον μοι)⁴⁹ about the events concerning Helen (2.113.1, cf. 2.118.1-120.1).⁵⁰ They inform him that Paris had intended to travel back with Helen to his native Troy, but after being driven off course by violent winds, the couple landed in Egypt. Here Paris would eventually be caught and arrested, before being taken to King Proteus in Memphis.⁵¹ Paris, Herodotus informs us, though guilty of breaking the laws of hospitality,⁵²

now Saïd (2012) *passim*. For other Homeric/epic themes and reminiscences in his *Aigyptios logos*, see Lloyd (1990) 227f.

⁴⁷ Indeed, challenging long-held (but under-critiqued) Greek assumptions seems to me one of the chief motivations behind Herodotus’ decision to write his *Histories*; cf. Cartledge and Greenwood (2002) 363: ‘[Herodotus’] innovative research sometimes cuts across or directly contradicts the received assumptions of his Greek audience’.

⁴⁸ Fehling (1989) 59-65 argues that here Herodotus, like elsewhere, has fabricated the entire story, in part because the Egyptians could not possibly have invented the story of Helen’s stay in their country; cf. West (2002) ‘it is much too readily assumed that Egyptians—and other non-Greeks—were likely to interest themselves in Hellenic legend...the Egyptians had no reason to regard [the Greeks] as culturally or intellectually superior’ (36). Regardless of this considerable scepticism, Lloyd I 89-113 provides an especially valuable discussion on those passages in which Herodotus purportedly derives his information from the priests, including many useful insights into the long-standing cultural interaction between Greeks and Egyptians, which almost certainly would then have influenced the priests’ accounts on, for example, Egyptian history; cf. the sagacious remarks in Moyer (2002), and now (2011) 42-3. Of course, this is not to say that we should therefore too readily assume that Herodotus’ account is a verbatim report based on the Egyptian priests’ knowledge; indeed, de Jong (2012) shows the considerable extent to which Herodotus’ hand is at work in this narrative, demonstrating the prevalence here of ‘the story pattern of the enquiring king, the motif of incredulity, and the principle of divine retribution’ (141)—all characteristically Herodotean themes.

⁴⁹ For all the characteristics of Herodotean *historiē* at work in this *logos*, and the similar methodology employed by the priests, see de Bakker (2012) 119-22, de Jong (2012) 128-32, 141-2. While Herodotus differs markedly from Homer, inasmuch that the latter derived his authority from an external source, i.e. the Muses, there is already in Homer a distinction between information derived from autopsy, and that from hearsay (e.g. *Od.* 3.93-5: εἴ που ὁ πῶπας | ὁ φθαλμοῖ σι τεοῖ σιν ἦ ἄλλου μῦθον ἄκουσας | πλαζομένου); see further Ford (1992) 105-9, Saïd (2011) 91-3.

⁵⁰ Cf. D.Chr. 11.37ff.

⁵¹ Herodotus and his Egyptian informants are not the first to challenge the common-held view that Helen went to Troy either. Hesiod refers to an *eidōlon* ‘phantom’ of Helen at Troy, and Stesichorus states in his *Palinode* that Helen did not ‘arrive at the citadel of Troy’ (Hesiod: F 358 Merkelbach-West; Stesichorus: *PMG* 193~Pl. *Phdr.* 243a), see further West (2002) 33-6, (2004b) 88-9; cf. too the Gorgianic *Encomium of Helen*, a work which probably predates Herodotus (see below), whereby the author rebukes the ‘univocal and unanimous’ (poetic) interpretations of Helen’s life (*Hel.* 9). Moreover Diels (1887) 441-4, followed by Lloyd III esp.47, proposes Hecataeus as the likely source (based on the reference to Menelaus’ journey in *FGrHist* 1 FF307-8). But aside from the *Helen*, even if Herodotus was indeed familiar with these earlier repudiations of Homer’s version, their relative brevity stands in stark contrast to his own vastly-extended and multi-layered critique of existing traditions, which more than glances towards the limitations of the poetic genre as defined by Thucydides (1.9-10). For further bibliography, see de Jong (2012) 128, n.3. cf. de Bakker (2012) 109, n.6, who outlines the contours of the ongoing debate about the sources which inspired Herodotus’ version of Helen’s role during the Trojan War.

⁵² Cf. *Il.* 3.351-4: Ζεῦ ἄνα δὸς τίσασθαι ὃ με πρότερος κάκ’ ἔοργε | δῖον Ἀλέξανδρον, καὶ ἔμῃς ὑπὸ χερσὶ δάμασσον, | ὃ φρα τις ἔρριγῆ σι καὶ ὃ ψιγόνων ἀνθρώπων | ξεινοδόκον κακὰ ῥέξαι, ὃ κεν φιλότητα παράσχη. For the *xeinia* concept in Herodotus’ Proteus passage as an allusion

was treated with the highest respect by Proteus, but was nonetheless ordered to leave Egypt, while Helen would stay behind in the safe hands of the King (2.115.4-6).⁵³

It is then at this point that Herodotus reflects on Homer's awareness of this alternative narrative: far from being ignorant of these events, 'it appears to me that Homer was in fact well informed of this account,' but did not use it, 'considering it to be less suitable for an epic poem than the one he used' (δοκέει δέ μοι καὶ Ὅμηρος τὸν λόγον τοῦτον πυθέσθαι...ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ ὁμοίως ἐς τὴν ἐποποιίην εὐπρεπῆς ἦν τῷ ἐτέρῳ τῷ περὶ ἐχρήσατο, 2.116.1).⁵⁴ In support of this, he refers directly to a passage in the *Iliad*, in which Hecabe ascends to her chamber:

ἔνθ' ἔσαν οἱ πέπλοι παμποίκιοι, ἔργα γυναικῶν
 Σιδονίων, τὰς αὐτὸς Ἀλέξανδρος θεοειδῆς
 ἦγαγε Σιδονίηθεν, ἐπιπλῶς εὐρέα πόντον,
 τὴν ὁδὸν ἣν ἔλενην περὶ ἀνήγαγεν εὐπατέρειαν.

and there were all-embroidered robes, the *erga* of Sidonian women, whom God-like Alexandros himself led from Sidon,
 sailing over the broad sea,
 on that journey in which he brought the noble-born Helen.

So here it is Paris' connection with the Syria-dwelling Sidonian women which leads Herodotus to detect that Homer knew of his wanderings, concluding that these verses (τοῖσι ἔπεσι) show Homer knew perfectly well of Paris' diverted trip to Egypt, 'for Syria borders upon Egypt, and the Phoenicians, who constitute Sidon, dwell in Syria' (2.116.6). The narrator hardly regards these Homeric lines as being recondite or difficult to attain; there is no mention of any difficulty attached to his obtaining this highly-specific citation, and to all intents and purposes, Herodotus appears to have incorporated the Homeric lines with relative ease. Indeed, Herodotus again quotes from the *Odyssey* at 4.29, a passage which he uses to support his theory that the horns in an animal's head grow more quickly in hot countries than in cold ones.⁵⁵ What is also interesting here is Herodotus' similarly reverent treatment of the

to the Homeric epic, see Vandiver (2012) 146-55, and for a broader investigation into the allusive relationship between the Herodotean and Homeric Proteus, see de Bakker (2012) 118-22, *passim*.

⁵³ For the contrast between the Helen of Homer and Stesichorus and Herodotus' distinctively imperial Helen, see Austin (1994) esp.127-36. I am not convinced by West's view that Herodotus' account is 'quite plainly a version of Stesichorus' (2004b, 89).

⁵⁴ On what criteria Herodotus might have deemed as suitable for epic poetry, see further Ford (2002) 150, Pallantza (2005) 154, Grethlein (2010) 155.

⁵⁵ Cf. Corcella ad loc.

Homeric corpus, since he clearly believes that the citation of Homer acts as an effective proof for his own researches.⁵⁶

Having posited that Homer was in fact aware of the true version of events related by the Egyptian priests, Herodotus then halts the narrative to show that Homer cannot be the author of the *Kypria* (2.117): ‘these verses (ταῦτα τὰ ἔπεα) and this passage most acutely demonstrate that the *Kypria* is not the work of Homer but of someone else’. This, he argues, is precisely because the *Kypria* relates that Paris and Helen reach Troy within three days with a fair wind and smooth sea,⁵⁷ whereas ‘he says in the *Iliad*’ (Ἴλιόδι λέγει) that Paris wandered far out of his way. So Herodotus ultimately draws his negative conclusions regarding the authorship of the *Kypria* from his analysis of the Homeric verses cited in the previous chapter. In this way, Herodotus not only shows his interest in the epic canon, but he also shows how the close examination of a written text can prove an effective tool in clarifying a controversial issue. The very discrepancy between the message conveyed by the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* on the one hand, and the *Kypria* on the other, is ultimately demonstrable proof for Herodotus, who clearly expects consistency from Homer,⁵⁸ that it is the work of some other poet.

Some scholars have deduced from this brief excursus on Homer that Herodotus displays a Thucydidean distrust of poets. For example, Legrand states: ‘Hérodote n’a pas plus de confiance dans les dires des poètes en général que Thucydide (I, 9-10) dans les dires d’Homère.’⁵⁹ But such a conclusion hardly seems tenable given Herodotus’ overall treatment of Homer and epic poetry here or elsewhere in the *Histories*. As previously mentioned, Herodotus does not ultimately aim to challenge the historical foundations of the events recorded in Homer’s text, rather he hopes to show that there are rules and limits imposed upon the epic genre which make it less accurate as an exact representation of the past than his own genre: historiography.⁶⁰ His criticism of poetry is very much directed towards

⁵⁶ Elsewhere in Book Four, note also the reference to the Λωτοφάγοι at 4.177-8, 183, a tribe who first appear in Homer (*Od.* 9.84ff.). Herodotus even writes of one Libyan tribe, the Μάζυες, who ‘claim to be descended from the men of Troy’ (4.191.1), cf. Hecataeus’ reference to the Nomadic Μάζυες (*FGrHist* 1 F334), cf. Corcella ad.4.191.1.

⁵⁷ Lloyd III 51 notes that Herodotus’ testimony contradicts later accounts on the *Kypria*, and tentatively suggests that Herodotus may have confused this with another of the Cyclic poems. Herodotus similarly questions the true authorship of the *Epigoni* (4.32), see further below.

⁵⁸ Vandiver (1991) 127, n.3. Cf. Graziosi (2002) 194 argues that scholars under-appreciate how Herodotus expects consistency in Homer in a way that he would not, e.g., of contemporary dramatists.

⁵⁹ Legrand II 145, n.1; cf. Lateiner (1989) 99, Austin (1994) 123: ‘Homer is being relegated to no more than a poet who would sacrifice historical truth to romantic fancy.’ Herodotus is by no means the first to offer a critique of Homer, cf. already Pi. *N.* 7.20-3, Heracl. DK 22.B.42; see further Marincola (1997) 219.

⁶⁰ Cf. Flory (1987) 65. Indeed, as Sammons (2012) 57, n.14 notes, Herodotus’ use of πῶς ἔσθαι here and in other passages concerning the methods of the poet, implies that Herodotus believed that the

specific details and not general ones; the intended outcome here is not to show that Homer must be regarded with less respect or confidence, but that Herodotus' chosen genre is simply superior for the purposes of providing a more accurate understanding of the past.⁶¹ As Ligota has observed, Herodotus' motivation here 'is to show not so much that Homer's version is not true, as that it is out of place in a rationalist historical discourse'.⁶² For it is significant, and indeed revealing, that he places the greatest trust in his Egyptian informants, precisely because they had conducted the same kind of *historiē* that our historian repeatedly appeals to, relying on eyewitness accounts.⁶³ So, when he reconvenes his description of the priests' account (2.118.1ff.), Herodotus notes that they said they 'inquired (ἰστορίησι) and knew from Menelaus himself' (2.118.1).⁶⁴ And again, at the end of the priests' description of Menelaus' subsequent impious behaviour in Egypt, sacrificing two local children, Herodotus reiterates that 'the priests told me that they had learned of some of these things by inquiry (ἰστορίησι), and that they knew accurately (ἄτρεκέως ἐπιστάμενοι) those things which happened in their own country' (2.119.3). As de Bakker puts it, 'Herodotus claims that he derives his authority on the subject of Helen's whereabouts from an enquiry that led him to eyewitnesses of the events, the priests' predecessors in Egypt and Menelaus in Troy.'⁶⁵

This excursus in a number of respects pre-empts the methods of the modern historian, whose research in part relies on accessing original documents.⁶⁶ Herodotus' attitude here cannot simply be evinced as reflecting a straightforward preference towards his oral informants, even though it is unequivocally clear that his ultimate aim is to show that it is the priests'

poet learnt through inquiry; cf. also Graziosi (2002) 116f., Grethlein (2010) 156, and Hunter (1982) 54: 'Herodotus pictures Homer as working rather like himself gaining knowledge through enquiry...and at times choosing among variant versions'. I am not, however, entirely convinced by de Jong (2012) 133, n.24: '[Herodotus is] enlisting him as much as possible in the historiographical camp', as this seems to be going a step beyond what is undoubtedly a clear distinction that Herodotus makes between the genres that he and Homer are working in, cf. [Plutarch] *On the Life and Poetry of Homer* 74-90, which credits Homer as the inventor of the ἱστορικὸς λόγος!

⁶¹ Marincola (1997) 225-6. Thucydides also questions the subject matter of Homer's work, criticising the historical accuracy of his work (1.9.3, 10.1, 10.3-5, 11.1-2), cf. Moles (1993) 100. On Thucydides' relationship with Homer, see esp. Hornblower (1994a) 64-5, 67-9; (1994b) esp. 153ff.

⁶² Ligota (1982) 11.

⁶³ So Hunter (1982) 56-61, Fornara (1971) 19-20, Bakker (2002) 16, de Jong (2012) 128. de Bakker (2012) 122ff. further explores the similarity between the research methods of Proteus and Herodotus in this passage, and demonstrates the persuasive power this elicits for the Herodotean enquirer, cf. Szegedy-Maszak (1987) 174, Gray (2002) 307. For Herodotean *historiē* and other events in the heroic age (e.g. 7.171.1f.), see the excellent remarks in Munson (2012) 210.

⁶⁴ Austin (1994) 120, n.4 speculates that when Herodotus asked the priests whether or not the Greek version of events was just a *mataios logos* ('foolish talk', 2.118.1), we may well be detecting an oblique acknowledgment of Stesichorus (*PMG* 257). For similar uses of ἰστορίη in the sense of oral enquiry in Book Two, see Lloyd I 88-9 (though he fails to include 2.118.1).

⁶⁵ de Bakker (2012) 122.

⁶⁶ So Sammons (2012) 64: 'Herodotus' use of *hypochoiai* in combination with the resources of historical inquiry...with an eye to discovering a verifiable truth rather than corroborating an imagined one, clearly looks forward to a tradition in the study of literary monuments that is alive and well today.'

account that is the correct one.⁶⁷ In fact this passage more acutely shows him working with numerous types of sources, attempting to discern some sense of harmony across all of them. Although Homer presents an entirely different version of events—a choice in no small way reflecting the constraints of his chosen genre, a close reading of the *Iliad* (and possibly the *Odyssey*)⁶⁸ nonetheless reveals that Homer was indeed aware of the same tradition reported to Herodotus by the Egyptian priests.⁶⁹ It seems that Herodotus is operating in much the same way that Halliwell has recently proposed for Gorgias in his *Encomium*, not presenting himself ‘as the exponent of a rationalizing repudiation of myth but as its reinterpreter’.⁷⁰ The point for Herodotus is that the myth must be re-interpreted in light of conflicting evidence in order for it to gain credence in his *Histories*.

In his quasi-scholastic deconstruction of Homer’s famous text, Herodotus is chiefly concerned not with denouncing his poetic predecessor as a liar, but rather with displaying his own critical acumen; such a process uncovers the value that different kinds of literature may have for historiographical research.⁷¹ In this way, Herodotus’ use of Homer as text illustrates the superiority of history-writing, which, through critical engagement with others’ *logoi*, is best equipped to reveal the truth about the past.⁷² So while this *logos* may suggest to Herodotus’ reader an implicit danger in the ability of poetry to speak truthfully about the past, it also highlights, as West argues, Herodotus’ wider belief, that where non-poetic

⁶⁷ Indeed Herodotus reflects elsewhere on the bookish culture of the Egyptians: they are considered the most *logioi* of all nations, keeping records of the past (2.77.1); some Egyptian priests recite to Herodotus a written list of 330 consecutive monarchs (2.100.1); cf. 2.82.1: the Egyptians keep a written record of omens and unusual phenomenon in anticipation of a similar event in the future. On the Egyptian literary tradition in Herodotus’ age, see Lloyd I, esp.104-11. For the term *logios* in Herodotus, see §1.1 above.

⁶⁸ As the transmitted text stands, Herodotus also cites two additional passages from the *Odyssey* (4.227-30, 351-2). In the first passage, Helen is said to have acquired ingenious drugs from the Egyptian Polydamna, the wife of Thon, while in the second, Menelaus informs Telemachus that although eager to return home, the Gods detained him in Egypt since he had not sacrificed complete Hecatombs to them. I agree with HW I 228, who athetise these passages, noting that they are probably interpolations, especially given a) that the brief summation which follows proceeds as though Herodotus had never quoted from the *Odyssey*, and b) that the verses do little to support his overall argument, cf. Stein and Hude; *contra* Lloyd III ad loc., Rosén, and Sammons (2012) 57, n.12.

⁶⁹ Sammons (2012) 57ff. argues that Herodotus aims to show that Homer not only knew the true version of events, but intended to reveal as such through a series of cryptic hints. Thus, for Sammons, Herodotus interprets Homer by way of *hyponoia* or ‘hidden-meanings’, a device used amongst ancient critics, cf. Graziosi (2002) 116-8.

⁷⁰ Halliwell (2011) 271.

⁷¹ Cf. the rather more dogmatic formulation proffered by Ford (2002) 152: ‘in his historicising approach, *Herodotus regards epics fundamentally as texts* [my italics], valuable for their antiquity but to be critically and closely collated with other traditions and other texts.’ Though it is indisputable that Herodotus treats Homer at various points as text, it is far less clear as to whether the same can be said for the epic tradition *in toto*.

⁷² Similarly Brown (1962) 262, Marincola (1997) 226, Asheri (2007) 31.

sources are lacking, ‘it might be possible to strip off fabulous and fictional accretions and expose a sound historical core.’⁷³

Before leaving this episode, I would like to consider one further point which sheds additional light on Herodotus’ complex relationship with Homer. Irene de Jong has recently demonstrated the conspicuousness of Herodotus’ own fingerprint throughout this passage, regardless of the various appeals to the priestly authorities from whom Herodotus purportedly derived his information.⁷⁴ This is no clearer than in the concluding chapter, where Herodotus argues from probability that

surely Priam was not so crazy, or those others closest to him, that they would wish to endanger their own lives and their children and their city, just so that Alexandros could live with Helen. (2.120.2).⁷⁵

A little further on, by way of a final flourish, Herodotus asserts

thus I declare my opinion, that the god prepared things for the Trojans, so that in complete destruction, they should make [the following] clear to all of mankind: great injustices meet great retribution from the gods. (2.120.5).⁷⁶

So in his concluding remarks Herodotus incorporates the idea of divine retribution—a motif that pervades his work—into his own explanation of the Trojan War.⁷⁷ In doing so, he

⁷³ West (2002) 47, cf. Munson (2012) 197, though I am not persuaded that Herodotus displays ‘more confiden[ce]’ than Thucydides in recovering events from the heroic age. The notion that poets embellished their accounts, or veered away from the truth, is prevalent in various authors predating Herodotus, see, e.g., Hesiod *Theog.* 27-8: τόνδε δέ με πρότιστα θεαί̄ πρός μῦθον ἔειπον, Μοῦσαι Ὀλυμπιάδες, κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο: Solon (29 *IEG*): πολλὰ ψεύδονται ἄοιδοί̄; Pi. *O.* 1.28-30: καί ποῦ τι καὶ βροτῶν φάτις ὑπὲρ τὸν ἀλαθῆ̄ λόγον δεδαιδαλμένοι ψεύδεσι ποικίλοις ἔξασπατῶντι μῦθοι. For further discussion on the vast topic of ‘truth’ and the poets, see Starr (1968), Bowie (1993) 11-20, Pratt (1993) 106-13, and now Halliwell (2011) esp. 13-24, with further bibliography at 13, n.26.

⁷⁴ De Jong (2012) *passim*.

⁷⁵ Cf. 1.4.3: σφέας μὲν δὴ τοῦς ἐκ τῆς Ἀσίης λέγουσι Πέρσαι ἀρπαζομενέων τῶν γυναικῶν λόγον οὐδένα ποιήσασθαι. On the insupportable grounds for the “*cherchez-la-femme* motif” as an adequate historical explanation for Herodotus (and indeed for Homer), see Węcowski (2004) 152-3.

⁷⁶ ὡς μὲν ἐγὼ γνώμην ἀποφαίνομαι, τοῦ δαιμονίου παρασκευάζοντος, ὅπως πανωλεθρίῃ ἀπολόμενοι καταφανέσονται τοῖσι ἀνθρώποισι ποιήσωσι, ὡς τῶν μεγάλων ἀδικημάτων μεγάλαί εἰσι καὶ αἱ τιμωρίαι παρὰ τῶν θεῶν. For the final clause and the focus on divine punishment as a response to criminal or profane acts, cf. the similar sentiments expressed at 4.205; 6.84.3, 91, 139.1; 7.134-7; 8.129.3. In this context, I find the following statement of Fowler a surprising one (2011) 61: [amongst Herodotus’ many achievements] ‘the manoeuvre [Herodotus] adopted in order to discuss heroic legends such as that of Helen – I mean the *elimination of supernatural involvement* [my italics]’; for a more precise formulation, cf. Austin (1994) 135, Baragwanath and de Bakker (2012a) 18.

⁷⁷ See, *inter alia*, Harrison (2000a) 102-21, Munson (2001) 183-94.

refracts the Homeric version of the War, in which the gods are capricious and vindictive, reimagining the gods' actions as based on a set of ethical values,⁷⁸ in turn making the Trojan War a true precursor to the more recent Persian Wars as narrated by Herodotus, which in no small way are the result of the hubris of Xerxes (cf. §6.2 below).⁷⁹ Such a re-interpretation of the gods' involvement in the Trojan War betrays not only Herodotus' refusal banally to regurgitate the accepted reading of Homer, but also implies a more collegial relationship with the poet, insomuch that he opens up new possibilities (obliquely related by Homer) to explain the reasons behind the Greek and Trojan hostilities at Troy, indubitably affecting any future reading of the *Iliad*, and other works on the Trojan cycle.

This extended discussion on Helen's whereabouts is not the only passage to refer to Homer in the *Histories*. Elsewhere in Book Two Herodotus engages in the difficult question of dating when Homer was active (2.53). Here Herodotus is principally concerned with showing that the Greeks had only recently acquired any knowledge (ἡ πιστέατο) of the gods, 'for Hesiod and Homer, as it seems to me, lived no more than four hundred years ago; and it is these [two] who informed the Greeks of the Gods' genesis and gave the gods their names; they who separated out their honours and specific skills, as well as indicating their appearance (εἶ δ' εἰς αὐτῶν σημήναντες) (2.52.2).⁸⁰ Herodotus then tackles what is clearly a controversial issue, namely the precise order of the poets, and brusquely asserts his belief that all of the other poets said to pre-date Homer or Hesiod came later (οἱ δὲ πρότερον ποιηταὶ λεγόμενοι τούτων τῶν ἀνδρῶν γενέσθαι ὕστερον, 2.53.3).⁸¹ As is characteristic of much of Herodotus' *Histories*,⁸² the narrator finishes by indicating the provenance of his information—the first section is derived from the priestesses of Dodona, while the latter material on Homer and Hesiod is the author's own opinion.⁸³ This passage is significant for three reasons: first, as Gould argued, it clearly illustrates that 'there was no other or earlier source [than Homer or Hesiod] that Herodotus could think of for the shared religious

⁷⁸ Similarly, the chorus in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (vv.60-2) assert that Zeus Xenios necessitated the fall of Troy, after Alexander's theft of Helen.

⁷⁹ Cf. de Jong (2012) 140-1.

⁸⁰ Cf. Hes. *Th.* 112. Modern scholarship largely conforms with Herodotus' dating of Homer to the 8th century BCE, see further West (1966) 40ff., cf. Lloyd (2007) ad. 2.53. Note Herodotus' interest in the Greeks gods' names earlier at 2.50.1-3, 52.1-3, cf. Gould (1994) 103-4 on the names of Greek and non-Greek divinities in the *Histories* more broadly.

⁸¹ This is clear case of open polemic against other writers who place Orpheus (e.g. Damastes [*FGrHist* 5 F1]) and Musaeus (e.g. Gorgias [DK 82.B.2]) before Homer and Hesiod; further references in Lloyd II 247-8, 251. Cf. also Burkert (1990) 26, who argues that the line ἔνθεν δὲ ἐγένοντο ἔκαστος τῶν θεῶν, εἶ τε αἰεὶ ἦσαν πάντες, ὁ κοῖ οἱ τε τινὲς τὰ εἶδεα (Hdt. 2.53.1) 'entspricht auffällig' with Protagoras' famous remark on the gods: οὐκ ἔχω εἰδέναι οὐθ' ὡς εἰσίν, οὐθ' ὡς οὐκ εἰσίν οὐθ' ὁποῖοί τινες εἰδέαν.

⁸² For a useful overview see Marincola (1987) 121ff.

⁸³ τούτων τὰ μὲν πρῶτα αἰ Δωδωνίδες ἰρεῖαι λέγουσι, τὰ δὲ ὕστερα τὰ ἐς Ἡσιόδον τε καὶ Ὀμηρον ἔχοντα ἐγὼ λέγω; cf. Lloyd (2007) 228-32.

perceptions and imagery of the Greeks'.⁸⁴ Secondly, and related to this, the implicit reference to others' opinions shows that Herodotus is actively engaging with other intellectuals in his attempt to clarify the inchoate picture of early Greek religion.⁸⁵ So in terms of clarifying Greek religious ideologies and praxes, Herodotus, along with his contemporaries, mines his knowledge of earlier poetry such as Homer and Hesiod, specifically because it is these texts which can reveal the religio-cultural heritage of the Greeks. And thirdly, the passage makes an important methodological point; this date places Homer some 400 years after Herodotus' dating of the Trojan War (cf. 2.145.4: Πανὶ δὲ τῶν ἐκ Πηνελόπης...ἐλάσσω ἔτα ἐστὶ τῶν Τρωικῶν, κατὰ ὀκτακόσια μάλιστα ἐς ἐμέ)—a considerable length of time in comparison to the few decades between Herodotus and his war. This remark thus further demarcates the boundaries between Herodotean historiography and Homeric epic, the former entirely unsuitable for exploring such distant epochs.⁸⁶

These boundaries are even further distinguished in another passage in Book Two, where Herodotus remarks on the *mythos* concerning the Ocean River that is grounded in *apahnes* (2.23, cf. §§2.1, 5 above), asserting that Ὅμηρον δὲ ἢ τινα τῶν πρότερον γενομένων ποιητέων δοκέω τοῦ νομα εὐρόντα ἐς ποίησιν ἐσενείκασθαι ('Homer or one of the earlier poets must have invented this name and introduced it into his poetry'). This passage thus forms a useful companion-piece to Herodotus' later remarks in his *Aigyptios logos* about Homer considering the true version of Helen's whereabouts unsuitable for epic poetry (2.116.1), since it offers some indication of what, in contrast, (Herodotus presumes) Homer considered suitable for epic poetry. And ultimately, with this talk of poets and their invented *mythoi*, Herodotus reinforces a theme picked up both here and elsewhere in our investigation, namely the need to treat others' reports critically and his methodological avoidance of including stories that are embellished or invented.⁸⁷

In addition to his concern over the date of Homer's *floruit*, Herodotus is interested in outlining the extent of genuine Homeric authorship. His scepticism as to whether Homer is the authentic author of the *Kypria* is not the only instance in which he questions whether a text is genuinely Homeric. Embedded within one of the *Histories*' more overtly ethnographic passages,⁸⁸ Herodotus informs us that neither the Scythians nor anybody else is able to speak

⁸⁴ Gould (1994) 104-5.

⁸⁵ Cf. Burkert (1990) 26: 'So ordnet sich Herodot in das Diskussions-niveau seiner Zeit ein'.

⁸⁶ So Graziosi (2002) 112.

⁸⁷ I am thus suggesting that the epistemological gap between Herodotus and his rival Thucydides, who famously criticises *to mythōdes* (1.21.1), is not as profound as many might like to think, *pace* Williams (2002) 149-71.

⁸⁸ See now Skinner (2012) 243-8, arguing for the need to see ethnography and history intertwined in the *Histories*.

of the Hyperboreans; however, he then adds that Hesiod speaks of them, ‘and Homer too in the *Epigoni*, if that poem really is the work of Homer’ (4.32).⁸⁹ While Herodotus’ attitude is notably more ambivalent in comparison to his outright rejection of the *Kypria* as a genuine Homeric poem earlier in Book Two, this second passage not only confirms his expansive knowledge of the Homeric poems, but also reinforces that *historiē* compels him to collect and assess various sources, questioning others’ assumptions. It is certainly noteworthy, too, that once again Herodotus refers to Homer as an authority on a pertinent topic, but does not specifically set out to reject what he says as false.

4.4 Homeric Intertexts

Thus far we have been considering explicit citations of Homer in the *Histories*, as well as Herodotus’ broader debt to the epic cycle, but there are also a number of occasions in which a particular moment in his *logos* forms an intertextual relationship with a specific moment in the Homeric corpus. So, for example, in the embassy scene between the Athenians and the Spartans on the one hand, and Gelon of Syracuse on the other,⁹⁰ the Spartan Syagrus takes exception to the idea of Syracusan leadership of the Hellenes against the mounting Persian threat,⁹¹ stating:

Ἴη κε μέγ’ οἱ μῶξειε ὁ Πελοπίδης Ἀγαμέμνων πυθόμενος Σπαρτιήτας τῆν
ἡγεμονίην ἀπαραίρησθαι ὑπὸ Γέλωνός τε καὶ Συρηκοσίων.⁹²

Surely, he would groan aloud, Agamemnon, the son of Pelops, if he heard that Spartiates had been deprived of their leadership by Gelon and the Syracusans. (7.159).

⁸⁹ Verdin (1977) comments approvingly on the critical ramifications of this passage: ‘Par là il inaugure une façon d’exprimer des doutes sur l’authenticité qu’on rencontrera chez un bon nombre de ses successeurs, bien qu’elle acquière alors un caractère plus technique par l’emploi du terme γνήσιος. Toutefois, dans ces deux cas, Hérodote a fait preuve d’un sens critique averti, puisque ses doutes ont été confirmés par la suite’ (59).

⁹⁰ On the strong intertextual links with Homer in this passage, see HW II ad loc., Hornblower (1994a) 66, Pelling (2006a) 89-90, Grethlein (2006), (2010) 160-73, Bowie (2012) 281-2, but note the cautious reservations of Boedeker (2002) 101, who argues that certain phrases such as this may have become common rhetorical expressions, and were thus not necessarily intended to call forth a specific Homeric passage, even if they originally derived from epic poetry. Despite Boedeker’s caveats, I am persuaded by the following axiom formulated by Hinds (1998) 26: ‘There is no discursive element...no matter how unremarkable in itself, and no matter how frequently repeated in the tradition, that cannot in some imaginable circumstance mobilize a specific allusion’.

⁹¹ On the Homeric intertext serving to undermine Syagrus’ outrage here, see further Grethlein (2006), Pelling (2006a) 90, Saïd (2012) 94 and Bowie (2012) 281-2. On the ‘complex network of Spartan motivation’ behind this reference to Agamemnon, see the valuable discussion in Zali (2011) 71-5, who illustrates conflicting, unresolved interests—both parochial and panhellenic (quote at p.74).

⁹² Pelling (2006a) 89-90 and Grethlein (2006) 489 note that the first part of the sentence is a near-hexameter; cf. Hornblower (1994a) 66, who argues that Herodotus intentionally avoided the hexameter, *contra* Griffiths (1976). For hexameters elsewhere in Herodotus, see e.g. Jacoby (1913) 502-3, Aly (1969) 273, n.3, Boedeker (2001) 124, Pelling (2006a) 90, n.40. For the significance of Πελοπίδης, see now Zali (2011) 73, but note already Hornblower (1994a) 66.

For many readers—both ancient and modern—this line immediately evokes the *Iliad* (Book Seven),⁹³ when King Nestor chides his fellow countrymen for their lack of courage in facing Hector, evoking the memory of Peleus:

ὦ πόποι ἦ μέγα πένθος Ἀχαιῖδα γαῖαν ἰάνει.
ἦ κε μέγ' οἱ μῶξειε γέρων ἰππηλάτα Πηλεΐδης

O shame! For a great sorrow attends the land of the Achaeans,
Surely, he would groan aloud, Peleus, the aged horseman. (7.125).

Recently, Jonas Grethlein has well argued that although we should avoid assumptions concerning intertextual relationships, unrealistically expecting Herodotus' original audience to spot them at every turn (some intertexts being far less marked than others, and besides that, always experienced differently by each recipient), the wider context of this passage reveals that Herodotus intends to evoke the Homeric allusion cited above, expecting it to resonate with many amongst his audience.⁹⁴ Indeed after Gelon states that the Syracusans would be content with leading the army or the navy (7.160.1-2), the Athenian envoy present also protests, citing amongst other things the strength of the Athenian navy, and finishes in a similar manner to the Spartan Syagrus, by recalling an epic precedent, namely Athens' role in the Trojan War:⁹⁵

τῶν καὶ Ὅμηρος ὁ ἐποιοῖς ἄνδρα ἄριστον ἔφησε ἐς Ἴλιον ἀπικέσθαι τάξαι τε
καὶ διακοσμήσαι στρατόν.

and [Menestheus] was one of [the Athenians], of whom even the epic poet Homer says was the best man who came to Ilium in ordering and marshalling armies. (7.161.3).⁹⁶

⁹³ In Xenophon's *Symposium*, Niceratos states that he was forced to learn the *Iliad* by heart (*Symp.* 3.5); further examples of the popular consumption of the epics in Greece are listed in Howie (1995) 143-6.

⁹⁴ Grethlein (2006) 487-8 (cautious approach to studying intertexts), 488ff., cf. further cautions in Rood (1998b) esp.41. In this context, note Raaflaub's instructive comments on fifth-century Athenians: '[they were trained] to grasp a wide variety of poetic allusions and moral and political "messages" in the annual theatrical performances. They had learned to understand the contemporary relevance of mythical paradigms presented to them on stage and to recognize the importance of new variations of traditional myths introduced with specific inventions by the poets' (1987, p.233). Cf. also Fornara (1971a) 65, Vandiver (1991) 12-3.

⁹⁵ For an earlier Athenian appeal to an epic *exemplum* in a political situation, observe the Athenians' claim to Sigeum in the Troad, based at least partly on their participation in the Trojan War, as portrayed in the *Iliad* (5.94.2). For references to the Trojan War elsewhere in Herodotus' latter books, see Richardson (1993) 27.

⁹⁶ Cf. *Il.* 2.552-3: 'τῶν αὖθ' ἠγεμόνευ' υἱὸς Πετεῶο Μενεσθεύς. | τῷ δ' οὐ πό τις ὁμοῖος ἐπιχθόνιος γένετ' ἀνήρ | κοσμήσαι ἴππους τε καὶ ἀνέρας ἀσπιδιώτας.' Although Menestheus'

On this occasion the reference to Homer is explicit, but given (i) the close proximity between this speech and Syagrus' earlier defence, and (ii) that both the Athenians and Spartans are appealing to their heroic past in order to establish their right to hegemony, we can be more confident that the reference to Agamemnon's groaning (οἱ μῶξειε), embedded in Syagrus' speech, was indeed purposefully intended to evoke the strikingly similar line enunciated by Nestor.⁹⁷ For Gelon's oft-cited subsequent dismissal of the Greek envoys, 'announce to Greece that the Spring has been taken out of her year' (ἀγγέλλοντες τῇ Ἑλλάδι ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἔνιαυτοῦ τὸ ἔαρ ἀύτῃ ἐξαραίρηται, 7.162.1),⁹⁸ emphasises the fissiparous nature of the Greek alliance in 480-79—a point repeated elsewhere in his battle narratives, notably, the damaging dispute over leadership between the Spartans and Argives (7.148-9), or that between the Athenians and the Tegeans before Plataea (9.26-7, more on this below). This rather un-panhellenic state of affairs in turn evokes the disjointed relations between the Achaeans that occupies much of the *Iliad*.⁹⁹ As Pelling observes, 'So it happened in the Homeric past; it happened in 480...overreaching hegemonic ambitions and inter-*polis* jealousies were continuing to devastate Greece still.'¹⁰⁰ In this way we can see Herodotus utilising the Homeric corpus to extend and underline key ideas which are no less relevant for the recent past than they were in the distant past. The clear intertextual link here with Pericles' funeral speech, articulated many years after this event, is also a noteworthy feature.¹⁰¹ It illustrates that the *Histories*' temporal gaze is not restricted to the past, but also

attributes are slightly different in this Homeric context (namely, excellence in arranging horses and shielding the men) than in the Herodotean passage, it is likely the case that the Athenian envoy was nevertheless referring to this passage, particularly given his proud remark that his proof derives from what 'the epic poet Homer says'. Another possible source that might have inspired this episode is one of the three Eion epigrams composed in the 470s, celebrating the Athenians' victory over the Medes at the Strymon river in 475 ('Simonides' XL *FGE* ~ Aeschines 3.185): 'ἔκ ποτε τῇ σδε πόλῃος ἄμ' Ἄτρείδησι Μενεσθεύς ἠγείτο ζάθεον Τρωικὸν ἄμ πεδίον, ὅν ποθ' Ὀμηρος ἔφη Δαναῶν πύκα χαλκοχιτώνων κοσμητῆρα μάχης ἔξοχον ἄνδρα μολεῖν. οὐ τως οὐδέ ν' ἀεικέες **Ἀθηναίοισι καλεῖσθαι κοσμητὰς πολέμου τ' ἀμφὶ καὶ ἠνορέης**'.

⁹⁷ Indeed Grethlein (2006) 489 notes that this is the only place in which the phrase 'ἦ κε μέγ' οἱ μῶξειε is found in epic poetry. For other appeals to myth in Herodotus' text, see further Zali (2011) 66ff.

⁹⁸ Cf. Arist. *Rh.* 1.7; 3.10, who twice ascribes these same words to Pericles, from a funeral oration given during the Peloponnesian War. For further intertextual links between the embassy scene and the *Iliad*, see Grethlein (2010) 162-4, who notes the interesting similarity between Gelon's ultimate rejection of the Hellenic ambassadors with Achilles' dismissal of the Greek delegation sent to reintegrate him into the ranks in *Iliad* 9. Cf. also the useful comments in Pelling (2006a) 91-2, and (2011) 7.

⁹⁹ *Contra* Zali (2011) 74. See also Miltiades' speech before Marathon at 6.109.3-6: ἡμέων τῶν στρατηγῶν ἔόντων δέκα δίχα γίνονται αἱ γυνῶμαι, τῶν μὲν ἐκελευόντων τῶν δὲ οὐ συμβάλλειν (6.109.4), cf. Pelling (2013) 10-1 for similarities and differences with the *Iliad* here.

¹⁰⁰ Pelling (2006a) 92, cf. Pelling (2013) 12, Baragwanath (2012b) 35. I am not persuaded by van Wees (2002) 341, who argues that Herodotus represents the 'Spartans as the villains of this episode'; rather, it is more the case that Herodotus portrays the Spartans in this *logos* in such a way as to reflect on the (f)utility of citing ancient *exempla* for present purposes.

¹⁰¹ See esp. the excellent remarks in Munson (2001) 218-9, cf. Grethlein (2010) 168ff., and already Hauvette (1894) 337.

to the present, or the “future-past” within his narrative.¹⁰² So just as the evocation of Homeric heroes by the Athenians and the Spartans bridges the gap between the ancient past and the more recent past, the spring metaphor acts as a *prolepsis*, inviting Herodotus’ immediate audience to reflect on the bleak struggle for hegemony in their own contemporary context.¹⁰³

A similar passage to the debate between the Syracusans, Athenians, and Spartans in Book Seven, is the reported dispute between the Tegeans and Athenians about the Greeks’ battle formation at Plataea in Book Nine (9.26-8).¹⁰⁴ However, whilst in the former passage the Spartans’ and Athenians’ unsuccessful bargaining with Gelon, claiming hegemony by appeal to the epic past, are implicitly critiqued by the extradiegetic narrator, in the latter passage it is the intradiegetic narrators—the Athenians—who question explicitly the validity of such rhetoric. First, the Tegeans cite a longstanding pact made with the Peloponnesians, in which the Tegeans have always been granted the privilege to command a wing in battle, ever since their king Echemus successfully defeated king Hyllus, thus excluding the Heraclidae from settling in the Peloponnese for one hundred years (9.26.2-7).¹⁰⁵ In response to this, the Athenians refer to various past achievements, including, amongst others: the significant support they offered to the Tegeans in overcoming the tyrant Eurystheus; their memorable exploits against the Amazons; and their by no means insignificant role played at Troy (9.27.2-4). But having cited this admixture of historical and mythical precedents, the Athenians then continue:

but it is to no avail in recalling these things, for those powers that were previously great may now be rather more trivial, and those who were formerly trivial might now be much stronger [cf. 1.5.4]; *now let that be enough of these ancient matters* (παλαιῶν μὲν νῦν ἔργων ἄλις ἔστω).¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² On the complex panopticon of different times in Herodotus, i.e. “plu-past”, recent past, and the “future past”, see Grethlein (2010) 172.

¹⁰³ Another, more explicit reference to the Peloponnesian War occurs at 6.98.2, cf. Fornara (1971a) 32. For Herodotus’ critical view of contemporary Athens, see below §7.4, n.82.

¹⁰⁴ Good discussions in Solmsen (1944) 248-50; Vandiver (1991) 64-7; Grethlein (2010) 173-86; Boedeker (2012) 18-23. For the historicity of this debate, see HW II 296. For other epic colourings in the Plataea *logos*, see Boedeker (2001) 122.

¹⁰⁵ Grethlein (2010) notes the correspondence between the Tegeans’ ancient *exemplum*, and their present situation, since in ‘in their attempt to conquer Greece, the Persians resemble the Heraclidae who tried to push into the Peloponnese’ (174).

¹⁰⁶ 9.27.4-5. Flower and Marincola, 156 note that the Athenians’ rejection of ancient deeds mirrors Herodotus’ ‘rejection of the mythical stories with which his history begins in favour of historical time, what he himself knows’. However, while it is of course true that Herodotus verbalises his intention to begin from the ‘first of whom we know’ to have committed unjust deeds against the Greeks, it is not straightforwardly the case that Herodotus rejects the mythical stories with which he opens his account; indeed he pointedly remarks that *he will not* pass judgement over the truth or falsity of the Persian and

Having thus questioned the value of appealing to ancient *exempla*, the Athenians resume their list of achievements by referring to their far more recent valour at Marathon, arguing (*contra* Herodotus) that they alone fought off the Persian forces, overcoming forty-six nations (9.27.5).¹⁰⁷ Following some brief concluding remarks, Herodotus informs us that the Lacedaemonians unanimously voted in favour of the Athenians' speech (9.27.1).

There are several important points to be made about this passage. First, as Vandiver notes, these chapters indicate that it was now possible to employ historical *exempla* as well as mythical *exempla*.¹⁰⁸ Indeed it is remarkable that the Athenians prefer to focus on more recent achievements, elevating their significance to that of the great deeds of the heroic past,¹⁰⁹ and even suggesting that they are more pertinent for present purposes.¹¹⁰ Is this not to be read as an attempt made by the Athenians (or Herodotus?) to epicise the battle of Marathon? And are we not to read the Athenians' inveterate dismissal of the practice of evoking long-gone matters for present purposes (παλαιῶν μὲν νῦν ἔργων ἄλις ἔστω) as an implicit Herodotean reflection on the construction of memory, i.e. as a metahistorical moment in the text?¹¹¹ Certainly, such a notion is mirrored elsewhere in Herodotus' work, most significantly, perhaps, when he veers away from critiquing the Persian and Phoenician *logoi* presented in his opening chapters, opting instead to report from the much more recent time of Croesus onwards.¹¹² But it is worth bearing in mind a contrary example in the form of the "wise adviser" Artabanus, who urges Xerxes: 'ἔς θυμὸν ὧν βάλει καὶ τὸ παλαιὸν ἔπος ὡς εὔειρηται, τὸ μὴ ἄμα ἀρχῆ πᾶν τέλος καταφαίνεσθαι' (7.51.3). We scarcely need reminding that Artabanus' *palaion epos* recalls Solon's advice on 'the necessity of

Phoenician *logoi* that comprise the opening chapters (1.5.3). Cf. the more measured observations of Fowler (2011) esp. 46-7, 59, n.54, emphasising the primacy of 'knowability' (for which see also Feeney [2007] ch.3, Fowler [2009] *passim*, esp.33). On the very peculiar, un-Herodotean nature of these opening traditions, see Węcowski (2004) 149ff.

¹⁰⁷ On the Athenians' characterisation of Marathon as a purely Athenian victory (*contra* Hdt. 6.108.1), both here and in the Attic orators, see further Loraux (1986) 158-9, Asheri III ad loc.

¹⁰⁸ Vandiver (1991) 66, cf. Rood (2010) 67, noting the distorting quality of 'claims made on the more recent past'. For the use of historical *exempla* in oratorical works, see Grethlein (2010) 127-33; cf. the insightful remarks in Calame (1999) 135-6.

¹⁰⁹ Flower & Marincola, 152.

¹¹⁰ So Boedeker (2012) 23. Indeed, at the end of their speech, the Athenians ask 'do we not, for this single deed [the defeat of Persia at Marathon], deserve to hold the right wing?' (9.27.6), cf. [Demosthenes] *Epitaph*. 8-10.

¹¹¹ Grethlein (2010) 159, following Fornara (1983) 104-20, argues that given the rhetorical, presentist nature of ancient historiography, 'references to the past by characters invite a meta-historical interpretation', cf. Grethlein (2011). For metahistory, see White (1973). Related to this issue, of course, is the highly vexed question of the authenticity of speeches as reported by Herodotus, see esp. Solmsen (1944), Hohti (1976), cf. Pelling (2006c) for useful discussion with further bibliography. Add now Schellenberg (2009), whose Genettian study explores the prevalence of irony in myriad Herodotean speeches, a technique befitting his 'congenially intrusive narrative persona' (p.135).

¹¹² Flower & Marincola, 156; Saïd (2012) 95

looking to the end of all matters' (1.32.9);¹¹³ the outcome of Herodotus' work shows that such advice proves to be well-grounded, though neither recipient (Xerxes and Croesus respectively) is shrewd enough to realise this in the heat of the moment. So while it is not straightforwardly the case that Herodotus rejects the utility of citing ancient deeds *tout court* (the *palaion epos* at 7.51.3 surely a fine example of the ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά Herodotus saves from oblivion),¹¹⁴ it is clear in this section that Herodotus' audience and their recent forebears, who were steeped in Homeric tradition, were able to offer and accept alternative rhetorical uses of the past, in which myth would play a much more muted role.¹¹⁵

4.5 A Most-Homeric War

Though not illustrative of all potentially allusive and/or intertextual moments with Homer in the *Histories*, the various sections of this chapter have indicated a conscious and complex engagement with the epic poet in Herodotus' work, showing the different registers of Homeric allusions and intertexts in the *Histories*. While certain passages, such as the various lists and catalogues which Herodotus records reveal as much about the Herodotean narrator's affiliations and differences with the Homeric narrator as they do a tendency to elevate the significance of recent events to that of the heroic deeds at Troy, it has also become clear that Herodotus is more typically cautious of straightforwardly juxtaposing heroic events against more recent ones.¹¹⁶ But regardless of such prudence, Herodotus' subtle criticism of Homeric traditions; his effusive preference for ratifying traditions which are in some way derived from the characteristic elements of his *historiē*; his interest in the authorship of several epic works; his own works' close intertextual engagement with specific scenes in Homer (often illustrative of paradigmatic motifs concurrent in both Homer and Herodotus), all acutely demonstrate the very pervasiveness of Homeric and epic paradigms in the *Histories*.

In addition, our analysis of the manifold explicit and implicit references to the Homeric corpus has illustrated not only Herodotus' pointedly critical and discursive approach to his epic predecessor, but also both his and his readers' extensive poetic repertoire. The specific appeal to the Homeric past in the *Histories* by various Greek states (e.g. 7.157-62; 9.26-7) very much reflects the extent to which a fifth-century Greek was steeped in the past as filtered through the poets. As Dillon observes,

¹¹³ Grethlein (2011) 119.

¹¹⁴ Rejecting *ta palaia* becomes a standard trope from Thuc. 1.22.4 onwards, e.g. Ephorus passes over what 'is hardly accessible to investigation' (*FGrHist* 70 F 31b), and Strabo 'must omit most of what is really ancient and mythical' (9.4.18). For further discussion, see Saïd (2007) 80.

¹¹⁵ Cf., similarly, Baragwanath (2012b) 42-3.

¹¹⁶ Grethlein (2010) esp. 171, Baragwanath (2012b) esp.55 ('his entry into this terrain as narrator is more often complicating and destabilizing, alerting readers to problems surrounding the past and its application to the present').

the tendency to buttress one's arguments by adducing characters or situations from the great store of Greek mythology, as portrayed by Homer, Hesiod, or any of the lyric or tragic poets, is deeply ingrained in the psyche of educated Greeks.¹¹⁷

Indeed Herodotus' exposition on Trojan War traditions at 2.112-20, a *coup de maître* of early Homeric criticism, illustrates this deep familiarity with the Homeric poems, showing that Herodotus regards Homer not only as a preeminent authority, but equally as a rival, whose presentation of the past is open to scrutiny and refinement. As we have discovered, the metahistorical significance of this rather academic approach to the Homeric text in these chapters is vital: in weighing up Homer against other traditions, Herodotus amasses considerable authority for his narrative.

And along with the metahistorical significance generated by Herodotus' engagement with Homer, we have also examined how Herodotus, who strives to produce an account which presents an accurate record of his society, skilfully incorporates Homeric characters, lines and patterns into various speeches and *logoi*, in order to reflect the way that Homer was a distinctively real and at times integral feature of people's lives in fifth century Greece.¹¹⁸ This point brings us back to Antonioni's (admittedly imprecise) reading of Homeric morality shaping real lives which heads this chapter; such blurring of the boundaries between fiction and real life holds no less true for Herodotus' age than it does our own. Hence, it would be truly remarkable, not to mention disingenuous, if Herodotus were to have presented an account of the Persian Wars which athetised any such real life engagement with Homeric narrative patterns.

¹¹⁷ Dillon (1997) 211, cf. Arist. *Metaph.* 2.995a7f.: οἱ μὲν οὖν ἐὰν μὴ μαθηματικῶς λέγη τις οὐκ ἂν ποδέχονται τῶν λεγόντων, οἱ δ' ἂν μὴ παραδειγματικῶς, οἱ δὲ μάρτυρα ἀξιοῦσιν ἐπάγεσθαι ποιητήν.

¹¹⁸ See Pelling (2013) esp.1-3 on the way that fiction informs our lives, i.e. narrative codes imposing order on 'the messiness of reality' (1), similarly Pelling (2000), e.g. (on "types" in tragedy) 166f.

Chapter 5

The Epic Present: Herodotus and Simonides

Hérodote est peut-être le père de l'histoire, mais il est en tout cas également un poète, au sens étymologique du terme.

— Claude Calame¹

But it would do not harm to consider the possibility that [Herodotus'] narrative draws on poetry rather more and on direct oral testimony rather less than we might on first reading suppose.

— Stephanie West²

5.1 The *Histories* and Lyric

It is often noted that Herodotus' account of Plataea is especially lacking in direct source references.³ One of the very few individual informants he chooses to mention in this, or indeed any part of his work is Thersander of Orchomenus,⁴ who famously relays to Herodotus the poignant details of a conversation with an anonymous Persian at a Persian-Theban banquet, in which the Persian laments on the divine ensuring that truth always falls on deaf ears (9.16).⁵ As Nyland notes, it is possible that he may have conversed also with the local Plataean inhabitants who hold the name of the river Oeroë to be derived from the daughter of Asopus (9.51.2), as well as a local Athenian source, who relates the story about the Deceleans repelling the invasion of the Tyndaridae (9.73.1).⁶ Clearly these exiguous references, which, though thematically significant, are demonstrably peripheral to the main flow of the war narrative, add little to our overall understanding of Herodotus' sources for the bulk of his account. Given that Herodotus elsewhere offers much more frequent references to his sources, Nyland has argued that Herodotus must have been working with a different set of sources to those which were used, for instance, in his account of the battle of Salamis, and that his Plataean sources were thus not considered by Herodotus to be

¹ (1996) 40.

² (2004b) 91.

³ Nyland (1992) 87-9, Flower and Marincola, 18-9, (account of events of 479 more broadly) HW II 387-8. Shrimpton (1997) well explores the especial gap in source references within Herodotus' latter books. He convincingly argues that this is largely due to the vast time-scale and largely non-Hellenic content of the earlier books, which thus meant that Herodotus applied a different criteria to those more attainable sources which make up the later books of his work (240-46).

⁴ Cf. 2.55 (priestesses at Dodona), 3.55.3 (Archias), 4.76.6 (Tymnes).

⁵ For the wider significance here, see, e.g., Harrison (2000a) 51, Flower and Marincola ad loc, Grethlein (2011) 103.

⁶ Nyland (1992) 87; for earlier (and later) treatments of the Attic myth on Decelea, see HW II ad loc.

acceptable authorities which the historian could reasonably cite.⁷ Whilst it is not disputed that Herodotus could have been working with different authorities for different sections of his narrative, suggesting that he adopts such an unbending attitude towards citation in Book Nine does not chime with our general understanding of Herodotus' uneven approach to his sources in the rest of his *Histories*.⁸ There is little reason to suppose that Herodotus, who had far from fully fleshed out a method of citation or quotation comparable to the methods of modern academia (§1.1 above), would have purposefully aimed to protect his account from the derision of a discerning Hellenic audience in quite the manner we would expect in contemporary academic discourse.

While Herodotus' account represents the chief source for understanding of the Plataea battle, the recent discovery and publication of the so-called "new Simonides"—a collection of elegiac fragments which, at least in part, offer a narrative of the battle of Plataea⁹—means that we are now able to access an additional, non-historiographical source which is specifically concerned with the recent Greco-Persian hostilities.¹⁰ These fragments, even in their current impoverished state, are a valuable piece of evidence, extending our understanding of contemporary responses to the Persian Wars. Although only a rudimentary reading of the fragments would suffice to show that they do not fully match up against Herodotus' own view of the battle (see further §5.4 below), there are nonetheless some revealing convergences between the poetic account of Simonides, and the historiographical account of Herodotus; in many ways Simonides' text even helps to clarify our understanding of Herodotus' oft-criticised version.¹¹ And in spite of the substantial difficulty of assessing the content of the fragments (which vary somewhat in length) and their wider context, it cannot be underestimated just how significant they are. For if the poem which they are taken from is to be dated immediately after 479 BCE, as Boedeker persuasively argues,¹² then it

⁷ Nyland (1992).

⁸ Cf. Flower and Marincola, 16; Asheri (2007) 17. For Herodotus' historical method, see esp. Lateiner (1989).

⁹ Though initially heralded as an elegy specifically concerned with the events at Plataea (Parsons [1992] 6; West [1993a] 2), it has since been demonstrated by Kowerski (2005) 49–61, *passim* that the highly-uneven fragments do not automatically allow us to firm such definite conclusions, arguing that it is equally possible that these fragments may have, in fact, been part of a much larger and far-reaching elegy.

¹⁰ On the need to avoid the term "historical elegy" for this, and other poems, see Sider (2006). While I agree with Sider that the term is artificial and limiting, it is nonetheless the case that elegies such as the "new Simonides" are remarkable in their inclusion of recent historical events, regardless of how far they also interact with myth. After all, Herodotus also interacts with mythic material, but scholars (rightly) still continue to think of his work as a piece of historiography.

¹¹ All references to Simonides are taken from W², unless stated otherwise.

¹² Boedeker (1998) 233. Boedeker's argument is built on the central premise that Pausanias is a prominent figure in the poem. Given that he was later recalled to Sparta for apparently conspiring with the Persians in c.477 BCE, which was then followed by his eventual starvation in a Spartan temple, it seems somewhat unlikely that he would play such an important role in the poem if it were written

serves as the earliest known example in text of an analogy drawn between the Trojan and Persian Wars. Although Herodotus gives the impression that such comparisons have become fairly commonplace by the mid-fifth century,¹³ the evidence would suggest this to have been a much more audacious move when Simonides was writing.¹⁴

As a result of this acquisition, there has been a flurry of new scholarship on Simonides over the last two decades,¹⁵ as well as a number of analyses concerned with the progression of Greek elegy more broadly. (Naturally the latter make good use of the Simonidean fragments—hardly surprising given that fragment 11 alone constitutes the second longest extant Greek elegy.) So in a valuable article which explores some of the major convergences and divergences between Simonides' and Herodotus' respective narratives on Plataea, Boedeker shows that while Simonides' eulogistic account is bereft of many of the complexities which are found in Herodotus' much fuller account, the cumulative effect of the manifold poetic allusions in Herodotus' Plataea *logos*, combined with the panhellenic tone of the Simonidean poem, ultimately points to Simonides as one of Herodotus' chief sources for the battle.¹⁶ Elsewhere, Bowie has explored the potential historiographical impact of earlier verse material composed by figures such as Archilochus, Mimnermus and Simonides,¹⁷ and suggests that Simonides' account on the heroic deeds of the *Plataiomachoi* very likely constitutes an innovative work, foreshadowing both Herodotus and Thucydides, since they too, in addition to emphasising the truthfulness of their work (cf. West's reconstruction of the beginning of line 11.17: πᾶσαν ἀληθεῖ ἦν), sought to heroise those who had displayed ἔργα μεγάλα καὶ θωμαστά during the recent past.¹⁸

after these events, cf. similarly Pavese (1995) 25, Sbardella (2000) esp.4-5, Asheri (2004) 69. Note also Fornara (1971a) 62-6 on Herodotus' ironic portrait of Pausanias.

¹³ 7.159, 161.3; 9.27.4, cf. §4.4 above.

¹⁴ Pace Barchiesi (1996) 253, n.18, Asheri (2004) 70. There are a few other parallels to this analogy which can be dated as being roughly contemporary to when Simonides' composed his poem. At the beginning of the set of epigrams commemorating the capture of Eion from the Persians in 475 BCE ('Simonides' XL *FGE*), our unknown author evokes the leader Menestheus, who ἠγεῖτο τοὺς ἀθηναίους ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ τῶν Περσῶν; see Boedeker (1998) n.9 for other possible, even earlier analogies. For a more general treatment of Simonides' innovative position in the development of Greek poetry, see Hutchinson (2001) esp. 288-291.

¹⁵ Recent bibliographic surveys on Simonides include: Molyneux (1992); Poltera (1997); Kowerski (2006). For the Simonidean epigrams: Bravi (2006), Petrovic (2007b), cf. the sensitive discussion in Sider (2007).

¹⁶ Boedeker (2001a) esp. 124-30. Flower (2000) 66-9 discusses the alacrity with which the Persian wars were panhellenically politicised, especially by Simonides, cf. Fearn (2007a) 106 n.16.

¹⁷ For historical narratives in early Greek elegy, see Bowie (2010). Bowie offers a useful table of narrative elegies that might have been sung c.700 BCE, arguing that they had already faded into oblivion by the time of poets of the 650s, such as Tyrtaeus, Semonides, Archilochus, Mimnermus and Callinus (p.156).

¹⁸ Bowie (2001) 62-6, esp.65 for Simonides' unique contribution; but note already the prescient observations in Bowie (1986). See also Boedeker (1995), and Stehle (2001) *passim* who well explores the various un-Homeric parts of the poem, particularly his eschewal of any claims to present the whole truth, in favour of a self-directed narrative committed to reliving recent experiences. On the

In this chapter, I am principally concerned with examining the impact of the “new Simonides” and Simonidean poetry on Herodotean historiography, though I will also offer brief remarks on the additional debate on whether or not this elegy was purely dedicated to the battle of Plataea.¹⁹ In the first section, I examine the scanty evidence for Simonides’ reputation in antiquity, and the likelihood that Herodotus was aware of his poetry. Next, I analyse the Simonidean fragments themselves, in particular drawing out the key themes and features of the elegy, which I argue could well have recounted other events, on top of those at Plataea. Thirdly, I discuss the ways in which Simonides’ (potentially substantial) poem helped to shape Herodotus’ understanding of this battle. In the final section, I consider Simonides’ wider intellectual significance, both in terms of subsequent receptions of the Persian Wars, as well as his impact on the historical methodologies of our early historians, namely Herodotus and Thucydides. As we have retained only a *soupcou* of Simonides’ undoubtedly impressive literary achievement, I will also supplement my analysis of the new fragments with other, later authors’ works which refer to Simonides and/or his poetry.

This investigation into the intertextual relationship between Herodotus and Simonides will also provide an opportunity to find other, fresh meanings within Herodotus’ own work. In his study on Thucydides’ potential awareness and use of Pindar, Simon Hornblower comments on the fluidity of intertextual relationships, arguing that they can cover anything ‘from echoes and parallels which may or may not be deliberate or conscious...to direct and explicit quotation or citation’. Whether or not, he adds, the reader is ultimately persuaded that there are indeed Pindaric allusions in Thucydides’ *History*, the very act of illuminating the shared worlds of these two writers can only lead to an even richer understanding of Thucydides’ complex and austere work.²⁰ This line of argument has much to offer, for it is not simply the case that searching for possible intertextual relationships in a given author’s work helps us to locate the provenance of their information; it can also lead to a more nuanced impression of their own literary enterprise. And as we have already seen in the chapters above, Herodotus’ work actively encourages the reader to evaluate the methodological differences between (his) historiographical work and other, non-historiographical forms of memory.

different Herodotean and Thucydidean readings of *ergon*, Immerwahr (1960) is essential. For Herodotus’ own inquiry (often mirrored through others’ inquiries [the *mise en abîme*]) as one of the *Histories* ‘great and wonderful deeds’, see Demont (2009) 196.

¹⁹ I will not be looking at other lyric poets who affected Herodotus’ work here, though the influence of, e.g., Bacchylides and Pindar is not insubstantial; cf. West (2004b) *passim*, arguing that ‘lyric poetry is actually Herodotus’ main source, even though he cites local tradition’ (quote at p.84).

²⁰ Hornblower (2004) 269.

5.2 Homer's Successor?

Σιμωνίδου δὲ παρατήρει τὴν ἐκλογὴν τῶν ὀνομάτων, τῆς συνθέσεως τὴν ἀκρίβειαν· πρὸς τοῦτοις, καθ' ὃ βελτίων εὐπίσκεται καὶ Πινδάρου, τὸ οἱ κτί ζεσθαι μὴ μεγαλοπρεπῶς ἀλλὰ παθητικῶς.²¹

So according to the first-century rhetorician Dionysius of Halicarnassus, the lyric poet Simonides was even more successful than Pindar in his ability to elicit sympathy by appealing to the emotions, rather than adopting the 'grand style' (μεγαλοπρεπῶς). Regardless of the high esteem in which he is held by Dionysius, the near-total loss of Simonides' works means that there is much about this great poet that remains unknown to the modern critic. There are nevertheless a number of extant Simonidean fragments, and these clearly illustrate the great variety of styles, and the wide range of poetic genres, which he included in his repertoire; these excerpts can go some way in explaining his long and productive career.²² This too is confirmed by the Suda entry on Simonides (Σ 439), a highly problematical testimonium, which states:

καὶ γέγραπται αὐτῷ Δωρίδι διαλέκτῳ ἢ Καμβύσου καὶ Δαρείου βασιλείᾳ καὶ Ἐέριου ναυμαχίᾳ καὶ ἢ ἐπ' Ἄρτεμισίῳ ναυμαχίᾳ, δι' ἐλεγείας: ἢ δ' ἐν Σαλαμίῳ μελικῶς: θρηῆνοι, ἐγκώμια, ἐπιγράμματα, παιᾶνες καὶ τραγωδίαι καὶ ἄλλα.

He wrote in the Doric dialect on the reigns of Cambyses and Darius, the naval-battle against Xerxes, and the naval battle at Artemisium in elegiacs; the naval battle at Salamis in melic verses; and funeral songs, encomia, epigrams, paeans, tragedies, and other works.²³

This at the very least gives some indication of the range of poetry, from *threnoi* to *paianes*, which Simonides composed. And even though the preservation of Simonides' *œuvre* is frustratingly uneven, to the point that none of his work can be accessed *in extenso*, there is little doubt that he was a prolific figure who was read by a number of later writers; for it can even be said with some certainty that a number of his works were collected in an Alexandrian edition, from which the Suda article most likely reproduced its outline of his

²¹ Dion. Hal. *Imit.* 2.420. For this fragment and the 'verdict of antiquity' on Simonides, see the various testimonia in Campbell (1991) 355-61.

²² The extant Simonidean fragments are still split amongst various volumes: for his elegies see principally West (1993); Boedeker and Sider (2001); for the Simonidean and pseudo-Simonidean epigrams, alongside the standard text of Page (1975), see also Bravi (2006), Petrovic (2007b); and for the myriad lyric fragments, see *Poetici Melici Graeci (PMG)*.

²³ For examples of each of these see Campbell (1991) 330.

career.²⁴ Amongst other testimonia, Theocritus cites Simonides alongside Homer as an especially important poet who ensured that many men's accomplishments avoided falling into oblivion (Theoc. 16.44f.). Simonides would eventually acquire a glowing reputation more widely in later antiquity, being installed as one of the Nine Lyric Poets by Callimachus.²⁵ Furthermore, in a well-known anecdote Simonides is credited with the invention of mnemonics, since he was allegedly able to name all of those who died after the palace fell in on the Scopodae, by referring to their places at the table.²⁶ *A posteriori*, there is ample evidence to suppose that works—either definitively or ostensibly—authored by Simonides, continued to be read long after the fifth century.

Preceding all of these testimonia on his life and his works, the earliest extant reference to Simonides' voluminous output is to be found in Herodotus. In Book Seven of the *Histories* he is quoted in relation to the epigram dedicated to the seer Megistias, one of the Spartan war-dead at Thermopylae (7.228.4, see §3.5 above).²⁷ While this is the only occasion in which there is a direct quotation of Simonides' poetry in Herodotus, the newly-acquired fragments—many of which, as already stated, have been compiled as originally forming part of an independent elegy dedicated to those Greeks who fought at the battle at Plataea—undoubtedly open up the possibility of a more extensive and complex relationship between the poet and *pater historiae*. And on top of this remark, there is also another, much less cited reference to Simonides in Book Five, one that too focuses on his literary persona. Here, Herodotus reports various events which took place after the conflagration of Sardis (5.101f.), describing how a group of renowned men were subsequently executed by the Persians. He then remarks that amongst those killed was a certain Eualcides of Eretria, who had been 'greatly praised (πολλὰ αἰνεθεῖν) by Simonides' for his numerous crowns which he won at the games (5.102.3; cf. *PMG* 518). This rather peripheral remark adds little to the core of his narrative, but in fact serves rather as an insistent reminder of Herodotus' own poetic repertoire.²⁸ Indeed, the casual tone with which Herodotus refers to the poet equally implies, as Nenci writes, that: 'il riferimento a Simonide presuppone che il pubblico conoscesse bene

²⁴ So Obbink (2001) 74f., noting the crucial presence of 'Alexandria-sourced scholia and variants' in the surviving copy of the poem; cf., too, Parsons (2001) 57.

²⁵ Pfeiffer (1968) 205.

²⁶ Cic. *de orat.* 2.86.351-53, Quint. *Inst.* 11.2.11-16; cf. Campbell (1991) 350-1. See also Simonides 89 W², in which Simonides claims nobody can match him in memory, cf. *PMG* 646.

²⁷ Page (1975) 196 notes that it was usual for an inscription to be unsigned in the fifth century, as nobody appears to have shown much interest in the authorship of such items. Herodotus' naming of Simonides' epitaph is therefore unusual, and the naming of an epitaph's author is not seen again for some time.

²⁸ West (2004b) 83 well notes that given Simonides' reputation as the first to compose *epinikia*, it is surprising that Herodotus should not mention this—particularly as he displays a fascination with (sometimes poetic) firsts (e.g. Homer and Hesiod were the first to give the Greeks the names of their gods [2.52.2], cf. §4.3 above).

Simonide'.²⁹ These two passages thus serve as telling indications of a more in-depth awareness of Simonides' poetry than might initially appear to be the case, but also of the importance which had been attached to Simonides' work even by the mid-fifth century.

A final, circumstantial reason for supposing that Herodotus was specifically aware of Simonides' elegy is the very international status that Simonides had acquired over the course of his career. Only one surviving passage suggests a piece of poetry written for his native Ceos;³⁰ the vast majority of his work appears to have been produced for a range of Hellenic *poleis*.³¹ So to review: (i) Simonides was a prolific poet whose formidable reputation developed throughout antiquity; (ii) Herodotus was familiar with Simonidean poetry, and his audience were at least aware of his poetic reputation; and (iii) Simonides, whom Herodotus refers to twice, appears to have written (with varying degrees of certainty) on a number of individuals/battles which are central to the Herodotean narrative. As Stephanie West remarks, '[given the context] It would have been strange if Herodotus ignored these compositions completely.'³²

5.3 Summoning the Muse

Having examined the evidence for Simonides' poetic output, it is necessary to say something further about our general uncertainty vis-à-vis the performative context(s) for Simonides' elegy.³³ Different proposals for the circumstances in which the elegy was initially composed are largely the result of whether scholars have relied either on the content of the elegy itself, or on the likely (or known?) performance context of other Greek elegies. Aloni and Grethlein, who envisage a more Spartan-centric view of the poem, argue for a Spartan (possibly Pausanian) commission.³⁴ In contrast, Boedeker has fervently argued in favour of a panhellenic reading of the text, and proposes the funeral at Plataea as a likely occasion for its performance.³⁵ It is certainly not unsound to suggest a wider, public reading of the elegy,³⁶ especially given that even in the poem's current lacunose state there is a clear inclusion of

²⁹ Nenci ad loc.

³⁰ Campbell (1991) fr.621, cf. Hutchinson (2001) 285-6.

³¹ Hutchinson (2001) 287ff.

³² West (2004b) 84.

³³ For a valuable introduction to the fluid nature of Greek elegy, see now Aloni (2009).

³⁴ Aloni (2001) 102-4; Grethlein (2010) 53; cf. also Pavese (1995) *passim*, Asheri (2004) 69 ('Ritengo che l'elegia sia stata eseguita a Sparta quando era ancora possibile lodare Pausania'), and now Nobili (2011), arguing for a Spartan tradition of threnodic elegy—the performance of this being the most likely antecedent for the performance of Simonides' elegy (note already Boedeker [2001b] 151).

³⁵ Boedeker (1998) 237-9, *pace* Asheri (2004). The poem's panhellenic tone, according to Boedeker, can be extended to its evocation of Achilles' heroic deeds, which are used as a paradigm for the achievements of all the various Greek communities fighting at Plataea (p.237); *contra* Lloyd-Jones (1994) 1 who believes that Achilles is invoked so as to sing of the glory of a particular individual, such as Leonidas or Pausanias.

³⁶ So Pavese (1995) 25.

numerous *poleis*, not to mention strong epic overtones which further make it appropriate for a grand event (more on these points below).³⁷ As it is one of the aims of this chapter to show that Simonides' elegy is notable for its multi-*polis*, panhellenic perspective, it thus follows that we cannot exclude the possibility that the elegy was designed for some sort of public festival,³⁸—perhaps, given the exceptional nature of its content, one different from that of other, earlier Greek elegies. The point I am ultimately stressing here is that there is still much about Greek elegy—especially its development—with which we are flagrantly ignorant: to limit the variety of performative contexts “appropriate” for Greek elegy seems to me therefore unduly dogmatic.

So now let us turn to the content of some of these fragments.³⁹ In fragment 11, the largest of the recently-discovered fragments, Simonides begins by addressing Achilles with a hymn, singing of the death of Patroclus and Achilles (11.6ff.), the latter dying no ordinary death, but struck down by Apollo. The narrator then records that this ghastly set of events culminated in the destruction of Troy—all ‘[because] of Paris’ wickedness’ ([εἶ νεκ Ἀλεξιά]νδροτο κακό φρο[ονο]ς, 11.11). And for their deeds at Troy, the valiant Danaans ‘are bathed in eternal glory’ ([ἄ θά]νατον κέ χυται κλέ ος, 11.15), forever remembered by Homer, the one whose glorious account, directed by the Muses, presents ‘the whole truth’ of the Trojan War, preserving this short-lived race of heroes for future generations (11.17-8).⁴⁰

Simonides later closes this hymnic section, like the Homeric hymns, with a typical formal address to Achilles,⁴¹ and then seeks to lend authority to the remainder of his account by invoking the Muses (11.20-22), who are summoned as an ἐπί κούρον (‘ally’).⁴² In

³⁷ Grethlein (2010) 62-8 attempts to expand on other intertexts between elegiac and epic poetry. But, although he posits some potentially illuminating parallels between Mimnermus and the *Iliad* (64-7), he surely undervalues the uniqueness of Simonides' much more transparent relationship with Homeric epic, for which see Bowie (2001) esp. 63-4.

³⁸ So Nobili (2011) 27.

³⁹ It is not my principal intention here to provide an exhaustive analysis of the problems surrounding the substance of the fragments, though I occasionally discuss those emendations which possibly have an important bearing on the question of Herodotus' knowledge and use of the poem, for a much more extensive commentary on each of the fragments, see Rutherford (2001) 33-54, cf. (for frs.10-18) Pavese (1995) 8-20.

⁴⁰ See Fearn (2007b) 20 for the ‘poetic double motivation’ in his engagement with Homer and the Muses here.

⁴¹ So Parsons (1992) 32; West (1993) 4f.; Sbardella (2000) 1ff.; Bowie (2001) 58; *contra* Pavese (1995) 22-25, who reads the reference to Achilles rather as a mythical *exemplum* (‘L’enfasi posta sull’uccisione di Achilles, suggerisce piuttosto che egli sia introdotto come *exemplum* di un guerriero che cadde combattendo valorosamente in battaglia e la cui uccisione fu successivamente vendicata da una finale vittoria’, p.22.)

⁴² This address to the Muses is, of course, anticipated in a number of earlier poetic works, see for instance the opening of Mimnermus' *Smyrneis* (13 W² = Paus. 9.29.4), for which see the useful discussion in Bowie (2010) 148-9. In *Persae*, Timotheus too invokes Apollo as an ἐπί κούρος (202ff.), thus following in the steps of Simonides, cf. Rutherford (2001) 46. On the possibility of

appealing to the Muses only as a guide, Simonides clearly intends to reposition himself apart from the Homeric narrator. Unlike Homer, he does not appeal to the Muses in order to narrate his poem, but rather to proffer additional help.⁴³ But while much has been said of the self-confidence and authoritative voice of the historian deriving from Ionian science,⁴⁴ it is still unacknowledged by most that this may have also stemmed from non-prose genres. Be that as it may, Simonides' dislodging of the omniscient Muses from fully imbuing his account is a highly symbolic action, telling the audience both that the narrator is relying on his own knowledge, and that it is his own praise which immortalises the *Plataiomachoi*;⁴⁵ hence this passage provides one of the clearest indications yet that the historian's self-assured reliance on his own claims might equally be inherited from verse. Bowie takes this one step further, rightly speculating whether or not Herodotus could even have opened his *Histories* the way he does without having known Simonides' poem, or indeed whether Thucydides would have felt so compelled to dwell on the great magnitude of the Peloponnesian War.⁴⁶

After his evocation of the Muses to fulfill an auxiliary role, Simonides begins over the course of the remaining lines to narrate some of the details concerning the battle itself, and he does so with a seemingly Spartan-centric perspective (11.24-34). Simonides writes 'of those who held the line for Spart[a and for Greece]', and explicitly refers to '[Cle]mbrotus' most noble [son,]' (11.25, 33-4 respectively). It is this section of the narrative above all others that has fuelled those interpretations which hold that the poem is a Spartan commission. Indeed it has even been suggested that a line in Pindar (ἔν σπάρτα δ' ἐπέω πρὸ Κιθαριῶνος μάχων, *P.* 1.77) suggests a potential context for the poem, giving further credence to this view.⁴⁷ But even if this elegy, or some other poem, was indeed performed at Sparta, surely it does not follow *a fortiori* that the Spartans personally funded its composition; it is just as likely that the elegy was re-performed throughout Greece, in which case Pindar's statement needs to be interpreted rather more flexibly. Indeed we will see below that any notion that this poem was composed exclusively to celebrate Spartan deeds is surely tempered by the poem's inclusion of a number of other *poleis*, including Corinth, Megara, and Athens.⁴⁸

further echoes of Simonides' use of the term ἐπίκουρος much later in Roman literature, see O'Hara (1998).

⁴³ Stehle (2001) 107-11.

⁴⁴ See, amongst others, Marincola (2001), Goldhill (2002) chs.1-2.

⁴⁵ Grethlein (2010) 63; Rutherford (2001) 45-6.

⁴⁶ Bowie (2001) 65.

⁴⁷ Parsons (1992) 32.

⁴⁸ For a useful critique of the different textual emendations offered vis-à-vis this line, some of which include Athens within the narrative, see Rutherford (2001) 46-7.

In some of the other recently-discovered fragments, which may or may not have originally formed part of the same elegy to that which fragment 11 was originally attached, there includes: an elaboration on the Corinthians' role in the battle (frs.15-16, see below), a quotation of and reflection on Homer's leaves simile (fr.19),⁴⁹ and an elaborate musing on the transient nature of human life, which also cites Homer (fr.20 [v.14 for Homer]).⁵⁰ So these fragments, however much they should be combined with the fragment already discussed, undoubtedly touch upon a variety of *topoi*, strengthening Aloni's view that Simonides' elegy was as much celebratory, exhortatory and funerary, as it was narrative.⁵¹

Furthermore, the elevated language of the "new Simonides", littered with quasi-Homeric epithets and eloquent, affecting language, also hints at the likely fame the poem enjoyed. For instance there is a reference to the ἐ πικλέ α ἔ ργα Κορί ν[θ]ου (11.35), Megara is named [N]ί σου πό λιν (11.37), and the Spartans are described as Δώρου δὲ παιῶν καὶ Ἡρακλέ ος (13.9-10). There is also the specific reference to Homer discussed above (fr.20.14), a fairly infrequent occurrence within our body of extant archaic and early-classical literature. Moreover, the beginning of fragment 11 incorporates a Homeric simile elaborating on the death of Achilles (11.1-3), and applies various other epic-style formulations—both in the opening hymn, and in the main narrative.⁵² These fragments, then, offer a compelling glimpse of the literary style and poetic range that won Simonides the sort of acclaim we see in the later testimonia. And for our own more immediate purposes, it is worth reinforcing the point made already that it would be somewhat far-fetched to suggest that such a poignant poem, written on a pertinent topic by a prolific and much-admired poet, could have possibly escaped Herodotus' attention; indeed I will now turn to examining Herodotus' reaction to the elegy.

5.4 Herodotus Re-Writes Plataea

One of the most remarkable features of the Simonidean elegy on Plataea is its panhellenic perspective. Aside from the multitude of Greek epigrams which specifically praise the great deeds of a single *polis*,⁵³ there are at least a few other poems on the topic of the Persian Wars which espouse a more panhellenic tone; but unlike Simonides, they fail to divulge specific

⁴⁹ Ibid. 50, Rutherford suggests that this formed as part of a σφραγίς to the Plataea poem, and is thus connected to fragment 11; cf. Kowerski (2005) 130-44 for a more detailed analysis on the pervasive sense of lament across these various fragments.

⁵⁰ Fr.20 being one of the more well-preserved, for potential similarities and differences with other Simonidean poems, see Rutherford (2001) 51.

⁵¹ Aloni (2009) 170, cf. Sider (2006).

⁵² See further Rutherford (2001) 43-7; West (1993) esp. 6-9.

⁵³ So the various epigrams commissioned by the Amphictyones in Herodotus 7.228, see §3.5 above.

communities' involvement during the conflict they report. There is, for instance, the inscription on the altar of Zeus Eleutherios ('Simonides' XV *FGE*), dedicated after the battle at Plataea, which refers to the Ἕλληνας, without giving any indication of which Greek states fought. In contrast, Simonides' elegy actually begins by narrating the Spartans' march to Plataea (fr.11.25f.),⁵⁴ and then goes on to include other *poleis* in the context of the battle, namely Corinth, Megara, and most probably Athens.⁵⁵ These *polis* names are almost certainly more substantial than crude geographical markers in the poem; indeed it has already been noted how in several of the other surviving fragments from the poem, Simonides provides a much more comprehensive account of the Corinthians' role in the battle.⁵⁶

This inclusion of several *poleis*, in connection with Plataea, has important implications for our understanding of the elegy, which thus seems less likely to have been exclusively commissioned by the Spartans, as some scholars have held.⁵⁷ In particular, the multi-*polis* perspective of the poem further opens up the possibility that it would have been re-performed throughout different parts of Greece. And if the poem were re-performed, it would surely strengthen the possibility that Herodotus was aware of the elegy,⁵⁸ particularly given that he is explicitly aware of other Simonidean works. To these ends, it is unsurprising that all of the cities named in Simonides' elegy should also feature in Herodotus' own account of the allies who fought at Plataea, though he may equally have relied on the list of cities who fought against the Persians on the Serpent Column, particularly as it is an inscription with which he signals his familiarity (ML 27, see §3.3 above).⁵⁹

But there are other, additional themes and features of Simonides' elegy which may well have affected, or even guided, Herodotus' Plataea *logos*. Though its significance in the poem is unknown, there is a somewhat elliptical reference made to Demeter (fr.17.1), a god who is conspicuously absent from the Homeric epics.⁶⁰ Interestingly, Demeter also features in various parts of Herodotus' work, particularly in his account of Plataea.⁶¹ In one especially revealing passage, Herodotus observes that while the battle was fought near the grove of Demeter, there was no evidence available to suggest that any Persian had fallen inside—or

⁵⁴ Cf. A. *Pers.* 816-20, where the Dorian spear is credited for the victory at Plataea, cf. §6.2 below.

⁵⁵ fr.11, vv.35; 37; and 41-2 respectively.

⁵⁶ Simonides' portrait of the Corinthians' at Plataea is clearly at odds with Herodotus' more pejorative version, see esp. Flower & Marincola (2002) 318-19, and §5.5 below.

⁵⁷ See Aloni (1994); Pavese (1995), but note Obbink (1998). For a more general discussion on the likely contexts for performance of the poem, see Boedeker (1995).

⁵⁸ On the possibility that the poem was re-performed in numerous *symposia* across Greece, see Aloni (2001); Boedeker (2001a) 125 n.25.

⁵⁹ 8.82.1, 9.81.1, cf. HW II 321-4.

⁶⁰ As noted by Boedeker (2001a) 129.

⁶¹ Rutherford (2001) 49.

that they had even entered the sacred precinct (9.65.2). This, he relates, is probably because ἡ θεὸς αὐτῆσφρασ οὐκ ἔδέκετο ἔμπρήσαντας τὸ ἰρὸν τὸ ἐν Ἐλευσί νι ἄνάκτορον. Is it possible, as Boedeker suggests, that this is either taken from, or an extension of Simonides' reference to the harvest goddess in fr.17.1? Certainly there are other passages in Herodotus to show that he was familiar with various poetic references to Demeter. In Book Two, he discusses an Egyptian legend which involves the god Isis, who is commonly equated with the Greek goddess Demeter, and remarks that it is from this legend that Aeschylus was able to substantiate his previously unattested view that Artemis was the daughter of Demeter (2.156.5-6).⁶² This passage shows, then, that it was clearly not unusual for him to amass, and discuss, information about this—or any other god—from a poetic source.⁶³

As already stated, it is impossible to determine the exact role played by Demeter in the Simonidean fragments; however, there is at least some suggestion of vengeance in the poem, with the word ῥύσιον ('reprisal') appearing close to Demeter's name (fr.17.7).⁶⁴ Moreover, Herodotus' ruminations on Demeter's act of vengeance towards the Persians has been read by some scholars as an extraordinary moment in the *Histories*, precisely because he opts to express an opinion vis-à-vis the goddess' motivation.⁶⁵ But as Harrison has shown, Herodotus is much less unwilling to express knowledge about divine matters across the whole of his *logos* than others have held;⁶⁶ indeed the theme of divine retribution is one repeatedly explored in his text.⁶⁷ It is also noteworthy that the reference to Demeter's motivation recalls the Potidaeans' remarks concerning the Persians who drowned while besieging their city in Book Eight, arguing that the *aition* of this disaster lies in the fact that those same Persians 'profaned the temple and *agalma* of Poseidon which lay in the suburb of the city' (8.129.3).⁶⁸

⁶² Boedeker (2001a) 129f. See Richardson (2009) for a useful overview of Demeter's prominence in archaic- and classical culture.

⁶³ On Demeter's pronounced 'interest in defeating the Persians' in Herodotus' account, see Mikalson (2003) 125-7.

⁶⁴ Rutherford (2001) 49 also argues that this could refer to the same Persian violations committed round Demeter's temple reported in Herodotus.

⁶⁵ So Lateiner (1989) 67 ('under pressure he threw out a merely divine explanation').

⁶⁶ Harrison (2000).

⁶⁷ Note esp. 8.65, whereby Herodotus reports that prior the battle of Salamis, an ominous dust-cloud purportedly descended from Eleusis on towards Salamis, and this is interpreted by Dicaeus as a divine event, because supernatural support is being offered to the Athenians (who observe the great procession from Athens to Eleusis annually) and their allies. Harrison (2000a) ch.4 well illustrates the pervasiveness of Herodotus' belief in divine retribution across the whole of the *Histories*.

⁶⁸ So Flower and Marincola, 222. After reporting this tradition, Herodotus remarks affirmatively: αἴτιον δὲ τοῦτο λέγοντες εὖ λέγειν ἔμοιγε δοκέουσι.

In this way, this small digression on Demeter therefore is crucial to our understanding of how the battle itself was won, or even how the Persian Wars were won. And the prominence of Demeter in this section of Herodotus equally fits into a more general pattern in which references to gods are especially prolific in Herodotus' Plataea narrative.⁶⁹ The noticeable abundance of such material serves to bring his account closer to other poetic sources, such as Simonides' elegy, in which supernatural elements are common.⁷⁰ So, while proposing that this, or any other Herodotean passage on Demeter is *exclusively derived* from Simonides would be somewhat problematic, it is clear that the inclusion of Demeter in Simonides' elegy is likely to have inspired—and maybe even shaped—Herodotus' own incorporation of the goddess in various parts of his Plataea *logos*.

As striking as these points of contact between the two different versions of the Plataea battle are, it is necessary to remember that, unlike Simonides, Herodotus was writing in prose: his account is thus devoid of many of the poetic conventions which shape Simonides' elegy. Alongside this, the two works are also split by their radically different length, as well as their authors' individual historical perspectives. Even though scholars are in disagreement about the physical length and scope of Simonides' elegy,⁷¹ there is no doubting that his work could never have covered the range and depth of events in Herodotus' monumental *logos*. Indeed, Martin West has characterised Simonides' elegy as something akin to a pocketbook mini-epic.⁷² While positing rigid arguments for differences in content between the “new Simonides” and Herodotus' *Histories* is somewhat constrained by the poor state of the fragments, below I will show that there are nonetheless some clear discrepancies between the two accounts. Here I will argue that Herodotus very likely dissented from Simonides' interpretation—at least on certain points; and that this, in turn, counters the notion that he constructed his account of the battle predominantly from oral testimonies,⁷³ showing that *de facto* there were more varied sources of information available to him, even for the battle narratives which dominate the latter books of his *Histories*.

⁶⁹ Boedeker (2001a) 130-1.

⁷⁰ Boedeker (2001a) 130. I am less persuaded, however, by the rather tenuous suggestion that δηρόν (fr.17.5) recalls Herodotus' description of fighting “for a long time” around Demeter's shrine (9.62.2), cf. Parsons (1992) 40; West (1993) 9.

⁷¹ West (1993) 4 shows that it did not fill a roll, but was joined by other, sympotic elegies. This has been justifiably complicated however by Kowerski (2005) and Grethlein (2010), who are both more open to the inclusion of other, non-Plataea fragments within the same poem.

⁷² West (1993) 5.

⁷³ Nyland (1992) frames his analysis on the supposition that Herodotus' account is based on information acquired from a series of individual informants.

Marincola has well illustrated some of the ways in which the heightened presence of a critical narrator is sustained throughout Herodotus' account;⁷⁴ this critical persona indeed sets his account of Plataea apart from that of Simonides, *exempli gratia* when we look to his less-than-glorious sketch of the Corinthians' role at Plataea. In several of the newly-acquired fragments (frs.15-16), Simonides offers additional details on the Corinthians' central position in the battle (a passage later quoted in Plutarch's irascible tract against Herodotus)⁷⁵ and ultimately argues that the Corinthians κἀλλιστον μάρτυν ἑθεντο πόνων ('set up [for themselves] the finest witness of their toils', fr.16.1).⁷⁶ This clearly demonstrates that for Simonides and his audience, the Corinthians played a much more integral role in the battle than that suggested by Herodotus;⁷⁷ and even though it is hardly likely that the poem was exclusively composed as an encomium for the Corinthian warriors, it seems rather unlikely that another *polis* (such as Sparta) would have agreed to commission a poem which would then elaborate on the Corinthians' glorious deeds.

But how does Herodotus' version of the battle compare with this? Unlike Simonides, and also Plutarch, (who, incidentally, by citing Simonides, shows that poetry could be used to buttress a critical account on the past long after the fifth century BCE)⁷⁸ Herodotus insists that only the Tegeans and Spartans fought against the Persians (9.59.1), and that the Athenians alone routed the finest of the Theban medisers (οὐ τῶ ὥστε τριηκόσιοι αὐτῶν οἱ πρώτοι καὶ ἄριστοι ἐνθαῦτα ἔπεσον ὑπὸ Ἀθηναίων, 9.67). The Corinthians, in contrast, are explicitly cited as one of the Greek communities who avoided participating in the battle, instead taking up a position by the temple of Hera. Upon hearing that a battle had taken place, Herodotus adds, they rather ingloriously 'set forth in no order' (οὐδέ νακόσιμον ταχθεῖντες, 9.69.1). Clearly aiming to reinforce this point, he later asserts that myriad *poleis* tombs at Plataea (Corinth included) are in fact empty, since they were really erected at some point after the battle to hide from future generations their shame at having

⁷⁴ Marincola (1987).

⁷⁵ Plutarch *De mal. Herod.* 872 D-E. It is not altogether clear whether the term μέσσοις is used to refer to the Corinthians' place in the battle formation (e.g. Luppe [1994]), or whether it refers to their specific fighting position (as suggested by Plutarch). On Plutarch's acerbic tract and its wider context amongst the imperial Greek elite, see esp. Momigliano (1966b) 136ff., Bowie (1974), Marincola (1994) esp.191-3. For a close reading of the various arguments propounded by Plutarch, see Baragwanath (2008) 9-22, demonstrating the Boiotian's pertinent remarks on, e.g., Herodotus' tendency to withhold an opinion (10-2). For Herodotus' broader reception in antiquity, see variously Momigliano (1966b), Evans (1968), Murray (1972), Hornblower (2006).

⁷⁶ After quoting from Simonides, Plutarch adds that 'he did not record this for a choir in Corinth, nor did he compose it as a song for the city: rather, he simply wrote down those events in elegiacs', *De mal. Herod.* 872 E. This equally seems to suggest, then, that the poem was not composed for any specific city or individual, see, e.g., Obbink (2001) 80-1.

⁷⁷ Shaw (2001) 172.

⁷⁸ As noted by Boedeker (1995) 226.

not participated (9.85.3).⁷⁹ Whilst we are surely right to exercise some reserve concerning how much the Corinthians ultimately feature in the Simonidean elegy, the poet's portrait of virtue-loving Corinth hardly chimes with Herodotus' ignominious version of their (lack of) deeds at Plataea.

Of course, it is necessary to ask whether Herodotus was at all aware of this alternative narrative on the Corinthians and Plataea. On this point, we are aided by statements which he makes regarding the Corinthians elsewhere in his *Histories*. For instance, contrast this negative picture of Corinthian cowardliness at Plataea with his subtle defence of those Corinthians who fought at Salamis (8.94). Here, he reports an Athenian 'rumour' (φῶ τις ἔχει)⁸⁰ which maintained that the Corinthians had fled the battle itself, and returned much later, only to find the battle had already finished. He then adds that the Corinthians reject this version and argue that they were in fact at the forefront of the conflict, a statement that 'the rest of Hellas will bear witness to' (8.94.4).⁸¹ It is clear that on this occasion, contrary to Book Nine, Herodotus argues in favour of the Corinthians (i) by labelling the Athenians' account as a mere rumour, and (ii) in concluding the passage with the declaration that μαρτυρέει δὲ σοφὶ καὶ ἡ ἄλλη Ἑλλάς.⁸² Hence Herodotus appears to have held a more complex attitude towards the Corinthians than is immediately apparent when considering his treatment of them in Book Nine alone. And given his knowledge of alternative versions regarding their deeds at Salamis, it seems no less likely that he was aware of alternative accounts on their role at Plataea. In this way, it is possible to see this as another occasion in which Herodotus is silently correcting an authority, rejecting his much more positive remarks on the Corinthians at Plataea.

The different dates at which these accounts were composed very likely provides a further explanation as to why Simonides and Herodotus depicted the battle in such different terms. For Simonides, writing very shortly after the battle, Greece had successfully united against the overwhelming might of the barbarian, and resultantly, there was an emerging focus on panhellenic ideals throughout Greece.⁸³ In contrast to this picture of a united Greece immediately after the Persian Wars, however, Herodotus was writing in the latter half of the

⁷⁹ For the problematical nature of Herodotus' attitude towards the Corinthians, see Flower & Marincola (2000) 19 n.98.

⁸⁰ Macan II 504 remarks that this rare formula suggests an oral source; cf. Powell (1938) s.v. φῶ τις.

⁸¹ Budin (2008) 339 suggests that the ostensibly Simonidean epigram celebrating the Corinthians' contribution to the Greek cause in 480-79 (see below) may have been commissioned as a 'subtle rebuttal on the part of the Corinthians', denying precisely the sort of tradition conveyed by the Athenians in Hdt. 8.94.

⁸² Pace D.Chr. 37.7, who states that Herodotus inserted this story to avenge the Corinthians, who refused to pay him, similarly HW II 267.

⁸³ On the emergence and development of panhellenism over the course of the fifth century, see Flower (2000).

fifth century, a period defined by deep internal divisions between different *poleis*; the glow of panhellenism, ignited by the Greeks' seemingly-impossible victory over the might of the barbarian had faded considerably as the Peloponnesian War loomed.⁸⁴ And this more subdued political climate within which Herodotus was working undoubtedly affected his perspective on the Persian Wars. For instance, in fragment 11 Simonides' Spartans appear to march out to in true heroic fashion, mindful that none of Greece should be enslaved (11.25f.). The texture of Herodotus' (very likely) much more extended account on Spartan preparations (9.6-10), however, is far less celebratory, as it focuses much more intensely on Spartan pontificating and opaque motivations.⁸⁵ According to his account, the Spartans eventually consent, but only after the Athenians (9.7a-β) and the Tegean Chileus (9.9)—a foreigner who exerts the greatest influence on the Lacedaemonians (δυνάμενος ἐν Λακεδαίμονι μέγιστον ξείνων, 9.9.1)—make separate pleas for their support in overcoming the Persians in the plains of Boeotia.

This is in fact germane to Herodotus' narrative more broadly, as he elsewhere elaborates on the flimsiness of the Greek alliance, for example, the widespread posturing that he reports prior to the battle of Salamis (see §6.2 below). Indeed at the beginning of his work one of his clearly defined objectives is to investigate the causes (*aitiē*) of the hostilities between Greeks and non-Greeks; such an intentionally critical exposition, in contrast to the genre-constrained eulogistic poetry of Simonides, allows for the possibility of an extended analysis of inter-*polis* relations during the War. So once again it would be naïve to assume automatically that the divergences from Simonides demonstrate that Herodotus was unaware of the poem, the likelihood here is rather that Herodotus sought to refine/omit those aspects of Simonides' elegy which were contradicted by the narrator's Odyssean travels and inquiries.⁸⁶

Another subtle, yet significant, difference between the Simonidean and Herodotean accounts of the battle can be seen in their narration of the Spartans' march to Plataea. In one of the restored fragments (11.30-1), Simonides states that the Spartans set out:

---] Ζηνὸς παῖσι σὺν ἰπποδάμοις
 Τυνδαρίδαϊς ἦ πῶσι καὶ εὐρυβίηι Μενελάωι

⁸⁴ Hornblower (2001) 140; Boedeker (2001a) 131, cf. further discussion below at §7.4, n.82.

⁸⁵ N.B. Herodotus records that the Spartans were busily celebrating the festival of Hyacinthus at the time, as well as constructing a wall across the Isthmus (9.7)—a wall that Herodotus later supposes that the Spartans, at least for a time, believed would provide sufficient means to repel a Persian attack, rendering Athenian support unnecessary (ἄλλο γε ἢ ὄτι ὁ Ἴσθμός σφι ἐτετείχιστο καὶ ἐδόκεον Ἀθηναίων ἔτι δεῖσθαι οὐδέν, 9.8.2), cf. Baragwanath (2008) 231-4, Zali (2011) 79.

⁸⁶ Redfield (1985), Marincola (2007).

...with the horse-taming sons of Zeus
 [The Tyndarid] heroes and almighty Menelaus.

The significance here, then, is that the Spartans marched out accompanied by both the Tyndaridae and Menelaus. However Herodotus is surely in disagreement on this point, having already noted previously that since the time of Cleomenes and Demaratus, the Spartans required one of the Tyndaridae to remain in Sparta (5.75): it follows from this that when Pausanias and the Spartans march out at the beginning of Book Nine it is impossible, according to Herodotus at least, that both Tyndaridae could have been present. Simon Hornblower attempts to explain this discrepancy by arguing that the Tyndaridae feature as an epiphany in Simonides, something quite different from the iconic representations of the heroes which Herodotus is talking about in Book Five.⁸⁷ The error, he argues, is in fact Herodotus' failure to report this additional detail.⁸⁸ Given the poor state of the evidence, I do not think it possible to be sure on exactly how Simonides incorporates the Tyndaridae into his account. But nonetheless, it is still possible to deduce that Herodotus is dissenting from Simonides, even if we accept Hornblower's formulation. On the one hand, if Simonides is referring to an iconic manifestation of the heroes accompanying the Spartans, then Herodotus' remark in Book Five may well be viewed as a silent correction of the poet. If, on the other hand, Simonides is including this detail as an epiphany (and the inclusion of Menelaus may help us arrive at that conclusion), then Herodotus is most likely intentionally suppressing this from his own account in order to set himself apart from the lyric poet, who, as Feeney observes, is generally much more likely to offer greater detail on the subject of epiphanies.⁸⁹

So even if at this stage many of the suggested similarities and differences between Herodotus' narrative on Plataea and Simonides' evocative elegy can only remain provisional, a picture has emerged in which the correspondences between the two writers works' on certain matters are more than offset by a number of strikingly deep divisions in content, texture and style. To some extent, these materialised because of our authors' flagrantly different historical perspectives. But these divergences are also a result of the differing outcomes each writer hoped for their work. Far from seeking to boost the collective morale of the Greeks—as Simonides' text might well have done—Herodotus' general intent here was consistent with the rest of his account, namely to produce a critical, independent

⁸⁷ On this point see Parker (1989) 147.

⁸⁸ Hornblower (2001) 140-2.

⁸⁹ Feeney (1991) 260-2.

record of the past; he was not, as he himself states, in the business of the more fanciful kind of storytelling which was freely available to the poets.⁹⁰

5.5 Simonides' Persian Wars

For the remainder of this chapter I shall examine the wider literary impact of Simonides' highly-significant dedication to contemporary events, specifically looking at the ways in which he elevates the status of the recent war-dead to that of the Homeric heroes, a familiar trope by the time of Herodotus and Thucydides. In doing so, I will suggest that Simonides' poetic persona not only acts as a useful precedent to the authority of the historian, but also that the extant Simonidean literature can help to enrich our understanding of the emergence—and development—of historiography in fifth-century Greece.

A striking feature of the “new Simonides” is the way in which the poet appeals to the Trojan War tradition as a paradigmatic model for the almost-contemporary events at Plataea. As discussed above, fragment 11 begins with a specific call to the mighty strength of Achilles; and while it is not clear as to whether Achilles is invoked as a paradigm for the collective Greeks who fought at Plataea, or for an individual leader such as Pausanias,⁹¹ the very mention of his name, and the other valiant Greeks, strengthens the heroic reputation which the poet wishes to bestow upon the recent war-dead. This not only anticipates Herodotus' complex interaction with Homeric/epic precedents, as explored in the previous chapter, but it equally pre-emptly the wider practice of portraying Trojans as barbarians within fifth-century Athenian cultural history.⁹²

But are these fragments, along with the epigram commissioned for those who fought at Thermopylae (as Herodotus ambiguously puts it at 7.228.4),⁹³ the full extent of Simonides' treatment of this epic war? On the contrary, Simonides' position as one of the principal, authoritative voices on the Greco-Persian conflict is further affirmed by a number of additional pieces of evidence. In the Anonymous life of Aeschylus, he is said to have

⁹⁰ Indeed, after reporting that Homer was ostensibly aware of an alternative version of Helen's whereabouts after being abducted by Paris, Herodotus states that ‘ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ ὁμοίως ἐς τὴν ἐποποιίην εὐπρόπῃς ἢ τῶν ἐτέρω τῶν περὶ ἐχρήσατο’ (2.116.1), cf. further 4.3 above.

⁹¹ Shaw (2001) 178-81 persuasively suggests that one does not automatically preclude the other; so Achilles may have been employed by Simonides, not only to invoke the panhellenic plurality of the Greeks, but simultaneously as a paradigmatic icon for the current leader of Greece, i.e. Pausanias. Pavese (1995) 21ff. is not persuaded by the suggestion that Simonides might be comparing Achilles with such an unscrupulous figure as Pausanias (‘Il suo temperamento difficilmente si può descrivere come Ἀλίλλειος’, p.21), and proffers the suggestion that the reference is rather to Leonidas at Thermopylae. Cf. also Sbardella (2000), reading the Spartans as the referent, noting how just as Achilles avenges the murder of Patroclus, so too the Spartans avenge Leonidas' death (10).

⁹² See further Miller (1997).

⁹³ See §3.5 above.

defeated Aeschylus in a competition in which he recited an elegy for those who died at Marathon, τὸ γὰρ ἐλεγεῖον περὶ τὸ συμπαθὲς λεπτότητος μετέχειν θέλει.⁹⁴ (This, incidentally, if indeed it did happen, clearly demonstrates that Simonides' use of elegiacs was more substantial than the newly-discovered fragments.) And by winning a poetry competition for commemorating the Marathon dead, the possibility is raised that he was commissioned for other, separate dedicatory elegies, praising those who fell in one of the other conflicts.⁹⁵ As Hutchinson notes, Simonides must have been no less important than Pindar, particularly as Pindar failed to acquire the grand commissions after the Persian Wars.⁹⁶ Turning towards his influence on other genres, Martin West also acknowledges the extraordinarily swift response to Xerxes' defeat amongst the tragedians, especially as it was more typically *au courant* for dramatists to explore subjects from the heroic age.⁹⁷ One might wonder whether Simonides' extensive poetic treatment of the recent conflict—in which he himself includes various analogical references to the Trojan War—made the conflict appear that much more worthy of further artistic treatment amongst his contemporaries? In this way, we can discern yet again how Simonides' contribution to the memorialisation of the Persian Wars was distinguished both for its breadth, and its profundity.

Turning now to post-fifth-century responses to the Persian Wars, it is the Boiotian author Plutarch who provides further discussion on Simonides' *œuvre*, and a more sustained appreciation of Simonides' subsequent reception in later authors' works. Indeed, on top of the reference to Simonides in Plutarch's polemical attack on Herodotus' ostensibly partisan account of the Corinthians' role at Plataea, there is other, substantial evidence for his knowledge of what he regards to be Simonidean poetry. In his *Life of Themistocles*, Plutarch informs us that, according to Simonides, Themistocles instituted the restoration and lavish decoration of a shrine at Phlya (*Them.* 1.3). Later in this same work, Plutarch quotes Simonides' praise for those who fought and succeeded at Salamis, a victory which is described as: τῆν καλὴν ἐκεῖνην καὶ περιβόητον ἀράμενοι νίκην, ἧς οὐθ' Ἕλλησιν οὐτε βαρβάρους ἐνάλιον ἔργον εἴργασται λαμπρότερον (*Them.* 15.2).⁹⁸ These two

⁹⁴ *TrGF* iii.33s., see Campbell (1991) 340-3. This passage is also relevant here, as it contradicts the Suda biography of Simonides, in which there is no indication of a Simonidean elegy on Marathon. This not only further brings into question the reliability of the Suda article, but equally, it strengthens the possibility that there was also an elegy composed on Plataea, and that this too had simply gone unreported. On the veracity of this reported contest for the best elegy, see Molyneux (1992) 151f.

⁹⁵ On the substantive and innovative character of Simonides' elegiacs, see Hutchinson (2001) 289-90.

⁹⁶ Hutchinson (2001) 288.

⁹⁷ West (1993b) 5.

⁹⁸ 'that fair and famed victory, which neither Greeks nor Barbarians have ever performed a more brilliant deed by the sea.' It is difficult, however, to determine how much of this is taken from Simonides verbatim, or is merely a paraphrase of his work, see further Pelling (2007b) 147 n.10. Even

references also show that Simonides' poetry could be—and was, in the case of Plutarch—cited for a wider range of purposes than merely for the singular purpose of correcting Herodotus.

It is also apparent that Simonides predominantly appears in Plutarchan texts which are specifically concerned with the Persian Wars. If we return to Plutarch's polemical tract against Herodotus, alongside his reference to Simonides' remarks on the Corinthians' deeds at Plataea, Plutarch in fact explicitly quotes from other Simonidean epigrams.⁹⁹ In the first of these two citations, Plutarch refers to a poem in which Simonides sings of the heroism displayed by Democritus of Naxos at Salamis, taking five ships with him to battle (869B-C), a passage which effectively undermines Herodotus' one-sided 'fiction' (ψεῦδος) that the Naxians initially sent three triremes to join the Persians (cf. 8.46.3).¹⁰⁰ This epigram is thus used by Plutarch to present a more authoritative account than that of Herodotus, establishing Democritus' "true" role during the Persian Wars. The other—and no less damning—Simonidean reference is an epigram he wrote about the Corinthian women who dedicated some bronze statues in the temple of Aphrodite (871B). The inscription runs:

Here stand the women who in prayer appealed
to Cypris for the men of Grece so bold.
Bright Aphrodite had no mind to yield
to Persians bearing bows our Greek stronghold.¹⁰¹

Plutarch vehemently asserts that Herodotus and his contemporaries were patently ignorant of this tale, even though its dissemination was pervasive and perhaps most importantly, even though it was memorably captured in a Simonidean epigram.¹⁰² Here it seems, then, that Plutarch is intentionally drawing our attention to the fact that Simonides was the author of the epigram, in order to further stress how nakedly pejorative was Herodotus' account of the

so, is it nonetheless clear that: a) Simonides wrote (perhaps aphoristically) on the battle, and b) that Simonides' work was readily available to Plutarch, cf. also 5.3-4.

⁹⁹ He does, in addition, quote a number of other verses, and it is by no means impossible that some of these were not too (or at least thought to be) Simonidean, so Bowen (1992) 139.

¹⁰⁰ For a discussion on how many (indeed if any) of the verses ultimately attributed to Simonides can actually be reliably attached to him, see Campbell (1991) 519-20. Bowen (1992) 139 argues convincingly that it is reasonable to assume, as Plutarch does, that Herodotus indeed chose to omit or suppress these Simonidean verses, especially as he quotes from Simonides' poetry in Book Seven; the new fragments, and the intertextual relationship between the two authors only serves to strengthen this view.

¹⁰¹ Bowen's translation. These lines are also quoted by (i) the scholion to Pindar (*FGrHist* 115 F 285b), and (ii) Athenaeus in the *Deipnosophistai*, who assuredly refers to the epigram as Simonidean (13.573c-d); for further discussion, see Budin (2008).

¹⁰² As Bowen (1992) notes: '[Simonides] is probably mentioned here by name to underline the importance (as P. Saw it) of this evidence' (142).

Corinthians. If this is the case, then this citation, along with the previous one, only serves to heighten our sense of Simonides' fame after the Persian Wars, and re-confirms that his output on all manner of topics and communities related to the conflict was indeed extensive. As to whether all of these epigrams quoted by Plutarch were in fact originally composed by Simonides or not is unfortunately impossible to determine, but as Anthony Bowen notes, it is striking in itself that war epigrams from the period after the Persian Wars generally gravitated towards Simonides.¹⁰³ Hence Plutarch's fairly wide-ranging use of (purportedly) Simonidean poetry offers an ever more lucid indication of the honour which was conferred on this prestigious classical poet long after the fifth century.

5.6 Simonides War Poet

So how does Simonides and lyric poetry fit into our understanding of Herodotus—as well as historiography more broadly? Above I have explored a variety of ways in which both the content and the style of Herodotus' Plataea *logos*, reflect and refract certain aspects of the earlier Simonides poem. However, this is not necessarily to be deemed as an entirely self-conscious act on Herodotus' behalf. Rather, a comparison of Simonides' elegy with a range of other known elegiac poetry has shown that his poetic voice was not only a voluble one, but more importantly, an original one. Simonides' contribution to the field of memory has been more acutely felt both as an important precursor to the rise of historiography in the latter half of the fifth century, and as crucial to the Greek-Barbarian polarity which permeates fifth-century Greek culture more broadly.

Moreover it is also the very extensive nature of Simonides' literary output, notably on the subject of the Persian Wars, which thus meant that it was *his* poetic voice that had rapidly become synonymous with the memorialisation process that took place immediately after that great conflict. So when Herodotus was constructing his own version of the battle at Plataea, his debt to Simonides—who had so vigorously helped to shape public memory—was in many ways to be expected. It was not possible for Herodotus, writing in the mid-to-late fifth century, to write on the subject of Plataea without being at all influenced by Simonides: he had quickly become for the Persian Wars what Homer was for the Trojan Wars. Indeed it can hardly be accidental that in his denunciation of Herodotus' account on Plataea, Plutarch should choose to appeal to the (still extant) Simonidean elegy discussed above. For in this

¹⁰³ Bowen (1992) 139. It would be somewhat unlikely that Plutarch could have known beyond all doubts that these epigrams were Simonidean in provenance, especially since interest in the authorship of an inscription (which would only rarely be signed) was minimal during the fifth century, cf. *FGE* 196.

Simonidean text Plutarch clearly places a great deal of trust, using it to help substantiate his claim that Herodotus offered a selective and partial view of the battle.¹⁰⁴

Even with the frustratingly poor condition of the Simonidean fragments, it is still possible to show some of the distinct ways in which Herodotus' later depiction of the battle differs from Simonides' earlier, contemporaneous version; and this is in no small way a reflection of the different genres they were working in. But Herodotus may have deliberately opted to redact a number of points from Simonides' elegy, particularly as the positive tone of his poem no longer seemed valid in Herodotus' much more politically-fraught context. While this is of course revealing, it should be borne in mind that implicit or explicit criticism of one's predecessors was a very well-established *topos* by the time that Herodotus was writing. I am not here proposing that it was a wildly peculiar feature of the emerging genre within which Herodotus was working to refine previous authors' works.¹⁰⁵

This chapter, therefore, has drawn out some of the ways in which lyric poetry, created both before and alongside the newly-emerging, self-conscious researches into the past (*historiē*), was also able to narrate and reflect on recent events, at the very same time that it continued to expand on subject matter derived from the so-called *spatium mythicum*.¹⁰⁶ Indeed Simonides' elegy on the recent antagonism between Persians and Greeks expertly shows how poets were able to move freely between ancient and contemporary history, even within an individual poem—something which Herodotus, and Thucydides after him, is unable to avoid within his own prose history. So in this way, as Boedeker well observes, the newly-published Simonidean elegy has (particularly as a result of touching upon an otherwise poorly-attested subject) led us into experiencing poetic “histories”; it is no longer adequate to eschew the question of these works' influence on popular understandings and traditions on the events which they narrate.¹⁰⁷ Although much more muted than his relationship with Homer, Herodotus' allusions to and subtle critique of Simonides' work reinforces the authority of the historian, and reinforces the critical superiority of his own intellectual enterprise.

¹⁰⁴ Elsewhere Plutarch adopts a far less condemnatory stance towards Herodotus; for example, in one tract he praises Herodotus' account for its ‘power and grace’ (*Non Posse* 10), see further Pelling (2007b) esp. 155-162.

¹⁰⁵ E.g. Pindar: *O.* 9.47; cf. above ch.2 *passim*. The principal work on the critique of one's predecessors is Marincola (1997).

¹⁰⁶ Cf. the classic study of Nestle (1942), cf. §4.3 above.

¹⁰⁷ Boedeker (1995) 226; cf. Thomas (1989) ch.4 for the influence of *epitaphioi* on official Persian War traditions.

Chapter 6

Tyrants and Dead Brothers

ὥσθ' οἷόν τ' εἶναι περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν πολλαχῶς
 ἐξηγήσασθαι, καὶ τὰ τε μεγάλα ταπεινὰ ποιῆσαι καὶ τοῖς
 μικροῖς μέγεθος περιθεῖναι, καὶ τὰ τε παλαιὰ καινῶς
 διελεῖν καὶ περὶ τῶν νεωστὶ γεγενημένων ἀρχαίως
 εἰπεῖν.

— Isocrates¹

[Herodotus'] procedure is not substantially different from that of the tragedians. The basics were known, the end result was predictable. What mattered was the presentation of the detail in such a way as to keep the audience involved and make the pattern explicable. This is the essence of Herodotus' art and the key to his technique.

— Charles Fornara²

6.1 The *Histories* and Tragedy

At the close of his account of the Ionian revolt—that ill-fated insurrection against the Persians to which, significantly, the Athenians had already ceased to offer any assistance (5.103)—Herodotus describes the capture and complete destruction of Miletus (6.18-22). After recounting a Delphic oracle delivered to the Argives which, amongst other things, foretold the collapse of Miletus (described as 'contriver of evil deeds', 6.19.2), Herodotus describes the subjugation of the Milesians, the immolation of the Temple at Didyma, and the re-allocation of the Milesian territory to the Persians and Carians of Pedasus. He then proceeds to contrast the unsympathetic response shown by the Sybarites (most improper, given the mutual ties between the two towns), with the compassion shown by the Athenians, who 'fell into tears' when watching Phrynichus' tragedy, *Halosis Miletou* (6.21.2).³ Indeed the Athenians were so acutely attuned to the cathartic qualities of this work, that the play is reported by Herodotus to have stimulated a visceral evocation of their own evils

¹ 4.8.

² (1971) 73.

³ On the difficulties surrounding this elliptical author, and the performance date of *Halosis Miletou* (for which no fragments survive), see the discussion in Scott (2005) ad loc.; cf. Rosenbloom (1993) *passim*, (2006) 20-2, 33-5.

(ἀναμνήσαντα οἱ κήια κακά),⁴ with the result being that they fined the playwright a thousand drachmas,⁵ proclaiming that nobody would be allowed to put on this drama in the future.⁶ Such an outcome illustrates the importance of tragedy in Herodotus' age, but also the pitfalls of working in this medium, as the tragic author must accept the possibility of public indictment, and even provide financial reparations if they are deemed to have offered an (in some way) unsatisfactory interpretation of, at least in Phrynichus' case, the very recent past.

This episode represents the only occasion in the *Histories* where Herodotus explicitly refers to a tragic work, albeit without providing any detail about the content of the drama itself. However, in addition, there is a less than flattering reference in his work to the ostensibly innovative tragedian Aeschylus.⁷ In his Egyptian *logos*, after having discussed the floating island of Chemmis, Herodotus writes that according to Egyptian tradition, Apollo (Horus) and Artemis (Bubastis) are the children of Isis (Demeter) and Dionysus, and hence:

ἐκ τούτου δὲ τοῦ λόγου καὶ οὐδενὸς ἄλλου Αἰσχύλος ὁ Εὐφορίωνος ἤρπασε τὸ ἐγὼ φράσω, μοῦνος δὴ ποιητέων τῶν προγενομένων: ἐποίησε γὰρ Ἄρτεμιν εἶναι θυγατέρα Δήμητρος. (2.156.6).⁸

So rather than credit Aeschylus with a poetic innovation, Herodotus attests a pre-existing Egyptian tradition that was clearly at the root of Aeschylus' version in which Artemis is the daughter of Demeter.⁹ For our purposes here, two things are worthy of note. First, the parenthetical remark that Aeschylus was 'alone of the poets preceding him' in saying this (μοῦνος δὴ ποιητέων τῶν προγενομένων) is a clear statement of authority on Herodotus' part, reasserting his comprehensive knowledge of Greek poetry. Secondly, this solitary

⁴ For the meaning of catharsis in antiquity, see esp. Halliwell (1998) 350-6.

⁵ Rosenbloom (2006) 21 reads this as a traumatic event for the Athenians, who were reminded of the suffering of 'their own people'; pace Marincola (1996) 66, who notes that Phrynichus' fiscal punishment may be redolent not of Athenian sympathy for the Milesians' suffering, but rather Athenian anger at an implicit or explicit sense of reproach directed to the Athenians for withdrawing from the Ionian cause. This hypothesis only works on the assumption, of course, that the play was performed not long after the fall of Miletus, a point also acknowledged by Scott (2005) 126. However, reading Herodotus' comment alongside Ammianus 28.1.4, Badian (1996) convincingly argues that οἱ κήια κακά is most likely a reference to the destruction of Athens in 480/79, and dates the performance of *Halosis Miletou* soon after this event, in 478/7.

⁶ On the contrast between the thoroughly unsuccessful staging of *Halosis Miletou* and another altogether more successful 'historical' tragedy, Aeschylus' *Persae*, see esp. Grethlein (2010) 86-8. Grethlein demonstrates how the former failed to distance the audience from the level of the action—a key component of tragedy as conceptualised by Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* (1383a8-12) and *Poetics* (1449b24-8); cf. Calame (1995) 113.

⁷ E.g. the tragedian is credited with introducing a second actor to the tragic performance; see Themistius *Orationes* 26.316d, and Diogenes Laertius 3.56.

⁸ Cf. Paus. 8.37.6.

⁹ Cf. Burkert (1990) 5-8, providing earlier evidence in Near Eastern and Greek culture for this procedure of equating a foreign god with a local one.

explicit allusion to the tragedian necessarily leaves a strong impression on the reader, since Herodotus is very likely engaging in a polemical attack against Aeschylus, who has ‘taken’ (ἦ ρπασε)¹⁰ a tradition and falsely presented it as an original interpretation, when it in fact derives from Egyptian legend.¹¹

This lack of explicit tragic references in the *Histories* may explain why Herodotus’ work is, above all, considered in terms of its debt to epic poetry.¹² Such a scenario is particularly unfortunate given the privileged position that tragedy occupies in fifth century, especially Athenian, culture.¹³ Indeed, as Griffin has noted, tragedy was in many ways the daughter of the Homeric epic, and had become the pre-eminent representative of that tradition in the fifth century. For like epic, tragedy was similarly concerned with depicting the full complexities of human and divine actions, often through powerful speeches.¹⁴ As will become clear, Herodotus’ work often employs such a mode of discourse, though by no means uncritically.

¹⁰ I am less than convinced by the suggestion in HW I ad loc. that the harsh term ἦ ρπασε may indicate that Herodotus ‘forgets his Orientalism, and speaks with resentment of a distortion of the usual Greek mythology’. Cf. Rood (2010) 68 n.65, who remarks somewhat elliptically on a correspondence between Aeschylus’ literary theft and the proem: ‘[2.156.6] is a hint that the proem’s (or indeed any) narrative of the theft of Helen is always already a form of literary theft’.

¹¹ Cf. Verdin (1977) 56: ‘le seule mention d’Eschyle dans l’œuvre d’Hérodote est donc caractérisée par un ton nettement polémique. On a l’impression que l’explication de cette irritation de la part d’Hérodote doit être cherchée dans le fait qu’Eschyle a présenté comme personnelle une interprétation trouvée dans un mythe égyptien, ce qui constitue un bel exemple de l’application de la critique d’originalité à une source poétique.’ For similar ideas found in Book Two and Aeschylus’ *œuvre*, see Lloyd I 133, suggesting Hecataeus as a common source.

¹² As Saïd notes, the case was never made for a ‘tragic’ Herodotus in antiquity, regardless of the clear acknowledgment of his penchant for myths (2002, 117). There are nevertheless a number of works that explore various aspects of tragedy in Herodotus, see esp. Fohl (1913); Myres (1914) 88-96; Aly (1921) *passim*; Schmid-Stählin (1934) 569-72; Waters (1966); Fornara (1971) esp.61-2, 73, 81, 90-1; Lesky (1977); Chiasson (1979), (1982), (2003); Long (1987) 179-92; Hartog (1988) 335-8; Romm (1998) 68-72; Nielsen (1997) 46-81; West (1999); Saïd (2002); Griffin (2006); Sewell-Rutter (2007) esp.1-14; Parker (2007); de Bakker (2007) 15-7; Schellenberg (2009) 146-7; (muting the influence of tragedy) Kurke (2011) 427; Wesselmann (2011) esp.39ff.; Baragwanath and de Bakker (2012a) 52-3; cf. now Baragwanath (2012a) 304-8, who explores the *Oresteia* as a possible intertext in Herodotus (see further remarks below), and Iriarte (2013) who argues for ‘un jeu intertextuel évident’ with tragic drama in Herodotus’ presentation of despotic women (quote at p.116). For a broader investigation into the similarities and differences between history and tragedy in antiquity, see Rutherford (2007).

¹³ Chiasson (1982) 156 notes that Herodotus’ (lengthy?) sojourn in Athens further confirms his familiarity with tragedy; on Herodotus’ stay in Athens see useful remarks in Jacoby (1913) 226-42; Fornara (1971) 37-58; Gould (1989) 14-17; Ostwald (1991); Stadter (1992); West (1999) 100-2, *pace* Podlecki (1977) who unconvincingly argues that the fragmentary, largely circumstantial evidence can provide no accurate picture of the historical Herodotus’ travels. The cumulative weight of these (admittedly non-contemporary) references to his stay in Athens, the clear interaction with Attic tragedy (for which see below), and the especially sophisticated appreciation of Attic cultural and political institutions all militate against Podlecki’s thesis; cf. Forsdyke (2001) *passim*, who highlights the prevalence of Athenian democratic ideology in Herodotus, even shaping non-Athenian narratives in his work, e.g. in the conversation between Demaratus and Xerxes at 7.101-5 (pp.341-54).

¹⁴ Griffin (2006) 46; cf. Walbank (1960) *passim*, Regenbogen (1961) 80-91, Meiggs (1972) 31.

While the majority of extant tragedies are populated with figures taken from mythological stories, tragic works such as Aeschylus' *Persae*, Phrynichus' *Phoenissae*¹⁵ and the aforementioned *Halosis Miletou* clearly illustrate that by the fifth century, material drawn from contemporary affairs was now considered appropriate for serious dramatic consideration,¹⁶ no less worthy of artistic expression than events leading up to, during, or on from Troy.¹⁷ Hartog well writes: 'Such tragedies created a field of acceptability in which it became possible to recount the wars between the Greeks and the barbarians to one's contemporaries.'¹⁸ So just like the murals on the Stoa Poikile,¹⁹ and the fragments of Simonides' elegiac poetry, tragedy can be seen to have contributed to a culture in which it had become acceptable to incorporate recent history into the narrative proper of various types of artistic works: it was precisely in such an intellectual and cultural context that Herodotus was able to conceive of his own project.²⁰

Given tragedy's prominence in fifth-century literary culture, as well as Herodotus' allusions to Phrynichus and Aeschylus, the reader should not be deterred from detecting a more extensive engagement with tragic material. Even a cursory reading of his work reveals that Herodotus was familiar with tragic storylines and motifs, clearly colouring a number of his *logoi* with motifs and language familiar from tragedy. Indeed a number of paradigmatic episodes in Herodotus evoke similar scenes and characters from tragedy: the story of Gyges' usurping of the Lydian throne; Atys' accidental murder at the hands of Adrastus; Croesus' spectacular downfall followed shortly afterwards by Cyrus' spectacular (and most improbable!) rise; Polycrates and his ring; Cambyses' descent into madness and ironic death—each betray structural and thematic qualities that evoke the work of the tragedians.²¹

¹⁵ For the extant fragments of *Phoenissae*, see *TrGF* F 8-12; cf. Raubitschek (1993), who speculatively suggests this as a potential source for Herodotus' dramatic dialogues between Xerxes and Artabanus (7.8-18, 44-52).

¹⁶ As Drews (1973) 35 noted: 'the *Peripeteia* of Persia could be ranked with the fate of the Seven who marched against Thebes...the Greeks had come to the realization that an event of their own time was just as appropriate a literary theme as the events of the distant past'; cf. Hartog (1988) 335ff.

¹⁷ Of course, this was at least in part achieved by the instant mythologisation of the Persian Wars in intellectual and artistic culture, see further Bowie (1997), Boedeker (1998), Baragwanath (2012b) 37f., see also chs.4-5 above.

¹⁸ Hartog (1988) 335.

¹⁹ In his *Periegesis*, Pausanias describes the various events depicted in the Stoa, events from both the heroic age (the Amazonomachy and the Illiupersis) and the much more recent past (the battle of Marathon and another conflict [the battle of Oenoe, according to Pausanias]) (1.15.1-3), see further Francis (1990) esp.82-94; Boedeker (1998); Erskine (2001) 61-92, esp.68-73.

²⁰ We should by no means consider this change primarily in terms of written culture, however, since alongside the painted murals, vase painters were also beginning to portray conflicts with Persians during the fifth century, see Bovon (1963), Lissarrague (2002), Ivanchik (2005); cf. also Higbie (2010) 186 on the diverse range of evidences for the Persian Wars.

²¹ Useful overviews (with further bibliography) on the various affiliations with tragedy in each of these *logoi* can be found in Saïd (2002), Flower & Marincola 8-9, Chiasson (2003), and Griffin (2006) 48-9; cf. (more generally) Aly (1921) 279-86, van der Veen (1996). On the surviving fragments of a

Alongside these broader narrative patterns familiar from tragedy, Charles Chiasson has also analysed a small number of terms, found in especially revealing passages in Herodotus' later books that are particularly common in tragic poetry.²² Furthermore, it is worth re-emphasising that Herodotus' work is suffused with story arcs and heroic individuals that descend from mythological traditions,²³ precisely the sort of traditions on which all of the major tragedians chose to base their works.

This chapter thus considers further the relationship between Herodotus and tragedy. In the next section I inquire into one of the few extant historical tragedies,²⁴ Aeschylus' *Persae*, considering the extent to which it chimes with Herodotus' later representation of the Persian Wars.²⁵ It will be shown that Herodotus' work reaffirms a number of details and themes that permeate *Persae*,²⁶ such as the Persian obsession with numbers, the Persian messenger system, and the decisive nature of the Greek victory at Salamis. However, certain notable discrepancies in Herodotus' presentation of the conflict, for example the persistent focus on the fissiparous nature of the Hellenic alliance, as well as the more even-handed authorial presentation of Greek and non-Greek achievements in Herodotus' Salamis *logos*, illustrate some of the more overtly polemical aspects of Herodotus' narrative. Just as we saw in the previous chapter, this emerges both because of our authors' divergent political circumstances, and as a consequence of the different genres they are working in. From here, I analyse certain possible Sophoclean intertexts in Herodotus, and consider in particular how

tragedy centred on Gyges, once thought to be a source for Herodotus' narrative (though now commonly rejected), see further Griffin (2006) 50f., cf. Apfel (2011) 183 on Gyges' paradigmatically tragic dilemma; Atys and Adrastus:, e.g., Jacoby (1913) 488, Rood (1998) 81, Fisher (2002) 205; Croesus: Immerwahr (1966) 69-71, Waters (1971) 86-100, Evans (1991) 45, de Jong (1999) 242-251, Chiasson (2003) 25-31; Cyrus: Immerwahr (1966) 165, Pelling (1996) *passim*, esp.76, Chiasson (2012) 220-5; Polycrates: Fohl (1913) 66-8; Cambyses: Roveri (1963) 41. Chiasson (2003) is an especially insightful investigation into the prevalence of tragic storylines in Herodotus, and well brings out a number of the more collaborative aspects of Herodotus' engagement with tragedy in order to help define his own genre. Thus, e.g., in the Atys and Adrastus episode (8-19), Chiasson illustrates how Herodotus' statement on Adrastus' status as the 'most unfortunate' (βαρυσυμφορώτατος [1.45.3], a Herodotean neologism?) of men that he himself knew, the tragic hero is recast 'as a kind of *histor*; in this way Herodotus' new genre of *historie* appropriates and subsumes the voice of tragedy as its own' (17).

²² Chiasson (1982), cf. also (on *Persae*) Hauvette (1894).

²³ Vandiver (1991).

²⁴ On the scanty evidence for other historical tragedies, see Hall (1996) 7-9; cf. also Bowie (1997) 42 who provides a survey of eleven 'historical' tragedies, a schema that is rightly criticised by Harrison (2000b) 26 for employing a much too limited definition of history.

²⁵ Historical value: Tuplin (1996) 133-4, Harrison (2000b) 25-30, Garvie (2009) ix-xvi; relationship with Herodotus: Hauvette (1894) 125-7, Hall (1989) 69f., Pelling (1997a) 2-9, Harrison (2000b) esp. 44-8, Forsdyke (2001) 336-7, 341-54, Saïd (2002) 37-45, Parker (2007). Indeed Baragwanath (2012) 304 states plainly: 'Herodotus engaged with a text of *Persians*', citing *Ar. Ra.* 51-2 as evidence for the circulation of texts in the late fifth century (n.61). For the spread of tragedy beyond Attica in the fifth century, and the evidence for re-performance of Aeschylus' and other tragedians' works, see further Baragwanath and de Bakker (2012a) 53 with n.218.

²⁶ Note Fowler (2010) 330: '[Herodotus'] understanding of the historian's task means that simple assertion, as in Aeschylus' *Persians*, is not open to him.'

far his contemporary shaped Herodotus' 'tripartite notion of rise, acme, and decadence of a city or an empire.'²⁷ Although ostensibly more collaborative in his engagement with tragedy, it will emerge once again, as it has done throughout our investigation, that Herodotus nevertheless demonstrates that his own genre, historiography, supplies a more authoritative account of the past than tragedy, appealing to his painstaking research, and methodologically avoiding a dogmatic, uniphonous and uncritical interpretation of the past.

6.2 Xerxean Hubris and/or 'Cruel Divinity'

Aeschylus' *Persae* is a play of considerable value to the cultural historian. It represents the oldest extant tragedy that survives *in toto*, first performed in 472 BCE at the City Dionysia. One of the play's many original features is that it slowly narrates the outcome of the battle of Salamis from the perspective of the Persian Queen, i.e. focalised through the female and barbarian or "other",²⁸ and patiently builds up to the final *kommos* in which Xerxes emotionally laments the Persians' loss. The play not only offers an abundance of material for studying Greek representations of Persia and "the other" following the major conflicts of 480-79 BCE, but as one of the earliest (surviving) written accounts on the Persian Wars, *Persae* provides a first-hand, albeit highly stylised, view of the events which occurred at Salamis, from which we may compare and contrast later versions.²⁹

Perhaps inevitably, some scholars have conjectured a consciously extended use of Aeschylus in the *Histories*. Victor Parker has recently examined a number of similarities between the two works, arguing for instance that Herodotus' reference to the 1207 Persian ships before the battle at Artemisium (7.184.1) is directly lifted from *Persae* (341-3), conjecturing that 'Herodotus was reading, re-reading, and interpreting the *Persae*'.³⁰ Harrison has argued for a

²⁷ Asheri (2007) 36. Here I have purposely avoid the term "cycle of human affairs" (cf. 1.207.2), often interpreted as the core of Herodotus' philosophy of history, e.g. Fornara (1971) 77-8, Solmsen (1974) 142, van der Veen (1996) 4. In fact it is not at all clear that Herodotus uniformly subscribes to such a stabilising concept, particularly given the number of passages in which Herodotus ponders the limits and fallibility of human wisdom (e.g. 7.1082), cf. (variously) Lloyd-Jones (1971) 62, Gould (1989) 78-80, Harrison (2000a) esp.31-63, Munson (2001) 183, Asheri (2007) 36f., Grethlein (2010) 190-2.

²⁸ Taxidou (2004) 98: '[*Persae*] points to the interdependency of these two categories, gender and otherness, and in turn to the constitutive relationships between the categories of citizenship and their exclusions.'

²⁹ On *Persae*, I have found the following especially valuable: Broadhead (1960); Michelini (1982); Goldhill (1988); Hall (1996); Harrison (2000b); Rosenbloom (2006); Garvie (2009); Grethlein (2010) 74-104; cf. Rehm (2002) 239-51, who focuses on the lack of defined spaces in the play in order to distance the original audience. On the chequered history of the play's fully-fledged status as a 'tragedy', see Hall (1996) 16-9; and, for its reception in recent scholarship, Rosenbloom (2006) 141-6. For the ways in which Herodotus and Aeschylus shaped later responses to the Persian Wars, cf. Kirk Jr. (1955).

³⁰ Parker (2007) 3-4 (quote at p.4); cf. the more measured observations of Lattimore (1943) 92-3, Winnington-Ingram (1983) 6, Nielsen (1997) 49-59, who all note the deep ideological and

more cautious approach, veering away from straightforwardly pointing out direct “uses” of the tragedian in Herodotus’ work, but nevertheless emphasising a number of aspects of the two works that demonstrate the two authors ‘drew on a larger pool of stories with many common themes’.³¹ So in his portrayal of Atossa as a formidable figure in the Persian royal court (cf. esp. 7.3.4), Herodotus’ portrait broadly coheres with the Aeschylean version of the queen as the dominant representative of Persian monarchy.³² However both accounts, Harrison reminds us, equally reflect (and feed into) wider Greek anecdotes and stereotypes concerning Persian women and the Persian court; to take just one example, Hellanicus of Lesbos’ remark that ‘[Atossa is] most warlike and manly in every deed’ (*FGrHist* 4 F178a).³³ But while Harrison is right to stress that a traditional use of *Quellenforschung*, compiling each datum in order to demonstrate the “use” of Aeschylus by Herodotus will only yield a rather schematic picture, this should not deter us from detecting distinctly Aeschylean moments in Herodotus’ work, albeit mindful of wider influences.

Before we begin our investigation proper, it is worth reflecting for a moment longer on the nature of their respective works. Given the divergence between his own generic concerns and those of tragedy,³⁴ it might be tempting to posit that Herodotus had little use for an account like Aeschylus’ *Persae*, with its relatively uncomplicated view of Hellenic relations both before and during the battle, not to mention the recurrence of certain dramatic motifs, such as the contradistinction between night and day, or land and sea.³⁵ Equally, it is no less plausible to conjecture in opposition to this that since Aeschylus’ tragedy was published less than a decade after the battle, and that he and much of his audience had personally witnessed the events recorded, it would be impossible for Aeschylus to venture very far from the truth, even in the minutiae of the battle itself.³⁶ Both positions no doubt have elements of truth. It is difficult to imagine how Aeschylus would have been able to present a version of the battle that was entirely at odds with the audience’s recollection of such an important moment in

metaphysical connexions between the two writers’ works. Note also Fehling (1989): ‘In earlier Greek literature the work that is closest to Herodotus in the rules it follows is Aeschylus’ *Persae*’ (11).

³¹ Harrison (2000b) 55, also esp. 44-8, 53-5, 58-64, 66-9; cf. Baragwanath and de Bakker (2012a) 52, who consider *Persae* ‘an important intertext for the account of Salamis’. Macan I.ii 179-80 considered Aeschylus’ few references to Marathon as possible contributors to Herodotus’ account. For the shared ‘thought-world’ of Herodotus and the tragedians more broadly, see Sewell-Rutter (2007) 3ff.

³² Harrison (2000b) 44-5, cf. Iriarte (2013) 104-6.

³³ Harrison (2000b) 46-7, similarly Tuplin (1996) 166. In ch.3 (132-77) Tuplin provides a useful survey of references to Persia in Athenian literature, demonstrating numerous lacunae in terms of Greek knowledge of Persia.

³⁴ On Herodotus’ sense of genre, see Boedeker (2000).

³⁵ See further Pelling (1997a) 2-9, cf. Konstan (1987) 72-3.

³⁶ For the latter position, see e.g., Fornara (1966) 51 (on Psyttaieia); cf. also the myriad works cited in Pelling (1997a) 1, n.1.

their own past, and unlike Phrynichus, avoid any sort of reparations.³⁷ But equally, it is more than a little naïve to assume that Aeschylus' audience did not appreciate that he was presenting *a* dramatic interpretation of the recent past. The majority of Aeschylus' audience would have recognised that, as a playwright, he would be seeking to incorporate his own artistic voice into his presentation of real events, rather than singularly replicating an unadorned documentary-like account of the battle. For it is surely right to admit that Aeschylus' intentions were pluriform—an admission, of course, that makes the task of the historian, both past and present, that bit more challenging: establishing which strands of his work are literary accretions becomes a decidedly messy business.

A clear similarity between the two works can be found in how both present recent events in a heroic register. Jonas Grethlein has illustrated how the various verbal and structural epicisms at work in *Persae*—the presentation of the messenger as an epic bard, and the imitation of the Iliadic 'Catalogue of Ships' at the outset of *Persae*—all combine to lend the play a 'heroic vagueness', a technique that distances the audience from the recent events portrayed.³⁸ Although Herodotus wrote his work some decades later than Aeschylus, we have already seen above in chapter four how he similarly utilises a number of epic techniques, not so much to distance his audience, but certainly to lend credibility to his account. Indeed Grethlein notes how Herodotus' narrative form is reminiscent of tragedy, since he 'creates a similar discrepancy between audience and characters'.³⁹ This discrepancy is perhaps most prominent in his use of *prolepseis*, moments in which the Herodotean narrator implicitly or explicitly provides the reader with a view of future events,⁴⁰ preparing them for a later outcome that his characters are not aware of, and thus protecting the reader from the 'contingency of chance'.⁴¹ So, for instance, in the Croesus *logos*, the reader is frequently directed to the Lydian King's downfall at a number of junctures, namely through the use of authorial statements, oracular predictions, and mirroring devices.⁴² Similarly,

³⁷ Harrison (2000b) 28 nevertheless emphasises Aeschylus' considerable room for manoeuvre, regardless of the basic need to appear credible.

³⁸ Grethlein (2010) esp. 75-9, 97-104. For the term 'heroic vagueness', see Easterling (1997), esp. 25f.

³⁹ Grethlein (2010) 201, cf. 100-1 for further analysis of the audience's and protagonists' expectations in tragedy.

⁴⁰ For recent analyses of Herodotus' narrative form that apply various narratological terms, see the articles by de Jong (1999), (2001), and Rengakos (2004), (2006a)—the former comparing and contrasting Homeric and Herodotean narrative techniques, the latter focussing specifically on Herodotus' debt to Homeric narrative techniques (principally retardation, audience misdirection, and dramatic irony).

⁴¹ For the 'contingency of chance', see Grethlein (2010) 7-15; cf. 86-97, where he explores the techniques used by Aeschylus to limit the role of chance in *Persae*.

⁴² E.g., authorial statements: [on Gyges' oracle] τούτου τοῦ ἔπεος Λυδοὶ τε καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς αὐτῶν λόγον οὐδένα ἐποιεῦντο, πρὶν δὴ ἐπετελέσθη (1.13.2), μετὰ δὲ Σόλωνα οἱ χόμενον ἔλαβέ ἐκ θεοῦ νέμεσις μεγάλη Κροῖσον (1.34.1), Κροῖσος δὲ ἁμαρτῶν τοῦ χρησμοῦ ἐποιέετο στρατηγὴν ἐς Καππαδοκίην, ἐλίπσας καταιρήσειν Κῦρόν τε καὶ τὴν Περσέων δύναμιν (1.71.1); oracular

Aeschylus' external audience is spared the powerful effects of the 'contingency of chance', experiencing a dramatic recreation of a not-so-past event that would push the Greek *poleis* to the edge of their limits, but, crucially, within the ritual context of the Great Dionysia, safe in the knowledge that the Persian menace was successfully averted.⁴³ So in both accounts it is the Persian side, whose imperialistic ambitions fall so far short, that experiences the shock and pain of defeat.⁴⁴

A significant passage in Herodotus' account which displays a clear awareness of the structural and semantic architecture of *Persae* is the second council scene between Xerxes and his uncle and loyal adviser Artabanus (7.46-52). In this passage Artabanus—one of the *Histories*' most conspicuously Chorus-like figures⁴⁵—reveals his ongoing unease about the Persians' expedition.⁴⁶ After Artabanus observes that the 'two greatest things of all [i.e. the land and the sea] are also your greatest enemies' (7.47.2), the statistically-minded Xerxes enquires whether there is a problem with the numbers (πληθὺς θοός)⁴⁷ of his land army, or whether the Persian navy falls short of the Greek fleet, or even that neither land army nor naval force match the Greeks in strength (7.48). (This query should not surprise the Herodotean reader, of course, who has earlier been informed that the Persians 'consider multiplicity to be indicative of strength',⁴⁸ 1.136.1.) Artabanus then responds that nobody could censure Xerxes for the size of his army, or 'the number of [Persian] ships' (τῶν νεῶν

predictions: τὸσόνδε μέντοι εἶπε ἢ Πυθίῃ, ὡς Ἡρακλείδῃσι τίσις ἦξει ἔς τὸν πέμπτον ἄπόγονον Γύγεω (1.13.2), προλέγουσαι Κροίσῳ, ἣν στρατεύεται ἐπὶ Πέρσας, μεγάλην ἀρχὴν μιν καταλύσειν (1.53.3); mirroring devices: the Spartans' misguided attempt to conquer Tegea, after misinterpreting an oracle which Herodotus describes as κίβδηλος (1.66) (an obscure term he likewise uses to describe the oracle delivered to Croesus at 1.75.2); cf. Grethlein (2010) 196-202.

⁴³ On the Great Dionysia, see e.g. Goldhill (1990); Sourvinou-Inwood (2003a) 67-200; and further bibliography in Grethlein (2010) 96, n.78.

⁴⁴ Hartog (1988) 335 comments on how 'it is in the world where tragedy in effect exists that it does not take place [i.e. Athens], whereas it is present in the world where it does not exist [i.e. barbarian lands].'

⁴⁵ Against my reading of Artabanus as a "wise adviser", see Pelling (1991), esp. 132-6, detecting weaknesses in his argumentation.

⁴⁶ Artabanus having already opposed the projected war against the Greeks (7.10), along with Darius' earlier invasion against the Scythians (4.83); see further Michelini (1982) 94-5, cf. Bowie 9-10, commenting on the artificiality of Artabanus' 'too accurate' predictions at 7.10 (9), a point that only reinforces the need to underscore Herodotus' role as narrative artist. On wise advisers in the *Histories*, alongside the classic works by Bischoff (1932) and Lattimore (1939), see esp. Immerwahr (1966) 74-5; Boedeker (1987) 191-2; Pelling (1991); Shapiro (1996); Asheri (2007) 43ff.; cf. Saïd (2002) who notes a subtle change between tragic and Herodotean advisers, inasmuch that the latter are now led by human, rather than supernatural, knowledge (123).

⁴⁷ Cf. the use of πληθὺς θοός: 7.49.5 and πληθώρα: 7.49.4; in *Persae*, Hall (1996) 24-5. Konstan (1987) *passim* examines Persian kings' obsession with numbers and counting (63-6 specifically focuses on Xerxes); cf. (more broadly) Munson (2001) 152, commenting also on the recurrence of Persian acquisitiveness in the Persian ethnography in Book One. For a rich discussion on the prevalence and thematic significance of πληθὺς θοός and its cognates in *Persae*, as well as Herodotus and Greek literature more broadly, see Michelini (1982) 86-98.

⁴⁸ Cf. similarly, the Cyrus Cylinder speaks of Cyrus' 'extensive troops, whose number was immeasurable like the water of a river' (Brosius [2000] 12.16).

τὸ πλῆθος, 7.49.1). Rather, Artabanus' concerns derive from the powerful opposition that the Persians face from the land and the sea. After reflecting on the lack of harbour space to accommodate the myriad Persian fleets, Artabanus then discusses the land, Xerxes' other foe, and concludes:

λέγω τῆν χώρην πλεῦνα ἐν πλεονί χρόνῳ γινομένην λιμὸν τεξεσθαι.

Thus I declare that the more land acquired over a greater length of time will cause famine. (7.49.5).

This image of the land providing insufficient sustenance resembles a much-cited passage in *Persae*,⁴⁹ in which the ghost of Darius disapproves of a Persian force going into Greece, declaring to the Chorus:

κτείνουσα λιμῶν τοὺς ὑπερπόλλους ἄγαν.

[the land] destroys with famine a very excessive population. (794).⁵⁰

The overall conception of the land as one of Xerxes' greatest enemies in *Persae*, as well as the repeated focus on the multitudinous Persians—by no means at odds with the base reality of the historical events, clearly contributed to Herodotus' perspective on the Persian Wars, so much so that he equally lists their unwieldy number as one of the major factors behind their downfall.⁵¹ Indeed the Aeschylean perspective here also aligns with, and perhaps reaffirms Herodotus' broader view that any kind of excess tends to be reversed—often by the gods—

⁴⁹ The land is similarly conceived as an ally of the Greeks in *Persae* at line 792: αὐτὴ γὰρ ἡ γῆ ξύμμαχος κείνοις πέλει.

⁵⁰ Cf. 490-1, where the messenger describes the Persians' torturous escape in graphic detail, stating that the majority of Persians died of thirst and famine at Thessaly (ἔνθα δὴ πλεῖστοι θάνον δίψῃ τε λιμῶν τ' ἀμφοτέρω γὰρ ἢν τάδε).

⁵¹ Indeed it is noteworthy that although a storm before the battle of Artemisium whittled away the vastly superior number of Persian forces (8.12-3), Herodotus studiously asserts his belief that on the eve of Salamis, when the Persian fleet was stationed at Phaleron, the Persians' land and naval forces were no weaker than they had been at Sepias and Thermopylae, since they had acquired new contingents as they advanced into Greece (ὥς μὲν ἐμοὶ δοκέειν, οὐκ ἐλάσσονες ἐόντες ἀριθμὸν ἐσέβαλον ἐς τὰς Ἀθήνας, κατὰ τὴν πειρὸν καὶ τῆσιν νηυσὶ ἀπικόμενοι, ἢ ἐπί τε Σηπιάδα ἀπίκοντο καὶ ἐς Θερμοπύλας... ὅσῳ γὰρ δὴ προέβαινε ἐσωτέρω τῆς Ἑλλάδος ὁ Πέρσης, τοσούτῳ πλέω ἔθνεά οἱ εἴπετο., 8.66.1). This statement thus serves to illustrate how Herodotus' conviction that the greatly oversized Persian forces were bound to meet a bad end still held true for Salamis, just as it had done for Thermopylae and Artemisium.

until a natural sense of balance is restored (so, e.g.: 2.120.5; 3.40.2-3, 53.7, 108; 4.205; 5.56.1; 7.10ε; 8.13, 109.3).⁵²

Note also that in both texts alike there is a focus on Xerxes striving to emulate and even outdo the achievements of his predecessors. In *Persae* (753ff.) the Queen comments on Xerxes' reckless dependence on wicked advisers (cf. Hdt. 7.16α1) who incited him for his lack of courage and domestic wars, thus failing to 'augment the prosperity left by his father' (756).⁵³ Similarly, in Herodotus' account of the council scene between Persian nobles and Xerxes (7.8ff), the King spells out his intention to undertake an expedition against Athens and remarks at length on the Persians' bellicosity, having subdued other nations ever since Cyrus deposed Astyages (7.8α1).⁵⁴ With this military heritage in mind, Xerxes adds that since being crowned, 'I have considered how I might not fall short of my predecessors in this honour, and not add less power to the Persians' (7.8α2), a move perhaps also motivated by his troublesome succession (obliquely referred to at 7.3-4).⁵⁵ And indeed, as mentioned above, both accounts are also closely aligned in their portrayal of the King's mother Atossa as an influential, politically active figure.⁵⁶

But while Herodotus' account evokes certain themes underlying the Aeschylean narrative, it is important to remember the considerable differences between these two works. One important distinction is the notable difference in how Xerxes and his forebears are represented in the two authors' works.⁵⁷ Aeschylus represents Xerxes as excessively hungry for power, veering away from the more moderate imperialising actions of his ancestors.⁵⁸

⁵² On balance, a leitmotif in the *Histories*, see esp. Immerwahr (1966) 306-26, esp.312-2; Gould (1989) 94-100; Lateiner (1989) 193-6; cf. Harrison (2000a) 102-21, who focuses on various aspects of divine retribution in Herodotus, including the gods' role in punishing excess and restoring balance, noting that 'when [the gods] scent an irregularity, either an excessively disproportionate response or one that violates certain fixed rules, they step in and compensate' (112).

⁵³ A not unproblematic sentiment, however; note West (2007) 415, n.38: 'Aeschylus can hardly have expected an Athenian audience to forget [Darius' loss at] Marathon'. On the different uses of the past in this scene, see Grethlein (2009) 197-205.

⁵⁴ For the centrality of this scene in the *Histories*, offering the full range of reasons for Xerxes' decision to attack Greece, see esp. Immerwahr (1954) 31-2, (1966) 128; cf. Solmsen (1974) 143-4, de Jong (1999) 238-41, Schellenberg (2009) 136-8, Harrison (2009) 389, Grethlein (2009) 197-205. de Jong (1999) 238 remarks on the similar narrative technique here to that of the Homeric epics, where an assembly likewise marks 'un moment décisif dans le récit'.

⁵⁵ Moggi (2005) 207-8; cf. Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1983) 25 for the Persian evidence.

⁵⁶ Harrison (2000b) 44-8. Garvie (2009) xii notes that such a picture may owe rather more to Greek perceptions of how the queen-mother was presumed to have acted, as opposed to the objective reality of life for a royal woman in the Persian court; see further Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1983) 23-7, Brosius (1996) esp.105-22, Harrison (2000b) 44-7.

⁵⁷ Baragwanath (2008) 251, n.40.

⁵⁸ See esp. 739-52, 759-62, 780-6. While Goldhill (1990) has rightly emphasised the essentially polyphonous nature of Greek tragedy, Garvie (2009) xxii- xxxii, *passim* surely goes too far in almost entirely excising hubris as a significant explanatory factor in the play; indeed note Darius' (Aeschylus'?) admonitions at v.808 and esp. vv.821-2, citing hubris as the root cause of the Persians'

Herodotus' account complicates this picture, however, emphasising Xerxes' reflexivity and initial reluctance to undertake such an expedition,⁵⁹ as well as the sense of continuity regarding the imperial policy of Xerxes and the restless expansionism of earlier Persian rulers, including Cyrus, Cambyses and Darius (e.g. 7.8β2, 11.2).⁶⁰ Nevertheless, as Saïd notes, both accounts agree that Xerxes was led astray by his 'consort with bad men' (*Pers.* 753-5, Hdt. 7.16α.1); these unnamed in Aeschylus, but Herodotus' account identifies a range of figures including Mardonius, Onomacritus the seer, the Peisistratids and the Aleuadae.⁶¹ This is one example, amongst others, which illustrates that the Herodotean Xerxes was far from unflappable.⁶²

While Aeschylus emphasises the relative moral positions of the two sides, as well as the unity amongst the whole Hellenic alliance as they triumphantly stride into battle (392-407, hardly cohering with the significant discord described by Herodotus),⁶³ Herodotus offers a panoptical cocktail of reasons for the Persians' defeat: insatiable Persian aggression; Xerxes' hubris; the transgression of natural boundaries; the moral superiority of the Greeks' cause;

calamities. *Pace* the more measured Rosenbloom (2006) 144ff., who reads the playwright's characterisation of Xerxes' invasion as a clear expression of hubris—a manifestation of human nature, however, not the preserve of Persians[!]; cf. Taxidou (2004) 16. This being the case, *Persae* can hardly be read as singularly encouraging chauvinism and/or Schadenfreude amongst its (originally Athenian) audience.

⁵⁹ For a subtle reading of Herodotus' portrait of Xerxes, in particular, the inherent subjectivity involved in weighing up his caution and reflexivity against other, competing interpretations offered in the *Histories*, see Baragwanath (2008) 240-88, cf. Fisher (1992) 373, Fisher (2002) 220ff. Interestingly enough, Erskine (2001) 84 makes the valid point that Xerxes does not cite Troy as one of the reasons for launching an expedition.

⁶⁰ Verdin (1982) 328; Evans (1991) 62-3; Fisher (1992) 370, 373; Saïd (2002) esp.142-5; Baragwanath (2008) 243-4; Harrison (forthcoming) n.108; cf. Saïd (1981) 31-8, in which she offers a more detailed analysis of the continuity between Darius and Xerxes in Herodotus' account, a clear contrast with the Aeschylean portrait of a distinct rupture between the two kings. And see now Grethlein (2010) 81-85, who examines this rupture against other competing explanations for the Persians' failure in *Persae*, not least mankind's dependence on and submission to the (sometimes jealous) gods. Indeed Grethlein well notes that the Chorus (e.g. 93-100, 282-3, 515-6, 532-4, 905, 1005-7), Atossa (e.g. 293-4, 472-3), the Messenger (e.g. 345-7, 353-4, 455-7, 513-4), and even Darius (725) all assert that the disaster was due to the gods (although note line 742, where Darius remarks that the gods simply lent a hand to Xerxes' recklessness), thus illustrating that 'the envy of the gods...plays a major role' in the work (85). Indeed it is a recurrent trope in Herodotus that kings make poor judgements, commit moral and ethical transgressions, and undertake imperial expansion, cf. esp. Christ (1994), Fisher (2002) 217ff.

⁶¹ Mardonius: 7.5; Onomacritus, Peisistratids and Aleuadae: 7.6. Indeed, the long and protracted account of Xerxes' decision to invade Greece (7.3-19) surely undermines the surprising position taken by Masaracchia xix, that Xerxes is 'facile a soggiacere alle pressione esterne'; cf. the sensible remarks in Solmsen (1974) 154, Baragwanath (2008) 242, Apfel (2011) 179-81.

⁶² Saïd (2002) 137, (with qualifications) Fisher (2002) 223-4, cf. Harrison (2011) 69. We may cite with approval Redfield (1985) 113: '[Xerxes] is portrayed as one who goes beyond a neglect of limits and spheres to the *abolition* of limits' [author's italics].

⁶³ So, e.g., line 398: θοῶς δὲ πάντας ἤσαν ἐκφανεῖς ἰδεῖν ('at great speed [the Greeks] all emerged clearly into view'), cf. vv.399-400. Cf. Jouanna (1981) 11 on the political connexions behind this stress on Greek order and courage.

not to mention the role of fate and the gods.⁶⁴ Certainly, the variety of reasons cited to explain the Persians' downfall in *Persae* militates against the view that the play offered a simplistic, black and white interpretation of the Greeks' recent past, in which West is good and East is bad.⁶⁵ But it is intriguing to note that in a much-discussed passage which acts as a proleptic glance ahead to the dénouement of the War, the decidedly ambivalent Themistocles lambasts Xerxes,⁶⁶ who in his impiety and excessive behaviour stirred the envy of the gods, 'treated sacred and profane things alike, burning and throwing down the images of the gods, and who actually lashed the sea and bound it with chains' (8.109.3). Whilst such a condemnation might well be read as implicitly sounding the voice of Herodotus, evoking the moralising attacks on Xerxes in *Persae* (e.g. 820-1), the reader must surely be vigilant that in assigning this critique to Themistocles, a man who played a significant role in the early days of the Athenian Empire (8.3, 112), Herodotus is surely complicating such a straightforward interpretation.

Further similarities with *Persae* can be detected in Herodotus' battle narratives. After landing at Phaleron, Xerxes summons a council in order to discuss future tactics with his commanders. Whilst most are supportive of military engagement, the single female Persian commander Artemisia, queen regent of Halicarnassus,⁶⁷ stands in opposition by advising against any naval action, instead recommending that the Persians try and contain the Greeks, or even advance into the Peloponnese (8.68α-β). She then adds that:

δειμαίνω μὴ ὁ ναυτικὸς στρατὸς κακωθεὶς τὸν πεζὸν προσδηλήσῃται.

I fear that that if the naval force is destroyed that may in turn damage the land army.
(8.68γ).

⁶⁴ Fisher (1992) 375-6 well remarks on the balanced picture that emerges in Herodotus' explanation of events. Thus, e.g., at 7.238.2, where, in citing Xerxes' obeisance to Persian customs, Herodotus conjectures other factors to explain Xerxes' ghastly decapitation of Leonidas; not simply written off as mad, then, as Cambyses is at 3.38.1. This is not to say, of course, that Aeschylus simply blames Xerxes for the Persian disaster; *au contraire*, other factors such as calculating advisers and divine will are repeatedly cited as explanations, see further Hall (1996) 15-6. Cf. Goldhill (1988) for a dense but rewarding analysis of the contrasting political ideologies of the Persians and the Greeks that are analysed in the play, positing that the 'name-filled descriptions of the Persians and the anonymous collective view of the Greeks' in *Persae* indicates that 'democratic *collectivity*, embodied in Athens, as opposed to barbarian tyranny', is offered as a further explanatory factor in the Persians' defeat (quotes at 192 and 193 respectively).

⁶⁵ For this admixture of human and divine *aitia* for the Persians' defeat in *Persae*, see the excellent remarks in Jouanna (1981) 4-7. Pace the surprising conclusion of Winnington-Ingram (1983) 15: '[*Persae*] does not seem to go much further than might be expected from an intelligent Greek of the time. Morally, it is a study in black and white, and so lacks subtlety'.

⁶⁶ See esp. Fornara (1971a) 66-74, Konstan (1987) 70-3, Fisher (2002) 224, Scullion (2006) 203, Marincola (2007) 30-1, Baragwanath (2008) 289-322.

⁶⁷ See Munson (1988).

This line is almost a direct quotation of a line in *Persae*,⁶⁸ specifically when the Queen laments:

ναυτικὸς στρατὸς κακῶθει ἵπεζὸν ὄλεσε στρατόν.

The defeat of the naval force determined the destruction of the land army. (728).

The exact reduplication of ναυτικὸς στρατὸς κακῶθει ἵπεζὸν in Herodotus' work should not be overlooked as an accidental echo; rather it clearly indicates a close engagement with *Persae* that is comparable to the critical use of other sources in Herodotus' work. While the line is originally uttered *post eventum* by Xerxes' mother Atossa in *Persae*, the Herodotean version is transposed so that it is now the Halicarnassian regent who offers the same advice to Xerxes—and ahead of the conflict itself.⁶⁹ Beyond the obvious point that Herodotus thus supplies yet another example of a “wise adviser” being ignored by a hubristic ruler, more subtly, this passage also presents a contrast with *Persae*'s conceptualisation of Persian culture as being dominated by hierarchical relationships, unreserved emotionalism, and excessive luxury.⁷⁰ Xerxes may well be the *hēgemōn* of the Persian Empire,⁷¹ but here, as elsewhere in the *Histories*, he convenes a council and listens to the sage advice of others, even if ultimately rejecting their admonitions. We might well posit that Herodotus is quietly rejecting the poeticised, Aeschylean view of Persian society: his is a more open Persia, one not so different from the Greek world.⁷²

If we turn to other divergences, one obvious contrast is their radically different audiences. Aeschylus' play, part of a tetralogy performed at the City Dionysia shortly after the conflicts of 480-79, overwhelmingly focuses on the battle of Salamis, the decisive blow which led to Xerxes' retreat, and offers only a brief allusion, in the form of a prophetic vision of Darius, to the Spartan-led victory over the Persians at Plataea (816-20). Herodotus of course affords a much greater role to the other major conflicts—especially the (predominantly Spartan) victory at Plataea—and generally avoids an encomiastic and Athenocentric interpretation of the Greeks' victory (even within his famous declaration at 7.139 that Athens' role was the

⁶⁸ So HW II ad loc.; Parker (2007) 5; Bowie ad loc.; Garvie (2009) 228.

⁶⁹ Artemisia, like Artabanus, presents Xerxes with advice that is indeed *too* accurate to be believable, but this allows Herodotus to re-emphasise the broader point that Xerxes was destined to a bad end (cf. 7.18.3).

⁷⁰ See Hall (1989) 80.

⁷¹ Herodotus nonetheless discusses social stratification in Persian society and how it shapes their views on non-Persians at 1.134.1-2.

⁷² On Herodotus' broader aim of challenging his audience's preconceptions about the Other, often blurring the boundaries between East and West, so that one might come to find the 'Self in Other and Other in Self', see the excellent discussion in Pelling (1997b) (quote at 56); cf. also Pelling (2007a).

decisive one in the Persian Wars).⁷³ Moreover, Herodotus, who is explicitly concerned with recording an accurate record of the past, conspicuously avoids offering a straightforward panegyric for the Greeks.⁷⁴ (Though this does not deter him from recording individual great deeds performed by Greeks.) For example, there is the preponderant agonistic language amongst the Greeks just before the battle of Salamis, (e.g. ‘pushing and shoving of words’ among the Greeks [8.78.1]; cf. ἄ κροβολισιά μνοι [‘skirmishing’, 64.1]).⁷⁵ More conspicuously, Herodotus also includes details in his catalogue of Persian forces about those Greek states who (ostensibly) medised during the war or supported the Persians in battle (7.61ff., cf. *Pers.* 16-58); his tragic counterpart lists no such information concerning Greeks fighting for Xerxes.⁷⁶ These Hellenic tensions resurface up until the moment of the battle itself; indeed even the Athenians are susceptible to fear and flight, threatening to sail away and found their own colony in Siris in Italy (8.63-4.1)—not quite the laudatory picture of Athenian leadership *Persae* might have opted for. This is not to suggest that Herodotus flatly refutes any kind of military cohesion amongst the Greek forces. In his assessment of the battle, couched between his laudatory remarks on those who fought well amongst the Greeks’ enemies (see more below), Herodotus writes that ‘the Greeks fought the naval battle in good order and in close ranks, while the barbarians were no longer drawn into position and did not fight with forethought’ (8.86).⁷⁷

Herodotus not only refers to indecorous Greek relations,⁷⁸ but he also studiously refers to individual Persian achievements in the battle. Hence he records the names of two Samian captains who captured Greek ships, having asserted that he could have recounted many other names (8.85). He also records details of the fortunate and quick-witted Artemisia, who when

⁷³ For instance, the Spartans’ contribution appears just as decisive as that of Athens elsewhere in his narrative, e.g. at 9.64.1, when the Spartan regent Pausanias, credited with the leadership at Plataea, achieved ‘the finest victory of any that we know’. Beyond the *Histories*, the Athenians’ rebuttal in the debate at Sparta (Thuc. 1.73-4) well illustrates the dominant view that the Athenians, and specifically their actions at Salamis, saved Greece; for the pervasiveness of this viewpoint in antiquity, see the rewarding discussion in Starr (1962).

⁷⁴ N.B., the arguments and insults swapped between various *poleis*, 8.61; the Peloponnesians’ desire to flee from Salamis, 8.74; the allies’ doubt in the veracity of Aristides’ report, 8.80-1; the Athenians’ account of the Corinthians’ attempted flight, 94.1; cf. Immerwahr (1966) 189-237.

⁷⁵ See Bravi (2009) 79, on ‘linguaggio agonistico’ at Hdt. 8.59.

⁷⁶ Hall (1996) ad vv.21-58. Indeed, even the Athenians threaten an alliance with the Persians (9.11.1, *contra* 8.144.3), though this is surely reflecting their extreme disillusionment with the pontificating Spartans, rather than a straightforward contradiction of their earlier stance; *pace* Fornara (1971) 86, who reads the latter statement as flatly contradicting the first—an ironical reflection, then, on the hegemonising Athenians of his own day. For Herodotus’ ‘denigration of the allied contingents’ of the Plataea campaign, see Nyland (1992) 81-7.

⁷⁷ Forsdyke (2001) 352-3 slightly overstates the parallelism between Aeschylus and Herodotus in this passage. Herodotus in fact offers a far less detailed portrait of the Greeks’ courageous and united attack than Aeschylus, and the bitter recriminations Herodotus reports at 8.94 somewhat undermine this lukewarm praise of the Greeks’ good order, cf. de Jong (1999) 268ff.

⁷⁸ Barker (2009) 144-202, esp. 163-6, 168-71, provides good discussion on the historiographical effects of dissension and the un-Iliadic ‘problem of inter-poleis debate’ in Herodotus (quote at p.171).

facing imminent destruction, decided to ram into one of the ships from her own side, thus persuading the captain of an advancing Attic ship to change course, convinced as he was that Artemisia's ship was either a Greek ship or a defector from the Persian side (8.87). Xerxes, watching all of this from above with great approval, is led to believe that she has sunk an enemy ship, and responds with the famous *bon mot*: 'my men have become women and my women men' (8.88.3).⁷⁹ And elsewhere Herodotus remarks on other Persian attributes, such as the love of truth, justice, and generosity (for which even Xerxes is capable, 7.135-6). Passages such as these, and there are certainly others recorded elsewhere in Books Seven to Nine,⁸⁰ not only serve to challenge chauvinistic and univocal interpretations of Persian weakness and effeminacy, but also further help define the historian's task, i.e. reporting events objectively.⁸¹

In a different way to Herodotus, *Persae* also plays down the achievements of individual Greeks, preferring to commemorate the success of all the Greeks (and especially Athens). For instance, the Messenger enigmatically reports to the Queen that 'a Greek man came from the Athenian camp with a message that he repeated to your son Xerxes' (355-6), an action that would precipitate the end of the stalemate between the two forces. Herodotus presents a similar picture of events (8.75), but unlike Aeschylus, names Themistocles as the individual who conceived of this plan, before sending his household slave (οἱ κέρτης) Sicinnus to deliver a similarly-themed message detailing Greek disunity and their preparations to put to flight. In fact Aeschylus systematically avoids naming any Greek individual throughout *Persae*, a stark contrast to the dozens of Persian figures he names in the *parodos* (21-58), the Messenger's speech (302-28) and Xerxes' *kommos* (958-99).⁸² As has been repeatedly noted,⁸³ such a move aligns his work with other commemorative works which similarly avoided naming (at least Greek) individuals' exploits, such as the *epitaphioi logoi* delivered

⁷⁹ Cf. Artemisia (speaking to Xerxes) at 8.68: οἱ γὰρ ἄνδρες τῶν σῶν ἀνδρῶν κρέσσονες τοσοῦτο εἰ σὶ κατὰ θάλασσαν ὅσον ἄνδρες γυναικῶν.

⁸⁰ Thus, e.g., 9.40, and 9.62-3, where Herodotus states that the Persians' spirit and strength at Plataea was not inferior, and although unable to match the Greeks in skill, their elite army killed many of the Spartans whilst Mardonius was still standing (one of the passages that would later face the ire of Plutarch, *de. Mal. Herod.* 873f.), cf. Flower (2006) 284-5, commenting on the Persians' bravery in various battles in Herodotus.

⁸¹ Note Asheri (2007) 44: in making objective assessments that are devoid of chauvinism or racial hatred, Herodotus 'shows himself a fine disciple of Homer and Aeschylus'.

⁸² Cf. Garvie (2009) xiv-xv who discusses the Persian evidence for these names. I am unconvinced, however, by their assertion that Aeschylus provides these names so that 'it was not just a nameless host, but that they were all individuals, each with his own identity, and each to be honoured with his own name' (xv), since this plays down the juxtaposition Aeschylus clearly seeks to establish between the collectivised Greeks and the atomised Persians. Related to this, Grethlein (2010) 88ff. addresses the controversial issue of whether or not the Athenians were meant to pity the Persians, or if the enmity/distance between the sides was just too strong, persuasively arguing that some sort of pity was a likely outcome, and providing extensive bibliography from both sides of the debate at p.88, n.58.

⁸³ E.g. Broadhead (1960) xx, Goldhill (1988) 192, Hall (1996) 135-6, Grethlein (2010) 75, 133.

for the Athenian war dead, as well as certain epigrammatic materials, like the inscriptions celebrating the Cimonian capture of Persian-occupied Eion in 475 (7.107, cf. Thuc. 1.98).⁸⁴ Indeed, Simon Goldhill has spoken well of the significant difference between the almost universal anonymity in the funeral speeches (and here one might add *Persae*), and ‘the epic or, say, Herodotean narratives with their concern for individual κλέος’. By avoiding this anonymising approach, not only does Herodotus reinforce his very different criteria for recording the past, but he also offers a more measured account, which avoids the exoticising effect of recording myriad (not necessarily credible) Persian names.

The outcome of the battle, as well as the manner in which Xerxes and the Persians retreat from Salamis presents further similarities and contrasts between the two authors’ works. Aeschylus is at pains to emphasise the wholesale destruction of the Persians both at sea *and* on land,⁸⁵ providing an extended account of the assault on the Persian land army that Xerxes had stationed on the island of Psyttaleia,⁸⁶ blithely expecting his men to rout a number of shipwrecked and disarrayed Greeks (447-71).⁸⁷ After describing at length the Greeks’ encirclement of the Persian troops, followed by the use of stones and arrows to attack, Aeschylus signals that the Greeks ‘butchered the wretched men’s limbs until all had been utterly deprived of life’ (463-4).⁸⁸ Such a comprehensive loss results in considerable anguish for Xerxes, who tears his robes and emits a piercing scream, before ordering his men to mourn this defeat no less than the one at sea (470-1).⁸⁹

In Herodotus’ version of events, however, the reader is presented with an altogether more muted engagement.⁹⁰ It is true that in both versions, as part of Xerxes’ preparations, the King

⁸⁴ On the *epitaphios logos*, see above all Loraux (1986), cf. Grethlein (2010) 105-25. The Eion epigrams are reported in Aeschin. *In. Ctes.* 183-5, Plut. *Cim.* 7.5, see further Erskine (2001) 69.

⁸⁵ Hall (1996) 141. Pelling (1997a) 8-9 emphasises the order of narration here, showing how the nesiotic disaster is represented as the culmination of the decisive blow dealt to the Persians at sea (‘the land engagement re-enacts the sea equivalent, but the sea starts it all’, 9), cf. Saïd (1992/3) *passim*.

⁸⁶ Like a number of his chief characters, Aeschylus avoids naming the island, undoubtedly because it was so familiar with his audience, Garvie (2009) 208.

⁸⁷ On Psyttaleia, see esp. Harrison (2000b) 97-102, cf. also Fornara (1966); Saïd (1992/3); Hall (1996) 141-3; Pelling (1997a) 8-9; Rosenbloom (2006) 72-4. For modern attempts to locate the island, see further Parker (2007) 27, n.53.

⁸⁸ Cf. the Messenger’s visceral account on the climax of the battle at Salamis (424-6): τοὶ δ’ ὥστε θύννουσ ἢ τιν’ ἰ χθύων βόλον ἀγαῖ σι κοπῶν θραύμασιν τ’ ἐρειπίων ἔπαιον, ἔρράχιζον (‘but just as if our men were tuna or some catch of fish, the enemy struck them and cut through their spines with broken oars and fragments of shipwrecks’).

⁸⁹ Cf. 435-40 where the messenger says that to narrate the catastrophes at Salamis would be to recount only half their miseries.

⁹⁰ Compare also Plu. *Arist.* 9.1-2, an account not identical to that of Aeschylus, but certainly suggesting that it was of considerable significance, as reflected in the subsequent trophy erected on Psyttaleia. Given that Herodotus shapes his narrative to his own ends no less than Aeschylus does, we might question Hall’s certainty that Psyttaleia was insignificant (1996, 11), though equally Fornara’s

places a number of his men on Psyttaleia so that they can save any comrades who are washed away and easily overcome any errant Greek crews.⁹¹ (These soldiers are deemed to have been his most distinguished and loyal, according to Aeschylus [441-3]. Herodotus is conspicuously silent on this.) And though not altogether clear whether Herodotus' remark that Aristides 'made [this attack] in the confusion at Salamis' (8.95) means that the Psyttaleian attack occurred during or after the battle at Salamis, it is at least certain that he also agrees with Aeschylus' statement that this attack happened 'on the same day' as the sea-battle (αὐθιμὲρὸν v, 456).

While Herodotus tacitly accepts Aeschylus' description of the one-sidedness of the skirmish, stating that 'the [Athenian contingent] slaughtered all the Persians who were stationed on the island' (8.95),⁹² he provides neither specific details about how the victory was achieved nor a sense that this conflict was in any way equal to that at Salamis. Moreover, it is significant that Herodotus notes that it was Aristides and a group of Athenian hoplites who were stationed on the island.⁹³ While Aeschylus, who may simply have not needed to refer to the Athenian forces who routed the Persians at Psyttaleia,⁹⁴ makes no references to their origin, Herodotus, who is consciously writing for a universal audience and free from a specific performative context, provides this extra detail.⁹⁵ Such a distinction reminds us that his account is an objective one, with multiple perspectives being integrated and synthesised into one all-encompassing account of the War.⁹⁶

Following the Persians' defeat at Salamis, Xerxes is reputed to have consulted Mardonius and Artemisia (as he did before the battle), before fleeing back to Sardis, leaving Mardonius as his commander-in-chief (8.97-117). In his commentary, Bowie remarks that Herodotus

insistence that Herodotus' account is a fiction derived from a conservative source is highly questionable (1966, 51-3).

⁹¹ Hdt. 8.76.2-3; *Pers.* 450-3. For an ingenious, if somewhat schematic attempt to show that Herodotus 'when writing up his own account of the battle, may have read ἐξ ἑξοῦσιν αὐτοῦ in his text [of Aeschylus]', where the manuscripts offer the problematic verb ἐκσωζοῖ αὐτοῦ (v.451), see V. Parker (2007) 16-7 (quote at 17). While it is right to pursue verbal correspondences between Herodotus and other authors (e.g. Broodhead [1960] 118-33), the notion of a scholar-like Herodotus poring over written texts is not to be pushed too far.

⁹² Rosenbloom (2006) 72.

⁹³ Thus deviating from Aeschylus, who has the soldiers hurling stones and shooting arrows, which rules out the possibility that they were Athenian hoplites, Parker (2007) 19.

⁹⁴ Perspective is also an important factor here, as this event is being narrated by the Messenger to the Queen. It is surely not reasonable, or indeed credible, to expect automatically something as specific as the particular group of Hellenes to feature in his description of the attack. And while Aristides is indeed unnamed in Aeschylus, it is important to remember that neither is Themistocles, cf. Pelling (1997a) 8.

⁹⁵ Harrison (2000b) 61-5 offers a number of sensible remarks on the tension between panhellenism and Athenocentrism in *Persae*.

⁹⁶ Grethlein (2010) 187.

offers a more ‘restrained’ portrait of Xerxes’ retreating army than Aeschylus at 8.115-7, a not entirely satisfying conclusion when one compares the two works.⁹⁷ For while Aeschylus’ version is clearly more condensed and dramatic in tone (480-514),⁹⁸ culminating in countless Persian deaths on the newly-thawing river Strymon, both authors present an image of an erratic and disordered flight that results in the loss of innumerable Persian troops. Indeed Herodotus notes that upon reaching the Hellespont after forty-five days, ‘[Xerxes was] carrying off not a fraction of his army’ (8.115.1), citing famine, plague, a storm, and later an overdose of food as reasons for the Persian army’s destruction. Similarly the Messenger in *Persae* reports that a number initially died from thirst, before arriving at Thessaly where the majority died of thirst and hunger (488-91).⁹⁹ Both authors are also conspicuously silent on the Asiatic stretch of Xerxes’ retreat, and one suspects not just because of the lack of information, but also because of the thematic significance of the Greek land itself in terms of explaining the Persians’ defeat.

It is in his subsequent narration of a variant version of Xerxes’ retreat (8.118-20) that Herodotus reveals the extent to which his work differs from that of Aeschylus.¹⁰⁰ In this version Xerxes and a number of Persians travel along the Strymon River from Eion onwards, by means of a Phoenician ship, leaving Hydarnes to march the army across the Hellespont. However, during their voyage a violent storm arises that is considered likely to kill everyone on board.¹⁰¹ In especially hubristic mode, Xerxes demands that his men prove how much they ‘care for the safety of their king’ (8.118.2),¹⁰² ‘performing *proskynesis*’,¹⁰³ his men jump overboard. Upon reaching Asia safely, the King bestows the captain with a golden

⁹⁷ Bowie 208.

⁹⁸ Hall (1996) 143 refers to this as an instance of ‘poeticised cartography’ (cf. 21-58), similar to the travelogues and catalogues in various Aeschylean works (e.g. *Ag.* 281-316; *Supp.* 249-71); cf. Hall (1989) 75-6, for the difficulty in determining the ultimate source for Aeschylus’ catalogues. Whether or not Aeschylus made use of Hecataeus’ *periegesis*, the manifold epic colourings in *Persae* reminds us not to underestimate the influence exerted by the catalogue of Achaeans and Trojans in *Iliad* (2.494-759; 816-77), see further Sideras (1971) 98-200, 212-5; Michelini (1982) 77-8; Garner (1990) 22-4; Hall (1996) 24; Grethlein (2010) 76-7, cf. the slight cautions of Garvie (2009) xxxviii, who whilst not rejecting the epic heritage in *Persae*, emphasises Aeschylus’ penchant for neologizing—not to mention the difficulty in distinguishing between certain Ionic and epic forms.

⁹⁹ Cf. also Hdt. 9.89.4, where many of Artabazus’ men retreating from Plataea, are cut down (partly) due to hunger.

¹⁰⁰ On this episode, see Flory (1987) 49-79, Lateiner (1989) 180-1; Strid (2006) 393-4; Baragwanath (2008) 274; cf. Bowie 211.

¹⁰¹ Note the recurrence of the Strymon River and a storm in this version, perhaps intended to evoke the Aeschylean version in the percipient reader’s mind.

¹⁰² See Fornara (1983) 171-2 for the way that Herodotus invents meaningful speeches in the final books of the work, which, as in tragedy, encapsulate the meaning of the episode.

¹⁰³ An ancient sign of deference, readily misconstrued by the Greeks as a symbol of Persian servility; see further Bowie ad loc.

garland to thank him, before beheading him for causing the deaths of so many Persians.¹⁰⁴ Immediately following this vivid account, Herodotus observes that ‘I myself trust neither the sufferings of the Persians [as depicted in this *logos*] nor any other part of it’ (8.119).¹⁰⁵ In refutation of this version Herodotus then proceeds to argue first from likelihood that rather than cast asunder his own (best) men, he would surely have forced the same number of Phoenician oarsmen into the sea. Next, Herodotus offers a second, ‘additional μαρτύριον’ to lend weight to his argument (8.120),¹⁰⁶ namely the fact that Xerxes visited Abdera upon his return to Persia and made a pact of friendship with the Abderans, gifting them with a golden ἄκινάκης and a tiara shot with gold.¹⁰⁷ Now given that Abdera lies closer to the Hellespont than Eïon, Herodotus concludes, it cannot be true that Xerxes sailed on the Strymon from Eïon hence.

The hypercritical tone that Herodotus establishes at 8.119-20, more typically found in the earlier books,¹⁰⁸ exposes the fallaciousness of much that is reported in this alternative version, a preposterously crude portrait of Xerxes that brings into question the overall characterisation of Xerxes and autocratic regimes in existing Greek traditions.¹⁰⁹ Historiographically, the point he makes is a significant one: the alternative version is incompatible with the genre that he is working within; probability and authoritative reports—tools applied throughout Herodotus’ work—combine to render this rival narrative defunct, no less than when Herodotus refutes the standard, Greek version of Helen’s

¹⁰⁴ Strid (2006) 394 suggests that one obvious reason for reporting this *logos* is the ‘extraordinary form and circumstances of the requital [sic]’, appealing to Herodotus’ much-recognised penchant for reporting wonders. On *thōma* in Herodotean discourse, see esp. Hartog (1988) 230-7, Payen (1997) 117-28; and (more broadly) Munson (2001) ch.6.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. 8.94.4 (where Herodotus has just reported the Athenians’ slanderous attack on the Corinthians): οὐ μέντοι αὐτοὶ γε Κορίνθιοι ὁμολογεῖν, ἀλλ’ ἐν πρώτοισι σφέας αὐτοῦ τῆς ναυμαχίας νομίζουσι γενέσθαι: μαρτυρεῖ δέ σφι καὶ ἡ ἄλλη Ἑλλάς (‘The Corinthians, however, do not admit this version, for they consider that their ships played a primary role in the naval battle—indeed *the rest of Greece bears witness to this*’), cf. §5.5 above.

¹⁰⁶ Macan II ad loc. For *marturia* and the language of proof in Herodotus, see Nagy (1990) 314-21, and (more generally) Thomas (2000) 190-200, esp.191-2, where Thomas reflects on the difference between Herodotus and earlier/later writers’ use of proof language. Cf. also Hollmann (2011) 15-19, esp.17-8, where he focuses more narrowly on the significance of the two (characteristically) Persian objects in Herodotus’ disputation, evident as they are of the king’s presence.

¹⁰⁷ Earlier at 7.54.2, the ἄκινάκης is described as a “Persian sword”, see also 3.118.2, 128.5; 7.61.1; 9.80.2, 107.2; cf. (similarly to 8.120), X. *An.* 1.2.27.

¹⁰⁸ On Herodotus’ (distinctive) voiceprint, see Marincola (1987); de Jong (1987) *passim*; Shrimpton (1997) 233ff.; Fowler (1996) esp.76-80; Thomas (1997), Brock (2003). But, note Darbo-Peschanski (1987) esp.107-12, who in emphasising the voice that Herodotus lends to many others, talks of ‘la discrétion de l’enquêteur’ (108).

¹⁰⁹ As Evans notes [quoted in Vandiver (1991) 203]: ‘The character of Xerxes had already taken shape in Greek literature by the time Herodotus wrote. He was a feckless prince, in sharp contrast to his father, and an archetypal Oriental despot...unable to recognize the limits to his power.’ This is not to say that *Persae* automatically belongs in this body of literature; indeed Garvie (2009) xxii-xxxii offers some instructive remarks on the intermingling of divine and human causation in the play, arguing against the standard view that it is a ‘tragedy of *hybris* deservedly punished’ (xxii).

whereabouts during the siege of Troy (2.120, cf. §4.3 above). Clearly this latter account adds little to the reader's overall perception of the conflict, but in reporting these two accounts of Xerxes' retreat, and then instantaneously rejecting the latter version, Herodotus reminds the reader of his role in sifting and weighing up the available evidence. Accordingly, Herodotus takes the reader on a somewhat different path to that of Aeschylus, whose 'poeticised cartography' implies an escalating sense of destruction until its dramatic climax at the frozen Strymon.¹¹⁰

While *Persae* thus provides particularly rich results in terms of discerning an intertextual relationship with Herodotus' work, unsurprising given its stature and the overlap in content between the two works, it should be borne in mind that Herodotus is clearly aware of other Aeschylean works. Another notable correspondence occurs in Herodotus' description of the Persian messenger system (8.98-9).¹¹¹ Herodotus remarks on the remarkable nature of their postal service, with men positioned a day's journey apart, allowing for a swiftness of communication that is unparalleled by any other mortal contrivance.¹¹² Commenting on how each individual passes his message on to the next with such alacrity, Herodotus compares the system to 'the Greek torch-bearers' race held in honour of Hephaestus' (κατά περ ἐν Ἑλλησι ἡ λαμπαδηφορὴ τῆν τῶ Ἡφαίστῳ ἐπιτελέουσι, 8.98.2). For many readers, this passage will evoke the description of the manner in which the fall of Troy was signalled to Clytaemnestra by a series of beacons in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (281-316).¹¹³ Clytaemnestra begins: 'Hephaestus, from Ida sent forth his glowing flame. Beacon sent on to beacon on to us by the courier-fire' (282-3), before then describing each stage of the original flame's journey.¹¹⁴ At the close of her elaborate account, the queen observes:

τοιοῖδε τοί μοι λαμπαδηφόρων νόμοι,
ἄλλος παρ' ἄλλου διαδοχᾶς πληρούμενοι:

¹¹⁰ Vandiver (1991) 204f. accepts the influence of tragedy and, in particular, Aeschylus, on Herodotus' portrayal of Xerxes, but reinforces the greater subtlety of the historian's Xerxes.

¹¹¹ See Lewis (1996) 60.

¹¹² Similarly X. *Cyr.* 8.6.18. On the literary and material evidence for the extensive postal service used to support the vast Achaemenid empire, see Bowie 186-7 (with further bibliography).

¹¹³ Cf. Fraenkel (1950) ad.282. This is not to deny the historical use of beacon fires in the fifth century, of course; see Baragwanath (2012a) 303, n.57 for further references.

¹¹⁴ Harrison (2000b) 54 suggests that the story in Aeschylus seems to be modelled on another passage in Herodotus, namely when Mardonius is consumed by the 'desire' (*himeros*) to signal his capture of Athens by lighting beacons across the islands (9.3.1). However, Flower & Marincola ad loc. caution that this is highly improbable, since the Persians no longer controlled the islands west of Samos in 479. It is noteworthy that Fraenkel (1950) ad loc. also fails to make any connection between 9.3.1 and the Aeschylean passage. Nevertheless, given the historical context *and* that the *Agamemnon* was performed in 458, there seems no reason to oppose the possibility that the play provided the model for Herodotus at 9.3.1, on top of 8.98-9, and not *vice versa*. On 9.3, see now Baragwanath (2012a) 300-12.

νικᾷ δ' ὁ πρῶτος καὶ τελευταῖ ος δραμῶν.

Such, then, are the torch-bearers I have arranged,
 completing the course in succession one to the other;
 and the victor is the one who ran both first and last. (312-4).¹¹⁵

So just as the series of beacons signalling the Greeks' destruction of Aeschylus' Trojans is implicitly compared to a torch race, so too the Greeks' victory at Salamis is announced to the Persian royal household by a messenger system that Herodotus likewise compares to a torch race. Indeed the intertextual relationship is further confirmed not only by the reference to Hephaestus in both passages,¹¹⁶ but also by Herodotus' use of the obscure term λαμπαδηφορίη—found in its genitival form in the Aeschylean passage. By recalling this earlier version, Herodotus appears to be encouraging the reader to contemplate the similarities between the two events. As Bowie puts it, 'the Greeks at Salamis, it is hinted, have achieved something on a par with the mythical heroes at Troy.'¹¹⁷

6.3 Saving Brothers: Herodotus and Sophocles

Our analysis thus far has illustrated the dynamic relationship with Aeschylus' *Persae* in Herodotus, who appropriates, modifies and extends the tragedian's version of events in forming his own panoptical account of the recent past. But beyond Aeschylus, Herodotus' work reveals other patterns and ideas that imbricate with another significant tragedian, Sophocles, the celebrated playwright who was almost certainly a contemporary of his.¹¹⁸ Although hazier than Herodotus' knowledge of Aeschylus' work, there are a number of passages which betray an affinity between tragedian and historian. But first, a few more words are needed on the nature of and scanty evidence for Herodotus' life and work.

A perennial quagmire in modern Herodotean scholarship has been establishing the publication date for the *Histories*, an issue that is all the more complicated by the much more fluid approach to publishing in Herodotus' age.¹¹⁹ Amongst our external evidence, Eusebius'

¹¹⁵ On the difficulties of v.314, see Fraenkel (1950) ad loc., whose translation I have broadly adopted.

¹¹⁶ As suggested by Bowie ad loc., who notes that the Athenian Hephaesteia is the only known torch-race dedicated to this deity, cf. *IG I*³ 82.30-31.

¹¹⁷ Bowie 187.

¹¹⁸ On the biographical details of Sophocles' life, see the entry by Gould in *OCD*³. On Herodotus and Sophocles, see variously: HW I 7, n.3; Jacoby (1913) 232-7; Schmid-Stählin (1934) 318, nn.3-4; Powell (1939) 34; Pinto (1955); Podlecki (1966) 365f., (1977) 248-9; Finkelberg (1995); Zellner (1997); West (1999); Saïd (2002) esp.120-4; Apfel (2011) esp.134-5.

¹¹⁹ The compelling arguments developed by Charles Fornara (1981) (a carefully considered elaboration of Fornara [1971b], responding to the criticisms of Cobet [1977]), have convinced a number of scholars that Herodotus lived throughout the Archidamian War; *contra* Cobet (1987) and

not unproblematic entry on Herodotus being honoured by the Athenian *boule* in 445/4 offers the tantalising possibility that Herodotus was known—and presumably lecturing—in Athens by the 440s.¹²⁰ There is also the oft-quoted epigram, preserved by Plutarch, recording that the playwright Sophocles composed an ode in honour of Herodotus: ὠιδὴν Ἡροδότῳ τῷ τεῦ ξεν Σοφοκλήος ἐτέων ὧν πένητ' ἐπὶ πεντήκοντα,¹²¹ although Jacoby long ago expressed reservations about the identity of this Herodotus.¹²² Given Herodotus' association with Athens, there is certainly no reason to deny that Sophocles could have come into contact with Herodotus during one of his readings,¹²³ just as there seems no reason to deny the possibility that Herodotus had himself attended one (or more) of Sophocles' dramas. Moreover, it is worth bearing in mind that Herodotus' association with Athens in these later testimonies may well derive from more contemporary evidence which detailed Herodotus' connection with Athens; for the lack of (stated) Athenian informants in his work can hardly provide historians with adequate grounds to refute that he gave readings there.

Looking at Herodotus' work itself, the picture is by no means more straightforward. While the sources cited above point to the supposition that Herodotus delivered smaller sections of

Sansone (1985), who maintain that Herodotus published his work before 425 BCE (based on the so-called allusion to Hdt.1.1-4 in Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, 523ff., for which see Pelling [2000] 154-5). For other works on Herodotus' publication date, see Asheri (2007) 51, n.125; and for further references to events post-479 in Herodotus, see Schmidt-Stählin (1934) 590, n.9.

¹²⁰ Ἡρόδοτος ἰστορικὸς ἐτιμήθη παρὰ τῆς Ἀθηναίων βουλῆς ἐπαναγνοῦς αὐτοῖς τὰς βίβλους (*Chron. Olymp.* 83.4); for a more extended discussion on the evidence concerning Herodotus' life, see now West (2007) 27-30; Asheri (2007) 1-7. On Herodotus being drawn 'to the bright lights of imperial Athens', thus demonstrating the link between cultural and political power, see Harrison (2009) 387.

¹²¹ Cf. the remarkable tradition preserved in Plutarch *De prof. in virt.* 79b, ostensibly based on Sophocles' own observations (Σοφοκλήος ἔλεγε), which records that Sophocles' literary art underwent three distinct stages, the first of which saw Sophocles knowingly emulate 'the grandiosity of Aeschylus' (τὸν Αἰσχύλου διαπεπαιγῶς ὄγκον). This acknowledgement provides a small but valuable snapshot into Sophocles' awareness of and conscious engagement with other literary figures, reinforcing this study's emphasis on the sophisticated literary culture in the age of Herodotus and Sophocles; cf. Pinnoy (1984) for further discussion on the opaque vocabulary used in this passage, and its sources.

¹²² Page (1975) 466-7=Plu. *Mor.* 785B. Jacoby (1913) 233f. (cf. Asheri [2007] 4) might well have questioned whether this is necessarily our Herodotus, a common enough Ionic name in the fifth century, but, it is important to remember that it was not a common name in Attica in Sophocles' age. And besides which, the various intellectual affinities between the two authors (see below), only strengthens the likelihood that this is referring to the historian Herodotus.

¹²³ Thucydides' remark on 'display pieces for instant hearing' (1.22.4), a reference directed towards a much wider group of individuals than just Herodotus (cf. the sensible comments in Thomas [2000] 267), provides further evidence of this oral mode of discourse. For Herodotus' 'lectures', see the excellent discussions in Momigliano (1978) 195-8, Erbse (1979) 139-46, Dorati (2000) 17-28, Thomas (2000) 257-69; *pace* Johnson (1994), who, though making some fine points on Herodotus' writerly preoccupation with creating an everlasting monument (esp.253-4), makes too much of the *Histories*' intratextual sophistication and Herodotus' (Hecataean/Thucydidean) use of γράφω as firm evidence that Herodotus' work was hardly suitable for oral performance (cf. Powell [1939] 31-6). Many of Johnson's contestations do not ultimately succeed in demonstrating that Herodotus' work was not delivered via oral performance, though they certainly do succeed in showing his desire to produce his own *ktēma es aiei*.

his research orally as early as the 440s, it is clear that the *Histories* as they stand were completed after this date. The later books contain a small number of allusions to the Peloponnesian War (e.g. 7.137.1, 233.2), as well as a reference to the expulsion of the Aeginetans at 6.91.1—an event dated to 431 BCE.¹²⁴ In addition, a further reference to the Peloponnesian War suggests a later date still. At 9.73.3 Herodotus notes that in payment for the support offered by the Deceleans to the Spartans, the Deceleans were granted exemptions from any payment and choice seats at feasts. The narrator then informs the reader that these honours continue ‘to be in existence all down to today’ (ἐς τόδε αἰεὶ ἔτι ἐοῦσα),¹²⁵ and, he adds, ‘this even held true many years later in the war between the Athenians and Peloponnesians’ (οὐ τῶ ὥστε καὶ ἐς τὸν πόλεμον τὸν ὕστερον πολλοῖσι ἔτεσι τούτων γενόμενον Ἀθηναίοισι τε καὶ Πελοποννησίοισι [i.e. the Archidamian War]¹²⁶). Whether this remark implies that Herodotus considered the Archidamian War to be completed is not relevant here,¹²⁷ but it nevertheless provides an absolute *terminus ante quem* of 413 BCE, since Herodotus could hardly have written this had he known of the Spartan occupation of Decelea in that year.¹²⁸ At the very least, Herodotus’ reference to the killing of Spartan envoys at 7.137.1 provides us with a *terminus post quem non* of 430 BCE.¹²⁹

What might be inferred from all this incidental and anecdotal evidence? The relatively late date that Herodotus appears to have published the final version of his work should not blinker us in our view of its initial circulation or of our peripatetic author, who very likely unveiled smaller sections of individual *logoi* in a variety of public and private contexts as early as the 440s. (Indeed, the much-cited reference in Thucydides to ‘display pieces for instant listening’ (1.22.4), a criticism commonly read as a veiled attack on Herodotus’ credulousness,¹³⁰ provides a clear illustration of the oral mode of intellectual discourse in the latter half of the fifth century.¹³¹) How far Herodotus’ work changed in this lengthy period is a topic beyond the scope of this study, but it would be astonishing if he did not continue to respond to the current literary and political trends up until eventual publication. Hence, in

¹²⁴ See Thuc. 2.27.

¹²⁵ A fine illustration of the continued politico-cultural significance of myth in Herodotus’ age, cf. Baragwanath (2012a) 289-90.

¹²⁶ As demonstrated by Fornara (1981) 149-50 (and followed by Flower & Marincola ad loc.).

¹²⁷ See further discussion in Fornara (1981) 149-50.

¹²⁸ Thuc. 7.19.1-3; so Fornara (1971b) 32-4, Baragwanath (2012a) 289 (with n.6). See now Irwin (forthcoming).

¹²⁹ Cf. Thuc. 2.67.1-4 with Hornblower I 351. Fowler (2011) 61 assumes that the *Histories* took its final form in the late 430s.

¹³⁰ E.g. Momigliano (1978) 195 (though with less certainty at p.198), Węcowski (2008). Not all scholars share this view however; for other interpretations, see Baragwanath and de Bakker (2012) 3, n.5.

¹³¹ Cf. Erbse (1979) 139-46. For similar scepticism to aurally-derived knowledge: Eur. *Hipp.* 488: οὐ γὰρ τι τοῖσιν ὥσιν τεραπνὰ χρῆ λείγειν, cf. Phaedra’s critique of deceptive speech at 486-7.

spite of the problematic evidence, Herodotus and Sophocles were very likely aware of each other (though we might well remain sceptical of Ehrenberg's remark on Sophocles' 'friend Herodotus').¹³² As Asheri remarked, 'Herodotus' Athens was also Pericles' Athens, as well as the Athens of Sophocles, Euripides, and Protagoras'.¹³³ Though this biographical information is at best provisional, it demonstrates that commentators have long inferred that the works of Herodotus and Sophocles share a similar intellectual predisposition.¹³⁴

Now that a probable *physical* coexistence between Sophocles and Herodotus has been established, let us consider further the *intellectual* coexistence between tragedian and historian. The most glaring overlap between our two authors' works concerns a curious digression on familial ties. In Herodotus' version of events (3.119), the Persian nobleman Intaphrenes (one of the seven who helped Darius overthrow the false Smerdis [Bardiya], 3.70ff.)¹³⁵ and the majority of his family members are imprisoned and sentenced to death by the king, who is disproportionately fearful of a potential coup led by Intaphrenes (3.119.2).¹³⁶ But after taking pity on Intaphrenes' devastated wife who, in a fit of tears, comes to his palace beseeching forgiveness,¹³⁷ Darius allows the wife to save one of her relatives. To Darius' consternation, the wife opts to save her brother, and after being summoned before him, the wife explains that she may yet have another husband or children, but since both parents are dead, she would never have another brother. Impressed with the wife's (tactical?) logic (εὖ τε δὴ ἔδοξε τῷ Δαρείῳ εἰπεῖν ἠ γυνή),¹³⁸ Darius releases both her brother and her eldest son, before slaying the remaining relatives.¹³⁹ On one level this represents a double victory for the wife, who outmanoeuvres Darius intellectually, and saves a second member of her family. But as Dewald and Kitzinger note, from a broader perspective this is

¹³² Ehrenberg (1954) 30.

¹³³ Asheri (2007) 4, cf. Dewald (1987) 152, Hunter (1982)

¹³⁴ On the shared world view of these two authors, see Ostwald (1991) 143-8. Cf. Asheri (2007) 36-7 with n.89, who well spoke of the essentially philosophical nature of Herodotus' (and Thucydides') historical enterprise, in spite of Aristotle's famous declaration that history is 'less philosophical' than poetry (*Poet.* 1451b1).

¹³⁵ On the false Smerdis, see the useful discussion in Asheri II ad.61-88, and (esp.) West (2007) esp.410ff., who judiciously weighs up the historical problems of this episode, as well as Darius' accession in Herodotus more broadly, against the Bisitun inscription and other Persian evidence. Indeed West conjectures an ingenious solution to this murky topic: Cambyses and his most trusted courtiers, in Kurosawa-like fashion, install the magus Guamata as viceroy (replacing the [somehow] deceased Bardiya) whilst Cambyses was away campaigning in Egypt, thus thwarting any potential insurrection (411-12, 415).

¹³⁶ Cf. Otanes' remark at 3.80.4: τὰ μὲν γὰρ ὕβρι κεκορημένος ἔρδει πολλά καὶ ἄτάσθαλα, τὰ δὲ φθόνῳ. On the various rebellions at the start of Darius' reign, see Balcer (1987) 134-43, Tuplin (2005), esp.227-8, 233-6, Asheri II ad.88.1.

¹³⁷ Just as the Asian farmers do at 3.117.5; on this interpretative link see Griffith (1999) 173, Griffiths (2001b), and Dewald and Kitzinger (2006) 122-3.

¹³⁸ Cf. Evans (1991) 60 on Darius' trickster profile in Herodotus (e.g. 3.72.4).

¹³⁹ See West (1999) 129 on the story's affinities to traditional migratory motifs, with further bibliography at n.85.

all rather hollow, as the wife's compliance only adds to the Persian king's debased rule, in which men are killed without trial, one of Otanes' objections to monarchic rule (3.80.5, more on this below).¹⁴⁰ Looking to the end of things (as prescribed by Solon, 1.32.9),¹⁴¹ the reader observes how Intaphrenes' wife thus plays her own small but significant role in the continued degradation of Persian rule, that would eventually lead to Xerxes' ignominious losses in 480/79.

In Sophocles' *Antigone*,¹⁴² the eponymous hero offers a similar explanation when theorising about which of her relatives she might spare (904-20).¹⁴³ The majority of scholars are agreed that there is a clear symbiotic relationship between these two passages,¹⁴⁴ though few would assert that the influence ran from Sophocles to Herodotus.¹⁴⁵ Let us consider further this passage and its context in the play and fifth-century culture. In what will be her final significant speech in the play, Antigone turns her attention towards the various members of her family with whom she hopes to be reunited upon her death, having performed the ritual acts for all her family members bar Polyneices (892-4, 897ff.). She then proceeds, in a hyper-logical manner, to state that

οὐ γάρ ποτ' οὐ τ' ἄν, εἰ τέκνων μήτηρ ἔφυν,
οὐ τ' εἰ πόσις μοι καταθανῶν ἐτήκετο,
βίῃ πολιτῶν τόνδ' ἄν ἢ ρόμην πόνον.
τίνοσ νόμου δὴ ταῦτα πρὸς χάριν λέγω;
πόσις μὲν ἄν μοι καταθανόντος ἄλλος ἦν,

¹⁴⁰ Dewald and Kitzinger (2006) 124.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Shapiro (1996), Mikalson (2003) 50-1.

¹⁴² The play is generally regarded to be one of his earliest, dated to ca. 442-1—an estimation partly based on one of three *hypotheses* adjoining the extant manuscripts which states that Sophocles was awarded with the *stratēgia* in Samos after his success with *Antigone*; see Griffith (1999) 1-2 for further discussion, cf. Lewis (1988), arguing for a slightly later date of 438.

¹⁴³ The scholarship on this divisive passage is behemothic, not least because many scholars (considering the sentiments expressed here an essential contradiction of Antigone's character elsewhere) have argued forcefully for excising these lines—unsuccessfully, one might add (see Griffith [1999] ad.904-15). For a particularly fine discussion on this passage's reception in modern scholarship, with further references, see Sourvinou-Inwood (1987-8) 20-2, who persuasively advances a reading of this passage based on the central premise that Greek tragedy is *not* a univocal genre, offering a 'unity of discourse and coherence of character' (22); cf. also the copious references collated by Cropp (1997) n.2. That these lines are surprising in their Sophoclean context is no reason in itself to atheise them from the text, if anything, they illustrate the need to exercise restraint when editing other passages which *prima facie* do not match our expectations.

¹⁴⁴ E.g. the firm view in Murnaghan (1986) 193 'that the argument Antigone advances in these lines is borrowed from a story in Herodotus [i.e. 3.119]', cf. Fohl (1913) 53, Jacoby (1913) 334, Powell (1939) 34; Ehrenberg (1954) 57; Sourvinou-Inwood (1987-8) 27ff.; Neuberger (1990) 57 (with n.9); Ostwald (1991) 143; Zellner (1997) 315ff.; Griffith (1999) ad.904-15; West (1999) 110, 129ff.; Said (2002) 120 (who nonetheless seeks to illustrate the differences between Herodotus' project and tragedy); Dewald & Kitzinger (2006) *passim*, de Bakker (2007) 16.

¹⁴⁵ But note Erbse (1992) 70f.

καὶ παῖς ἀπ’ ἄλλου φωτός, εἰ τοῦ δ’ ἦ μπλακον,
μητρὸς δ’ ἐν Ἄιδου καὶ πατρὸς κεκευθότοι
οὐκ ἔστ’ ἀδελφὸς ὅστις ἐν βλάστοι ποτέ. (905-12).¹⁴⁶

Antigone thus makes the same argument as Intaphrenes’ (non-Greek) wife, opting to save a brother (i.e. Polyneices) over a husband or child, though unlike the Herodotean example, she makes this remark *ex hypothesi*. This artificiality serves to bring the passage even closer to Herodotus’ version, even if the direction of the influence remains opaque, as Antigone (who has previously been consistent in word and deed) appeals to a most un-Greek, and in Herodotus’ case Persian, *logos*. Such a connection would surely have increased the audience’s sense of Antigone as “other”, no longer able to communicate the values of the *polis*, and perhaps more jejunely, acts as a *prolepsis* for her baleful fate.

Beyond this passage, other Herodotean aspects of *Antigone* have sparked further interest, notably Sophocles’ portrayal of Creon.¹⁴⁷ Amongst the myriad caveats cited in his rejection of autocratic rule in Herodotus’ controversial Constitutional Debate,¹⁴⁸ Otanes objects that the monarch ‘unseats the ancestral laws’ (νόμια τέ κινεῖ πάτρια, 3.80.5),¹⁴⁹ a fear that is certainly reflected in Sophocles’ portrait of Creon, whom Antigone lambasts for thinking he might countermand ‘the unwritten and immovable laws of the gods’ (ἄγραπτα καὶ σφαλῆ θεῶν νόμιμα, 454-5).¹⁵⁰ Earlier in his opening *rhēsis* (162-210), Creon appeals to various γῶμαι and general platitudes, making frequent use of language found in contemporary Athenian politics (e.g., *polis*: 162, 166, 178, 191, 194, 203, 209; *nomoi*: 177, 191; *euthunai*: 178), as well as his preference for the State over the individual (182-90), all things that might well lead to a positive audience reception. And yet, he also refers to his *thronos* (173, cf.

¹⁴⁶ Neuberger (1990) 76 offers a robust defence of the lines showing how it would have to be an impossibly sophisticated interpolator to have inserted these lines into the work.

¹⁴⁷ See esp. Podlecki (1966), West (1999) 119, 124-9.

¹⁴⁸ On the intellectual inspiration for this episode, see Baragwanath and de Bakker (2012) 5 (with n.13), and, for its thematic significance and presentation of general truths, see Benardette (1969) 85-7, Moles (1993) 118-20. For other valuable, recent contributions (with further bibliography) to this iconic scene see Luraghi (2001b) 142-3, Pelling (2002), Asheri II 471ff., cf. now Sydnor-Roy (2012).

¹⁴⁹ *Contra* 3.82.5, where Darius flips this, so as to make the monarch a preserver of ancestral custom: χωρὶς τε τοῦ τοῦ πατρίους νόμους μὴ λυεῖν ἔχοντας εὔ. The Cambyses-like qualities of Otanes’ hypothetical tyrant-monarch are, of course, far from universal in Herodotus’ presentation of monarchs; one need only think of the favourable depiction of Deioces at 1.96-101, or Herodotus’ surprising opinion (γνώμην τῆν ἐμήν) that the Thracians would be the most powerful of all races ‘if they were ruled by an individual (εἰ δὲ ὑπ’ ἐνὸς ἄρχοιτο 5.3.1). On the varied presentation of sole-rulers in Herodotus, see Waters (1971) *passim*, cf. Flory (1987) 121, Romm (1998) 176, Sydnor-Roy (2012) esp.307, 311-15.

¹⁵⁰ Podlecki (1966) 365; on this and other references to ‘unwritten laws’ in antiquity, see Griffith (1999) *ad loc.* See Torrance (2010) 215-8, for remarks on this passage, and others in Sophocles’ plays, which employ the metaphor of writing as memory, illustrating his privileging ‘of the medium of orality over writing’ (218).

166) and his possession of *kratē panta* (173)—and perhaps more worryingly—refers to himself and his views repeatedly (e.g., *ego*: 164, 173, 184, 191; *eme* [and its cognates]: 178, 188, 207 [bis], 210).¹⁵¹ Creon also appears disinterested in democratic structures of decision-making, emphasising how ‘I will strengthen the city’ (191), before detailing the edict which he has directly issued to the populace, without prior consultation (192-3, cf. Hdt. 3.80.3: ‘[a monarch] is able to do what he wishes without accountability’). Such inconsistency, i.e. Creon’s flitting between democratic and autocratic states, is a hallmark of the monarch as defined by Otanes (ἀναρμοστότατον δὲ πᾶντων, 3.80.5). And much of the initial pomposity exhibited in this opening speech is slowly unravelled over the course of the play, well exemplified in Creon’s risible protestations to his son Haemon: ‘Shall the *polis* command me in my actions?’, ‘Am I required to rule this land by anybody’s will other than mine?’, ‘Does the *polis* not traditionally follow the figure in power?’ (734, 736, 738).

There are also certain verbal echoes between Sophocles and the Constitutional Debate.¹⁵² For instance, Creon’s son Haemon implores his father to make time for sage advice, appealing to the natural world to make his point: ‘You see how the trees which bend by the torrential streams created by a winter storm (παρὰ ῥεῖθροισι χειμάρροις) yield—how they even save their branches, while those which stretch back are destroyed root and branch?’ (712-4). Similarly, in his negative depiction of democratic rule, Megabyzus counters that the hubristic *dēmos* hastily rush into decisions, ‘like a river in winter storm (χειμάρρῳ ποταμῷ εἴ κελος, 3.81.2)’.¹⁵³ While such metaphorical language dates as far back as Homer, and is well documented in archaic thought,¹⁵⁴ the resemblance between these passages is striking, particularly given the similarities between despotic rulers and Otanes’ hypothetical tyrant in Herodotus and Sophocles’ Creon.

Turning away from *Antigone*, further visual and stylistic reminiscences emerge between the two authors’ works. For instance in Book One of Herodotus, the Median king Astyages has two disturbing dreams (107.1, 108.1),¹⁵⁵ in the first his daughter Mandane urinates in such vast quantities that she submerges the whole of Asia, while in the second a vine grows from

¹⁵¹ See West (1999) 125, n.67 on the overlap between Creon’s egocentricity and self-promotion, with that of Aeschylus’ Agamemnon and various Near-Eastern rulers (e.g. Darius in the Bisitun Inscription).

¹⁵² As pointed out by Podlecki (1966) 365-6.

¹⁵³ Cf. 7.10ε: ὁ ρᾶς δὲ ὡς ἔς οἱ κήματα τὰ μέγιστα αἰεὶ καὶ δένδρεα τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀποσκήπτει τὰ βέλεα.

¹⁵⁴ Asheri II ad loc.

¹⁵⁵ See esp. Frisch (1968) 6-11. On the comparative Oriental (especially Assyrian) materials for the imagery in these dreams, see esp. Pelling (1996), cf. Asheri I ad.1.107.1. Fourteen of the eighteen dreams recorded in Herodotus are dreamt by non-Greek, and are (almost) exclusively assigned to tyrants, kings, and other great figures of power. See already Agamemnon’s dream in the *Iliad* (2.80-2); cf. Hollmann (2011) 82-5 for other instances of dreams in Herodotus based on visual signs.

her genitals and covers the whole of Asia.¹⁵⁶ The latter dream, with its use of the vine as auguring the coming of the Achaemenids (which may well owe some debt to authentically Eastern sources),¹⁵⁷ evokes a memorable scene in Sophocles' *Electra*.¹⁵⁸ Here Clytaemnestra dreams that Agamemnon seizes his ancient sceptre and plants it at the hearth, from which a tree grows and overshadows the whole of Mycene (417-23), a dream that portends her destruction at the hands of Orestes. Although direct influence in either direction is indeterminable, the similarities between the passages are nonetheless significant, for both authors specifically appeal to dreams involving untameable vegetative imagery as a metaphor for a (powerful) individual's future ruin. This similarity serves thus as a kind of compositional intertext between Sophocles and Herodotus, who, though working in different genres, at times overlap in their literary technique. Indeed, Ostwald well comments on the general preponderance of dreams, oracles and other portentous signs in both authors' works, determining the lives of the characters—both legendary and historical—that they narrate to us.¹⁵⁹

6.4 A Manifold Poetic Heritage

This investigation into the relationship between tragedy and the *Histories* has illustrated the breadth of potentially allusive and intertextual moments in Herodotus' *Histories* with tragic works. It has become clear that tragedy influenced Herodotus' conception and narration of the Persian Wars at both a micro- and macro-level. At the micro-level, individual details from Aeschylus' presentation of the Greek victory at Salamis come replete, such as the number of Persian forces and the considerable lamentation displayed by the Persians upon hearing of the defeat. On a more fundamental scale, though, Herodotus' analysis reinforces a motif integral to many tragic works, namely the part played by divine forces in human events. In both Aeschylus' and Herodotus' version of the War, it is clear that the Persians had overstepped natural boundaries, and the gods reacted by recalibrating this unnatural state of affairs. And in our analysis of specific Sophoclean intertexts in Herodotus, we have uncovered numerous correspondences which illustrate the shared set of ideas across both of these authors' works.

To these ends, Herodotus' relationship with tragedy is more complicated than mere repetition or rejection. As the quote from Fornara's *Essay* at the head of this chapter, along with Baragwanath's full-scale investigation into character motivation in Herodotus have both

¹⁵⁶ Similarly 1.209.1 and 7.19.1.

¹⁵⁷ Asheri I ad.1.107.1 cites the vine as a symbol of success and salvation in Eastern sources.

¹⁵⁸ Ostwald (1991) 143, Pelling (1996) 69.

¹⁵⁹ Ostwald (1991) 144.

elegantly shown,¹⁶⁰ it is rather in his complex presentation of his characters' motivations, as well as his usual avoidance of making explicit value judgements, instead utilising motifs such as the tragic advisor, the rise and fall of powerful individuals *et alii*, in order to encourage the reader to make deeper connections that transcend the base events recorded in the text, that we can most clearly uncover the influence of the tragedians in his work. Moreover, Flower and Marcincola speak well of the way in which even though tragedy is strongly felt in Herodotus, 'it does not dominate, but rather is integrated into a new kind of narrative forged from existing genres'.¹⁶¹ This 'new kind of narrative', of course, has long been recognised as the beginning of Greek historiography,¹⁶² but our investigation into the effects that the tragedians had on Herodotus' understanding of *what happened* in the past, and, equally, *how* one should report what happened, has clarified how distinctively different his work is from the many genres that helped create it.

¹⁶⁰ Baragwanath (2008) *passim*, esp.323f.

¹⁶¹ Flower and Marcincola 9.

¹⁶² E.g. the famous remarks of Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Thuc.* 5.5): τὴν τε πραγματικὴν προαίρεσιν ἐπὶ τὸ μείζον ἐξήνεγκε καὶ λαμπρότερον...καὶ τῆς λέξεϊ προσπέδωκε τὰς παραλειφθείσας ὑπὸ τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ συγγραφέων ἀρετάς; cf. Fowler (1996) *passim*, esp.61-9.

Chapter 7

The Oracular Text

Till then, by Nature crowned, each patriarch sate,
 King, priest, and parent of his growing state;
 On him, their second providence, they hung,
 Their law his eye, their oracle his tongue.
 — Alexander Pope¹

7.1 Mantic Readings

I have elaborated above on some of the most important literary sources which influenced Herodotus when composing his *Histories*, particularly poetic accounts which deal with war, such as the *Iliad* and Simonides' Plataea elegy, as well as a wide array of publicly and privately-displayed inscriptions like the monuments he found dedicated by the Egyptian king Sesostris.² Another equally important source which sits alongside these materials within the Herodotean text is the oracular message. Indeed the Oracle, and oracular pronouncements and prophecies, a vital component of the Greek divinatory system,³ are a fundamental source of knowledge in Herodotus—both for our historian and for the historical individuals he writes into his text.⁴

Up until recently, oracles have been analysed usually in terms of their authenticity, with different ideas being propounded vis-à-vis what criteria to apply for such an investigation.⁵ In their collection of Delphic oracles, Parke and Wormell judged the authenticity of oracles based on tentative criteria such as whether the oracle has been recorded verbatim or not, and whether there are any traces of supernatural elements.⁶ Parke and Wormell thus concluded their overview of Greek oracles rather cynically, arguing that there are 'practically no oracles

¹ *An Essay on Man*, III, VI

² On the Sesostrian monuments, see §3.3 above.

³ On ancient Greek divination, see Iles Johnston (2008) *passim*, cf.17-27 for a useful contextual overview of other works on this subject since the latter half of the nineteenth century.

⁴ Throughout this chapter I use the capitalised 'Oracle' to refer to the institution and/or individual delivering an oracular pronouncement, and the lower-case 'oracle' to denote the subsequent pronouncement by an oracular institution. On the history of oracles in ancient Greece, alongside the standard works of Parke & Wormell (1956) (hereafter PW) and Fontenrose (1978), see the excellent contributions by Parker (1985); Manetti (1993); Maurizio (1997). On oracles in Herodotus see principally Bischoff (1932) 316-9; Panitz (1935); Crahay (1956); Kirchberg (1965); Fontenrose (1978) *passim*; Lachenaud (1978) 244-305; Hart (1982) esp. 56-69; Shimron (1989) 39-51; Asheri (1993) 63-76; Compton (1994); Harrison (2000a) 122-157 (2003) 252ff.; Mikalson (2003) esp. 54-8, 148-58 with notes; Kindt (2006); Barker (2006); cf. now Hollmann (2011) 94-117, 213-217.

⁵ For an instructive refutation of this authenticating approach, see Maurizio (1997).

⁶ See further PW (1956) II xxi-xxxvi.

to which we can point with complete confidence in their authenticity'.⁷ In contrast to this approach, Roland Crahay posited that there are two types of Herodotean oracles: oracles summarised in prose, reported to Herodotus at Delphi, and hexametric oracles, based on romantic biographies. For Crahay only the prose-oriented Delphic utterances are to be deemed authentic, unlike the fictitious, poeticised (and political) verses that Herodotus cites, which are thus forgeries.⁸

More recently, in his study on the Delphic oracle, Fontenrose has argued for four categories of Delphic response: "historical", "quasi-historical", "legendary", and "fictional".⁹ Within these broad fields, certain "historical" and "quasi-historical" oracles are judged as authentic, but others are not, each case judged on its own merits. Ultimately, however, while Fontenrose proposes the need to apply a more objective set of criteria to establish the authenticity of responses,¹⁰ he largely subscribes to the method applied by Parke and Wormell, judging those oracles authentic which are (seemingly) recorded verbatim and are framed by an accurately recorded consultation process.¹¹ As Maurizio has well shown, such an approach is not without its flaws, since many oracles are transmitted orally, rendering it impossible to affirm the Pythia's *ipsissima verba*.¹²

More recent contributions to the role that oracles play in the Herodotean corpus have moved away from this rather circular attempt to establish authenticity, and instead have focussed on a more diverse range of issues: how Herodotus and his readers maintained a belief in the oracular voice; the political ramifications of oracular consultation in the *Histories*; the oral transmission and communal authorship of oracles in archaic Greece; the metahistorical value of certain oracle stories, reflecting Herodotus' research process.¹³ These contributions have greatly improved our understanding of how oracles work in Herodotus (and beyond); thus, while it would be difficult to eschew entirely the issue of truth and accuracy when addressing oracles as sources incorporated within the Herodotean text, it is clearly far more lucrative to examine how oracles are represented and utilised by the narrator.¹⁴

⁷ PW (1956) II xxi.

⁸ Crahay (1956) esp. 299-304.

⁹ Fontenrose (1978) 7-9.

¹⁰ Fontenrose (1978) 12.

¹¹ Cf. the criticisms of Brenk (1980) and Maurizio (1997) 310-11.

¹² Maurizio (1997) 312. Maurizio provides an effective repudiation of this approach towards oracular literature, showing how oracular knowledge was disseminated in a way quite different to that presented both by Fontenrose, and by PW.

¹³ Belief in oracles: Parker (1985), Harrison (2000a); politics of interpretation: Manetti (1993), Kurke (1999) (2009), Bowden (2005), Barker (2006); oral transmission: Maurizio (1997); metahistorical readings: Flower (1991), Hartog (1999), Kindt (2006).

¹⁴ Regarding the (potentially misleading) question of authenticity, Mikalson (2003) 58 sums up the issue well: 'whatever their origins, however they may have been revised or reshaped, the Delphic

Unlike the much more ambiguous relationship which Herodotus appears to develop with earlier prose works, certain types of poetry, and other source materials, his engagement with oracles, like inscriptions, is far more explicit. Indeed Herodotus refers to some sixty-four oracles in the *Histories*, twenty five of which are cited in verse.¹⁵ Alongside his appeal to oracular texts, the actual process of oracular consultation is also frequently referred to by Herodotus. For Oracles and their oracles not only serve as a form of evidence for our historian, but they also function within the narrative proper, delivering (sometimes opaque, sometimes lucid)¹⁶ messages for a number of Herodotus' protagonists to interpret—some more successfully than others.¹⁷ And not only do oracles assist and guide many of Herodotus' characters into a particular course of action, they also help shape much of Herodotus' narrative, sometimes embedded in episodes which offer the reader a complex metahistorical commentary on his research methods.¹⁸

As Herodotus' Croesus *logos* in the first half of Book One well shows, Delphi and Delphic pronouncements are important sources of authority in Herodotus' work, shaping significant sections of his *logos*.¹⁹ Of course not all of Herodotus' reported oracles are derived from well-established divine centres like Delphi. Indeed, a number of chance events and chance statements subsequently turn out to be prophetic; as Harrison remarks, 'potential omens and prophecies are everywhere.'²⁰ So in a well-known passage whereby the Spartans seek compensation from Xerxes, the hubristic king who happened to be standing near the commander Mardonius, ironically tells the Spartans that Mardonius would 'pay to those you speak of whatever price fits' (8.114.2).²¹ We ultimately realise that Xerxes has just

oracles seem to have been accepted by the Greeks after Herodotus as Herodotus presented them. And if so, they become part of the corpus of Greek religious beliefs, whatever fact or fiction lies behind them'; cf. Crahay (1956) 107, and Flower (1991) 65-6.

¹⁵ Of the 25 quoted oracles, all but one are recorded in dactylic hexameter (an oracle in iambic trimeter is given at 1.174.5); for the wider panhellenic significance of this see further Hollmann (2011) 102. The significance of versified oracles in archaic Greece is extensively addressed by Plutarch in his *On the Oracles Given at Delphi No Longer Given in Verse*, cf. Maurizio (1997) 313-14.

¹⁶ Lachenaud (1978) 270-77 tabulates the different functions of oracles in Herodotus, showing that ambiguous oracles are in fact relatively infrequent; 'l'ambiguïté et l'obscurité manifesteraient l'ironie des dieux qui tendent des pièges aux hommes ou les invitent à utiliser leurs ressources intellectuelles' (276).

¹⁷ For a concise list of failed oracular interpretations in Herodotus, see Hollmann (2011) 247, n.84.

¹⁸ So e.g. Hollmann (2011) 104-5.

¹⁹ On Delphi and Delphic oracle stories in Herodotus, see esp. Fontenrose (1978); Flower (1991); Harrison (2000a) 122-57; Kindt (2006).

²⁰ Harrison (2000a) 129.

²¹ Flower (2008) 112 is sceptical about the historicity of this passage, but remarks nonetheless that 'the acceptance by the herald...is a sure indication to Herodotus's readers that Mardonius's fate was sealed'; On this passage, see further Pavese (1995) 22f., Asheri (1998) esp.65-75, the latter emphasising Herodotus' emphasis on *tisis* ('compensation'), i.e. an appropriate penalty for Persia's

unwittingly prophesised Mardonius' downfall when Mardonius later dies at Plataea at the hands of a Spartan; indeed Herodotus confidently leads his reader to this conclusion at the end of his Plataea account, opining that Mardonius' destruction at the hands of the Spartan Aemnestus was the fulfilment of the oracular prediction (ἐνθαῦτα ἢ τε δίκη τοῦ Λεωνί δεῶ κατὰ τὸ χηιστήριον τοῖσι Σπαρτιήτησι ἐκ Μαρδονίου ἐπετέετο).²² Of course, such statements on the fulfilment of divine intervention are a characteristic feature of Herodotus' work.²³

In the various sections that follow in this chapter, then, I explore further the open and pervasive appeal to oracles and oracle stories in the Herodotean work, primarily questioning what impact their prominent place in the *Histories* has on the reader, and in particular, for our understanding of Herodotus and his sources. This will begin with a brief consideration of general attitudes towards the validity of oracles in Herodotus' context, and also to what extent Herodotus seeks to authorise (or even extend) the traditional authority of the oracular text in his own work. Next I look at the familiar trope of consulting an Oracle in the *Histories*, examining both the reasons behind this repeated motif and the chief intellectual ramifications of correct and incorrect readings of oracular texts. It will be illustrated that such interpretative scenes prove not only vital in terms of the future of many of Herodotus' characters, but also in our wider understanding of how to read history. From here I inquire briefly about how Herodotus, like many of the characters that he includes in his work, also appeals to an oracle explicitly because it supplements a particular argument and lends a further form of proof to his narrative. This will lead us to conclude on the crucial place of the oracular text in the *Histories* in terms of how Herodotus crafts an authoritative persona. As Kindt has recently argued, 'Herodotus uses oracles to establish the authority of the *Histories* as text written in a new genre.'²⁴

destruction of the Spartans at Thermopylae (cf. 9.64.1). Cf. also Lateiner (1977) 179f., exploring the connexions between laughter and ignorance here, and the catastrophic implications of Xerxes' ill-considered amusement.

²² 9.64.1, cf. Plut. *Arist.* 19. Bowie ad 114 notes that the verb δέκεσθαι (8.114.1) signals for the reader the prophetic nature of Xerxes' utterance (cf. 1.63.1; 9.91.2); for other instances of 'accidental prophecies' in Herodotus, see Harrison (2000a) 127-30.

²³ To take just one example: after reporting various traditions regarding the death of Cleomenes, Herodotus remarks that 'it seems to me that Cleomenes' death was retribution for what he did to Demaratus' (ἐμοὶ δὲ δοκέει τίσιν ταύτην ὁ Κλεομένης Δημαρῆτῶ ἐκτίσαι, 6.84.3) (here referring back to Demaratus' deposition from the Spartan throne following Cleomenes' bribery of the Delphic oracle, 5.67.1); contrast here the opaque formulations of Lateiner (1989) 203-4 and de Romilly (1971) 316. On retribution in Herodotus, see esp. Gould (1989) 42-5, Harrison (2000a) 102-21, and Munson (2001) 182-94; and for Herodotus' belief in divinity, see e.g. Lloyd-Jones (1971) 64, Gould (1994) esp.93ff., Harrison (2000a) *passim*, Gray (2001) 21-2, Fowler (2010) esp.319, *contra*, e.g., Lateiner (1989) 196-205 and Scullion (2006), who erroneously read Herodotean reticence to speak on divine matters as *de facto* scepticism.

²⁴ Kindt (2006) 35.

7.2 Herodotus on Oracles

In the aftermath of his account on the Ionian revolt, Herodotus briefly digresses on the outcome of the Milesian tyrant Histiaeus, who, *inter alia*, subdued the Chians in a sea-battle (6.26ff.). At this point Herodotus stops the flow of his narrative and reflects on the various calamities that have struck the Chians. He writes that

it is often the case that some sort of sign is given whenever great evils are about to befall a city or a race; for before all these things great signs had been sent to the Chians. (6.27.1).²⁵

Then, after relating an ill-fated expedition to Delphi and the collapse of a school roof, causing all but one of the children to perish, Herodotus reiterates that ‘the god showed these signs to them’ (ταῦτα μὲν σοφιστήρια ὁ θεὸς πρόξεδεξε, 6.27.3).²⁶ Statements like these are not atypical in Herodotus, who is far from unlikely to espouse supernatural explanations for a chain of human events. Indeed they mirror his penchant for including oracles, prophecies and omens as aetiologies of many significant incidents in the *Histories*. As David Asheri noted, oracles ‘are used to explain and justify the origins of certain actions or historical, political, and military events, and in cultic or expiatory procedures.’²⁷

If one is to uncover a general statement by Herodotus on the validity of oracles as true sources of knowledge, it is necessary to turn to a much discussed passage in Book Eight, in which he quotes one of numerous oracles recorded by the prophet Bacis (8.77).²⁸ Here Herodotus begins stating that ‘I am not able to refute the oracles as being untruthful (Χρησιμοῖσι δὲ οὐκ ἔχω ἀντιλέγειν ὡς οὐκ εἰσὶ ἀληθέες), nor do I wish to discredit them when they speak clearly.’²⁹ To illustrate this point, he then goes on to quote a particular

²⁵ Φιλέει δέ κως προσημαί νειν, εἴ τ’ ἄν μὲ λλη μεγάλα κακὰ ἢ πόλι ἢ ἔθνεϊ ἔσεσθαι: καὶ γὰρ Χί οισι πρὸ τοῦ των σημήια μεγάλα ἐγένετο; cf. Scott (2005) ad loc. who argues that κως probably reflects certain doubts on Herodotus’ part about the causal connection his local sources have made.

²⁶ See further Harrison (2000a) ch.6.

²⁷ Asheri (2007) 41.

²⁸ Cf. also 2.18 (see 5.3 below). As Bowie (2007) 111 notes, Herodotus is our principal source for Bacis’ oracles [Bacid oracles at 8.20, 77; 9.43]; on the problems of identifying the historical chresmologue from the different individuals who share the name Bacis, see further Asheri (1993). For a general analysis on collections of oracles in antiquity, cf. Parke & Wormell (1956) 165-79; Fontenrose (1978) 145-65.

²⁹ Herodotus is certainly aware of the possible abuse or corruption of divinatory knowledge. Indeed both the Alcmeonidae (5.63.1, cf. 5.91.1) and Cleomenes (6.66.3, cf. 6.75.3, 84.3) are reported to have bribed the Delphic Oracle. As Harrison (2000a) 141-3 points out, however, this does not in any way damage the reputation of the oracle itself, rather, it seems to ‘offer a convenient ‘let-out clause’ by which belief in divination is sustained’ (142), cf. Parker (1985) 302.

Bacis oracle, which he interprets as being a lucid anticipation of the recent Graeco-Persian hostilities. The oracle reads:

When the sacred headland of golden-sworded Artemis and Cynosura by the sea they
bridge with ships,
After sacking shiny Athens in thoughtless hope,
Divine Justice will extinguish mighty Greed the son of Insolence
Lusting terribly, thinking to devour all.
Bronze will come together with bronze, and Ares
Will darken the sea with blood. To Hellas the day of freedom
Far-seeing Zeus and noble Victory will bring.³⁰

He then cautiously concludes that ἐς τοιαῦτα μὲν καὶ οὐ τῷ ἐναργέως λέγοντι Βάκιδι ἄντιλογίης χρησμῶν πέρι οὐ τε αὐτὸς λέγειν τολμέω οὐ τε παρ' ἄλλων ἐνδέκομαι ('on account of this, I dare to say nothing that contradicts Bacis when he gives oracles that speak so plainly, and nor do I accept them from anyone else', 8.77.2).³¹ So it follows from this that the oracle, when in the hands of a capable researcher such as Herodotus, is ready to be interpreted clearly; and if done so, the truth will be revealed. It is also worth noting Herodotus' extraneous remark that the oracle was a statement of Bacis, since it suggests that Herodotus' audience were familiar with broader discourses on a number of Bacis pronouncements.

Another unambiguous display of Herodotus' faith in the validity of oracles is embedded at the end of his account on the battle of Salamis. Herodotus writes:

So the prophecy was fulfilled, not only all the prophesying by Bacis and Musaeus about the sea battle, but also what was said many years before these events about the wrecks that were brought ashore there, in an oracle by Lysistratus, an Athenian oracle-monger (χρησμολόγῳ),³² which all the Greeks had forgotten.³³

³⁰ Bowie 166-7 expunges this entire chapter, following the recommendations of Krueger. Asheri (1993) however, rather ingeniously argues that this is a recycled oracle (Herodotus is himself aware of the possibility of a recycled oracle at 9.43) originally used in the context of Marathon, and then subsequently re-shaped with the somewhat jarring addition of περὶ νηῶν to make it appropriate for its new Salaminian context. Though I am not entirely convinced by Asheri's proposition, whose solution relies on certain, unverifiable textual conjectures, it is nonetheless clear that a complete excision of this chapter is ideologically driven by those who wish to de-emphasise Herodotus' belief in prophetic statements, and is thus methodologically insupportable.

³¹ On this as a possible echo of 'the famous Protagorean development of *antilogiai*', see Thomas (2006) 68.

³² For χρησμολόγος in Herodotus, see: 1.62.4; 7.6.3, 142.3, 143.1, 143.3; 8.96.2; and for its meanings in antiquity, see Bowden (2003) 261.

³³ Translation by Bowie ad loc.

Herodotus thus suggests that there are many oracular notices which could be cited as proof that the outcome of the battle was long ago foretold, the implication being that Herodotus could just as easily cite other prophetic statements on this matter—a subtle indication, therefore, of his extensive inquiries. Similarly, at the closing stages of his account on the Ionian revolt, Herodotus states that the city of Miletus was reduced to slavery, thus fulfilling the prediction of the Delphic Oracle (6.18-19). He proceeds to report that when the Argives had consulted the Pythia, they received a message which partly concerned them, but partly the Milesians.³⁴ The section directed towards Miletus reads:

You then, Miletus, contriver of evil deeds,
 Shall be a banquet for many, and a splendid prize;
 Your wives shall wash the feet of many long-haired men,
 And our shrine at Didyma shall be the care of others. (6.19.2).

Herodotus rounds off this account with his own holistic reading of the oracle:

This is just what happened to the Milesians, since most of the men were killed by the Persians who wear their hair long; the women and children became slaves, and the temple at Didyma, both shrine and Oracle (καὶ ὁ νηός τε καὶ τὸ χρηστήριον), was plundered and burnt. (6.19.3).

So both this passage and the Lysistratus oracle discussed above show that Herodotus intentionally seeks out oracular literature which aids his interpretation of significant historical events, and in turn affirms the validity of numerous mantic institutions operating in the Greek world—a clear display of his faith in Oracles as valuable sources of knowledge. We shall see below that his forensic analysis of the Milesian oracle is in fact one of myriad occasions in the *Histories* where Herodotus is at pains to emphasise the inner coherence of an oracular message.

The process of testing the accuracy of Oracles is itself a familiar motif recurring throughout Herodotus' text. Alongside Croesus' testing of many different oracles (see below), there is Mardonius (8.133), who, whilst wintering in Thessaly, sent a man named Mys from Europus to visit τὰ χρηστήρια, ἐντειλάμενος πανταχῆ μιν χρησόμενον ἐλθεῖν, τῶν οἷά τε ἦν σφι ἄποπειρήσασθαι ('charging him to go everywhere and consult the Oracles, so that he could

³⁴ Cf. 6.77 for the lines concerning Argos. For the 'common oracle', see esp. Piérart (2003).

test the their responses’). (Herodotus adds to this that he is not able to relate the reason for this test, οὐ γὰρ ὤν λέγεται.) Earlier in his account of the Egyptian king Amasis II (2.174.1-2), Herodotus reports that when he was just a commoner, Amasis was a frivolous individual who would steal if he ran out of drinking supplies. Whenever it was possible, the people who he had stolen from would take him to an Oracle, where he was sometimes exonerated and sometimes convicted. So later, when he became king, Amasis would only support the upkeep of those sanctuaries in which the gods had correctly found him guilty of theft, since he concluded that they were the authentic gods who bestowed upon mankind true oracles (ἀ ψευδέα μαντήια).³⁵

Although oracles play a vital role throughout Herodotus’ work, a significant number of prophecies are not recorded verbatim and/or are not analysed to the same extent as others are by our historian. It is often these oracles which seem to be less opaque and more easily (and successfully) negotiated in Herodotus. For instance, after a crop failure, the Epidaurians go to the Delphic Oracle to enquire about how they might remedy their troubles (5.82.1).³⁶ After being advised to set up statues of Damia and Auxesia, ‘made from the wood of the cultivated olive’,³⁷ Herodotus states that they sought the permission of the Athenians to fell some of their peculiarly sacred olive trees. After gaining Athenian consent, having promised to offer annual sacrifices to Erechtheus and Athene Polias, Herodotus swiftly concludes that they erected the statues and that their harvests improved (5.82.3).

But beyond such episodes in which oracles feature only briefly, the successful negotiation of an oracle’s manifold complexities has a far more profound impact on the overall texture of the *Histories*. If an individual, or a group of individuals, misreads, forgets or neglects an oracular pronouncement, then some kind of divine punishment will likely follow. For instance, the Euboeans are condemned as the creators of their own destruction, since they ‘[mistakenly] neglected an Oracle of Bacis, believing the oracle to be meaningless’ (παραχρησάμενοι τὸν Βάκιδος χρησμὸν ὡς οὐδὲν λέγοντα, 8.20.1). When the Samian tyrant Polycrates arrogantly sails to Oroetes, in spite of the foreboding caveats issued by oracles and friends alike, as well as a troubling divinely-inspired dream sent to his daughter, he is slaughtered in an unmentionable manner and then crucified (3.124-5). Moreover, in the most well-known oracular passage in Herodotus, Croesus’ Lydian empire is destroyed by the

³⁵ Ὁ σοι δέ μιν κατέδησαν φῶρα εἶναι, τοῦτων δὲ ὡς ἀληθέων θεῶν ἐόντων καὶ ἀψευδέα μαντήια παρεχομένων τὰ μάλιστα ἐπεμύλετο.

³⁶ Fontenrose (1978) Q63 does not consider this to be authentic, but rather, ‘a non-Aeginetan origin myth of the cult of Damia and Auxesia on Aigina’ (289); cf. Crahay (1956) 75-7: ‘la récit fait une large part au merveilleux et constitue le préambule légendaire des événements historiques’ (75).

³⁷ 5.82.2. Cf. 1.167.1-2 and 4.149 where similar advice is given by an oracle to establish a temple or a cult in order to placate the god.

Persian king Cyrus, but only after the outcome has been enunciated in an esoteric oracle, which is delivered to Croesus at Delphi.³⁸ In the following pages, I will consider those occasions in the *Histories* whereby an oracle is successfully decoded, addressing the extensive benefits that Herodotus associates with this form of close, textual reading.

7.3 Successful Readers of Oracles

One of the exclusively successful readers of an oracular text—other than Herodotus—is the Athenian general Themistocles.³⁹ Having announced his controversial view that Athens was responsible for saving Hellas in 480-79 (7.139.1-2), Herodotus then remarks proleptically, ahead of his reporting of any oracles themselves, that ‘not even the fearful oracles sent from Delphi threw [the Athenians] into fear or persuaded them into leaving Greece’ (7.139.6). Immediately following this, he then narrates both the Athenians’ appeal to the Delphic Oracle and their subsequent debate about how best to read the two oracles and resist the mounting Persian threat, once again quoting both prophecies in their original hexametric verses.⁴⁰ In the first message, the God states:

Fools, why do you linger here? Rather flee from your houses and city,
 Flee to the ends of the earth from the circle embattled of Athens!
 The head will not remain in its place, nor in the body,
 Nor the feet beneath, nor the hands, nor anything in between;
 But all is ruined, fire and bitter war, speeding in a Syrian chariot will bring you low.
 Many a fortress too, not yours alone, will he shatter;
 Many a shrine of the gods will he give to the flame for devouring;
 Sweating for fear they stand, and quaking for dread of the enemy,
 Running with dark blood are their roofs, foreseeing the stress of their sorrow;
 Therefore I bid you depart from this sanctuary.
 Have courage to lighten your evil. (7.140.2-3).⁴¹

³⁸ See discussion below at §7.4.

³⁹ On the ‘wooden wall’ episode (7.139-144), see principally Harrison (2000a) esp. 150-51, 245; cf. Evans (1982b), Manetti (1993) 32-5, Mikalson (2003) 55-6, Blösel (2004) ch. 1; and now the acute observations of Hollmann (2011) 110-113.

⁴⁰ Fontenrose (1978) 124-28, 316-317 classes both oracles as quasi-historical, expressing deep reservations about their authenticity, noting *inter alia* the extraordinary length of the verses, their ambiguity and the extent to which they are inflected by the Croesus *logos* (125f.); *pace*, e.g., Hauvette (1984) 322-8, PW I 170, HW II 181-182, Hignett (1963) 441-5, who all class these oracles as genuine Delphic utterances. Macan II 186 interprets them as genuine responses, ‘but evidently very carefully composed and redacted.’ Cf. also Shimron (1989) 50, who mistakenly argues that the Athenians compel Apollo to ‘change’ his first oracle; in fact they simply seek a more favourable response, the first prophecy remains intact. (Indeed, as our analysis below demonstrates, the Athenians’ chosen course of action relies on an interpretation that includes *both oracles*.)

⁴¹ For an Aeschylean echo in this oracle, see Evans (1982b) 29.

Thoroughly disheartened by the foreboding tones of this first oracle, the Athenians daringly decide to act on the advice of the distinguished Delphian, Timon son of Androboulos, and seek another, more favourable prediction. In this second prophecy,⁴² the priestess of the Oracle (πρόμαντις) says:

Vainly does Pallas strive to appease great Zeus of Olympus;
 Words of entreaty are vain, and so too cunning counsels of wisdom.
 Nevertheless I will speak to you again of strength adamant words.
 All will be taken and lost that the sacred border of Cecrops
 Holds in keeping today, and the divine vale of Cithaeron;
 Yet a wood-built wall will by Zeus all-seeing be granted
 To the Triton-born, a stronghold for you and your children.
 Await not the host of horse and foot coming from Asia,
 Nor be still, but turn your back and withdraw from the foe.
 Truly a day will come when you will meet him face to face.
 Divine Salamis, you will be the death of women's sons
 When the corn is scattered, or the harvest gathered in.
 (ὦ θεῖη Σαλαμίς, ἃ πολεῖς δὲ σὺ τέκνα γυναικῶν
 ἣ που σκιδναμένης Δημήτερος ἣ συνιούσης, 7.141.3-4.)⁴³

Preferring the ‘gentler’ (ἡ πώτερα) second prophecy, Herodotus reports that they have it written down (συγγραψάμενοι) and return to Athens.⁴⁴ Then the Athenians initiate a public discussion about the meaning of the oracles,⁴⁵ with two major factions emerging: one group

⁴² The time elapsed between the two utterances is impossible to glean from the text, though note Fontenrose (1978), who asserts that they could hardly have been delivered a month apart, and believes that we are in effect dealing with a double consultation, something otherwise unattested in his list of historical consultations (125). Herodotus is explicit at 7.138.1 that the Greeks had long been fearing a Persian invasion, and thus Hands (1965) 60 suggests that in this second oracle ‘we may assume...a carefully ‘loaded’ question devised by Themistocles, including a reference to Salamis,’ precisely because a strategy of evacuation had already been planned; see also Labarbe (1957) 117-19 and Burn (1962) 257, and more generally Parker (1985) 317-18.

⁴³ Both oracles are taken from Godley’s translation, with very minor alterations.

⁴⁴ The only two other occasions where Herodotus explicitly refers to an oracle being written down: 1.47-8 (Croesus) and 8.135.2 (Mys); cf. Price (1985) 141-3, Asheri I 109: ‘at Delphi the προφήτης often dictated the response to the enquirer or gave him a copy of the text in a sealed tablet [my italics]’. See also Macan I i lxxxv: ‘It is little short of incredible that the isolated oracles, given originally *ex hypothesi*...and preserved by Herodotus *ipissimis verbis*, were simply reported to him orally. They were certainly preserved in writing at the centres’ of inspiration, and probably in copies by the cities, houses, or persons immediately concerned.’ I am less confident than Macan that Herodotus acquires his (fixed) oracles through written means, but Macan was certainly right to emphasise that oracles were indeed committed to writing.

⁴⁵ See too 7.189, where Herodotus (somewhat noncommittally) alludes to a story told that the Athenians appealed to Boreas when at their battle stations off Chalcis, after an oracle had advised

maintain that the elusive ‘wooden wall’ referred to in the second oracle is an allusion to the defensive stockade which long ago encircled the Acropolis, whereas the other group propose that it as a reference to the Athenians’ ships at Salamis. Consistent in both readings, though, is the belief that the oracle is foretelling the Athenians’ doom. Herodotus then disputes the latter suggestion, showing how the interpretation of ‘wooden wall’ as denoting ships is inconsistent with the last two lines of the second oracle (7.142.2-3).

It is at this point of profound perplexity that the reader is then introduced to Themistocles: ‘now there was a certain man of the Athenians called Themistocles son of Neocles, who had lately come into the forefront’.⁴⁶ The pre-eminent politician challenges the interpretation of the official interpreters (τοῦς χρησμολόγους), principally by referring back to another piece of phraseology in the second oracular text. ‘Divine Salamis’, he argues, is hardly indicative of some great misfortune about to befall the Hellenic nations; instead it is the Persians who are the true recipients of the god’s gloomy pronouncement. Later in Book Seven Herodotus’ readers will learn that this is a perspicuous reading of the oracle,⁴⁷ since the Persians are indeed defeated in a naval battle at Salamis. Themistocles alone successfully overcomes the opacity of the oracular response and unearths the “true” meaning of the message,⁴⁸ *and not as a result of some fortuitous event*, but as Hollmann notes, by a ‘rhetorical appeal to the

them to seek help from their son-in-law, which they collectively interpreted as meaning Boreas. (This association was made because he was the husband of Oreithuia, the daughter of the Athenian king/mythical figure Erechtheus.) The Athenians likewise consult the Oracle in Thucydides, on the eve of the Peloponnesian War (Thuc. 2.17.1, 54.2-4; 5.26.3-40); cf. Bowden (2003), (2005) who argues that oracles become more important in political debates across the fifth century, *contra* Price (1985).

⁴⁶ ἦν δὲ τῶν τις Ἀθηναίων ἀνήρ ἐς πρώτους νεωστὶ παριών, τῷ οὐ νομα μὲν ἦν Θεμιστοκλῆς, παῖς δὲ Νεοκλέος ἐκαλέετο, 7.143.1. On this phrase, see esp. Macan II ad loc., who is surely right when he says Herodotus does not discredit Themistocles, but rather introduces him ‘with a flourish of trumpets...[presented as] a brilliant and sagacious diviner...putting the experts to shame’; cf. Fornara (1971) 68, who notes a similar formula used by Xenophon to introduce himself (*An.* 3.1.4), and Barker (2009) 154, who makes the connection between Herodotus’ use of ἀνήρ and the opening word of the *Odyssey*, ἄνδρα (1.1), an ingenious suggestion that should not be pushed too far, however.

On Herodotus’ complex presentation of the enigmatic Themistocles, see Fornara (1971) 66-73, and Baragwanath (2008) 289-322 who argues that Themistocles’ opaque motivation reflects Herodotus’ wider historiographical concerns about the attainability of a “true” account, *pace* Blösel (2001) who focuses more narrowly on showing how Herodotus’ [ostensibly] bipartite portrait of Themistocles serves as a model for Athens and the perverse Delian league.

⁴⁷ Though of course Herodotus’ immediate audience would hardly have needed to wait until this later *logos* to find out if Themistocles’ judgement was correct.

⁴⁸ *Pace* Shimron (1989) 50 (who remarks inaccurately): ‘finally the Athenians decided by a show of hands what Apollo had really said’. On the obscurising language of oracular pronouncements, the different temporal perspectives of man and the gods, as well as the ultimate difference between the ‘language of man’ and the ‘language of the divine’, see Manetti (1993) 14-19, cf. Kindt (2006) 36-7 (‘the obscure language of the oracle represents and maintains the restricted nature of human knowledge and the resulting ignorance of the future, and translates these into its own linguistic signs’, 37).

internal logic and consistency of the text'.⁴⁹ So in this way, Themistocles is presented by Herodotus as having critically engaged with the two oracular texts (as Herodotus does himself at 7.142.2-3),⁵⁰ ultimately conjecturing a positive, coherent explanation which eventually wins over the Athenian populace,⁵¹ at the expense of the official interpreters (ταύτη Θεμιστοκλέος ἀποφαινομένην Ἀθηναῖοι ταῦτα σφίσι ἔγνωσαν αἰρετώτερα εἶναι μᾶλλον ἢ τὰ τῶν χρησμολόγων, 7.143.3).⁵² The authority of the (now inscribed) Delphic text is thus preserved by Herodotus' Themistocles—and indeed extended—after the Persians are routed at Salamis by the Greek allies.

A much earlier account in the *Histories* which displays a number of similar features to the Themistoclean episode in Book Seven is Herodotus' *logos* dealing with the Lycurgan reforms in Sparta, followed by the Spartans' subsequent appeal to the Oracle to ratify their colonialist ambitions (1.65-70). First, Herodotus reports that previously Sparta had been the most poorly governed (κακονομώτατοι) in Greece, but then the great reformer Lycurgus consulted the Oracle at Delphi, who instantly addressed him:

You have come to my rich temple, Lycurgus,
A man dear to Zeus and to all who have Olympian homes.
I am in doubt whether to pronounce you man or god,
But I think rather you are a god, Lycurgus. (1.65.3).

There are those, he adds, who say that the Pythia even taught him the Spartan constitution, as it still existed in Herodotus' own time, but the Spartans refute this, arguing that Lycurgus imported their current form of government from Crete. What is striking here, regardless of whether Lycurgus learnt the laws of the Spartan *polis* from the Oracle or not (and note Herodotus' distinct ambivalence on this point), is the fundamental part that the Oracle plays in the formation of the (now powerful) Spartan state. As Barker puts it, 'the oracle again

⁴⁹ Hollmann (2011) 111. In an important study on the theoretical evolution of the sign in antiquity, Manetti (1993) has well shown how this episode depicts a kind of conciliation between divination and political eloquence, before concluding that 'the adoption of conjecture [Themistocles' interpretation] and the moving away from vision [the authority of the χρησμολόγοι] allow the sign to evolve from the field of divination into that of true science' (135), cf. also Harrison (2000a) 245 who believes that democratic decision-making and divination did not have to be—and were not—incompatible.

⁵⁰ Cf. Parker (1985) 301, '[the episode is] no longer a problem of tactics or politics, but of philology'.

⁵¹ Indeed Herodotus stresses at 7.142.1: 'γνώμαι καὶ ἄλλαι πολλὰ ἐγίγοντο', cf. Barker (2009) 153, n.28 who reads this as a Thucydidean way of structuring an episode.

⁵² Cf. 1.128.2 where Astyages impales the Magian dream-interpreters (ὁ νειροπόλους) who persuaded him to let Cyrus go, an undesirable interpretation which he understands to have aided his eventual downfall.

plays a crucial explanatory role particularly in the way it points to the founding of Sparta's laws as the critical moment in their history.⁵³

However soon after these constitutional changes, the now-prosperous Spartans wish to invade Arcadian territory. Herodotus then writes that 'they sought a response from the Delphic oracle (ἐ χρηστηριάζοντο ἐ ν Δελφοῖ σι) concerning all of the Arcadian territory', to which the Pythia responds:

You ask me for Arcadia? You ask me too much; I shall not give it to you.
 There are many men in Arcadia, they who eat acorns,
 Who will hinder you. But I do not want to begrudge you all.
 I shall give you Tegea to dance with your feet,
 And its fine plain to measure with a rope. (1.66.2).

Foolishly taking this 'ambiguous oracle'⁵⁴ at face value, the Spartans forget about Arcadia and march to Tegea, 'believing they would fetter the Tegeans', though in fact they are soon routed by their Tegean opponents. At this point the reader might conclude that this is a defective oracle, but Herodotus explicitly insists on the consistency of the Oracle's pronouncement, noting that those Spartans taken as prisoners were bound in the very chains they had intended using on their Tegean captives, and as labourers they did indeed measure out the Tegean plain with ropes.⁵⁵ So in this episode, like Croesus earlier in Book One (§7.4 below), the Spartans unequivocally trust their un-deliberated reading of the oracle, and endure a bitter and sustained period of suffering as a result. The message thus conveyed by Herodotus, who subsequently presents his reader with the correct reading of the oracle, is that disputation is an essential component in the interpretation of ambiguous oracles.

Indeed Herodotus immediately follows this failed reading of an oracle with a description of the Spartan ἀγαθοεργός ('do-gooder') Lichas, who successfully interprets an oracle by utilising precisely the same sort of deliberative methodology employed by Themistocles in the 'wooden wall' episode (1.67-9). Herodotus states at the outset of this *logos* that the

⁵³ Barker (2006) 14.

⁵⁴ χρησιμῶ κιβδηλῶ. On the term κιβδηλος, see Harrison (2000a) 152, n.109; Kurke (1999) 53-5; and now (2009) *passim*, where she interprets the term within the theoretical world of coinage, ultimately arguing that 'Herodotus' use of the image of counterfeit oracles, like the dedication of counterfeit coins, registers the fundamental incommensurability or opacity of the world of the gods to the space of the city' (435). See also Barker (2006) 15, who focuses rather on the problems of focalisation here, i.e. through whose eyes should the oracle be seen as κιβδηλος, the Spartans or Herodotus?

⁵⁵ As a further layer of proof, Herodotus finishes by noting that the chains used to tie them up can still be seen in the Tegean temple of Athena Alea (αἱ δὲ πῆλαι ἐ ν τῇ σι ἐ δεδέεσθαι ἔτι καὶ ἐς ἐμὲ ἦσαν σόαι ἐ ν Τεγέῃ περὶ τὸ ν νηὸ ν τῆς Ἀλέης Ἀθηναίης κρεμάμεναι).

Spartans—who would eventually defeat the Tegeans—were for a considerable time unsure how to overcome their adversaries, and so they appeal to the Delphic Oracle, asking which god they should propitiate; to this the Pythia replies that they must bring back home the bones of Orestes. Unable to locate his sepulchre, the Spartans return to the Pythia enquiring about its precise location. Herodotus this time includes the full Delphic response:

There is a place called Tegea on the Arcadian plain,
Where powerful necessity drives two winds,
Where a blow is repelled by a blow, and misery is piled on misery,
There the life-producing earth holds Agamemnon's son,
Whom you must bring back home if you will be the ruler of Tegea. (1.67.4).

The Spartans remain unable to locate the bones even with this additional guidance. But Herodotus then turns to recounting Lichas' rather fortuitous discovery of the bones, 'utilising both fortune and wisdom' (συντυχίη χρησάμενος καὶ σοφίη, 1.68.1). After having spent time with a Tegean ironsmith, who describes to Lichas his discovery of a supra-human sized corpse, Lichas subsequently concludes that this account matches the oracle about Orestes. Herodotus then relates the evaluative process which he supposes Lichas went through:

in the smith's two bellows he found the winds, hammer and anvil were blow upon blow, and the forging of iron was woe upon woe, since (by his reckoning of this image) he figured that iron was an evil for the human race. (1.68.4).

Finally, after hearing Lichas' hypothesis, the Spartans fabricate a reason for his banishment, and later, when he befriends the Tegean smith, Lichas digs up the Oresteian bones and conveys them to Sparta. Since this time, Herodotus concludes, the Spartan *polis* has been an overwhelmingly successful military force.⁵⁶

Whilst any kind of public discourse is far less pronounced in this account compared to the Themistoclean episode discussed above, there are, as Barker shows, subtle indicators that Lichas is working on behalf of a wider interpretive community.⁵⁷ Indeed Herodotus informs us that as an ἄγαθοεργός, Lichas—like all other knights—is required to travel wherever he is directed by the state during his first year of retirement from this prestigious rank,

⁵⁶ Barker (2006) 14 'the oracle again plays a crucial explanatory role particularly in the way it points to the founding of Sparta's laws as the critical moment in their history'. Cf. the similar story in Pausanias (7.1.8), where the Spartans convey the bones of Orestes' son Teisamenos back to Sparta, after a proclamation by the Delphic Oracle.

⁵⁷ Barker (2006) 14-15.

Herodotus adding that he ‘never rested in his efforts’ (1.67.5). So during his time spent in Tegea, Lichas acts as a kind of metonymy for the Spartan *polis*, performing deeds that are ultimately intended to profit a much broader group of individuals. It is unsurprising, then, that after Lichas has extemporised his elaborate theory in front of the Spartans *en masse* (ἔφραζε Λακεδαιμονίοσσι πᾶν τὸ πρῆγμα, 1.68.5), and brought back the bones of Orestes, Sparta enjoys an unprecedented period of imperial supremacy. Just as is the case with Themistocles, an opaque oracle is successfully deciphered by a wise individual who is not driven by self-interest (as Croesus is), but by the wider interests of the community. And, significantly, this reading proves to be a reading in the strictest sense of the word, as Lichas rigorously deconstructs the fixed oracular response (or so Herodotus envisages), establishing a coherent and detailed interpretation that considers the whole response.

Alongside these sagacious readings, by far the most sustained and triumphant criticism of oracles is provided by the Herodotean inquirer himself. In Book Three, when the Samians sail to the Cycladic island of Siphnos, Herodotus offers the reader further insight into the recent prosperity of the Siphnian nation (3.57-8). He notes that their gold and silver mines had made them inexorably wealthy, and that when they had set up an elaborate treasury at Delphi, they inquired about the longevity of their current affluence. To this request the oracle warns:

ἀλλ’ ὅταν ἐν Σίφνω πρυτανία λευκὰ γένηται
 λεύκοφρύς τ’ ἀγορή, τότε δὴ δεῖ φράδμονος ἀνδρός
 φράσσασθαι ξύλινόν τε λόχον κήρυκά τ’ ἐρυθρόν.⁵⁸

But when the prytaneum on Siphnos becomes white
 And so the brows of the market, then a thoughtful man is needed
 Beware the ambush of the wood and the red herald. (3.57.3).

Ominously, Herodotus adds that the town square and town hall were decorated with Parian marble at this time, and then reports that ‘they did not understand this oracle (τοῦτον τὸν χρησμὸν οὐκ οἶόν τε ἦσαν γινῶναι), neither straightaway nor when the Samians arrived’ (3.58.1). When the Samians land on Siphnos, Herodotus notes that their ships are painted scarlet, concluding that this ‘is what the Pythia was referring to, when she warned the Siphnians to beware the ambush of wood and the red herald’ (3.58.2). Unsurprisingly, when the Siphnians subsequently enter into battle with the Samians who are found plundering their

⁵⁸ ἀλλ’ ὅταν is a common formulaic opening to verse oracles and begins those at 1.55.2, 4.77.2 and 8.77.1, cf. Fontenrose (1978) 166ff.

land, they are defeated and a fine of one hundred talents is imposed (3.58.3-4). So in this *logos*, which as Asheri has noted, reaffirms the tragic sense of history in Herodotus' *logoi* on Polycrates and Cambyses in Book Three,⁵⁹ Herodotus, like Lichas and Themistocles, succeeds at interpretation precisely because he too locates the central unity of the oracular text. This success lends Herodotus and his narrative additional authority, the narrator equalling the intellectual achievements of these successful oracular readers.

7.4 Unsuccessful Readers of Oracles

Thus far in our survey of specific occasions in Herodotus where an individual or a group of individuals interpret an oracle, we have chiefly considered those occasions where the interpreter is represented as successfully establishing the correct reading of the received prophetic utterance. In particularly spectacular examples, where the successful oracular interpretation has profound ramifications on the course of history, best illustrated by Themistocles and the 'wooden wall' oracle, it is noteworthy that Herodotus ensures that his audience recognises how this is, in no small way, due to the pursuit of a holistic and critical reading of the particular oracular text. Our investigation of oracular readers now turns to analyse those passages where the interpreter fails to establish the correct interpretation of a divine prophecy, perhaps by credulously accepting an oracle at face-value, or even by not paying heed to the entire oracular text. Just as with successful oracular interpretations, these ineffectual analyses too will leave an indelible mark on Herodotus' work, and will shed further light on Herodotus' approach to his sources.

By far the most memorable oracular episode in Herodotus (or even Greek literature?) is in fact a series of oracular predictions,⁶⁰ all integrated into Herodotus' programmatic Croesus *logos* (1.6-94).⁶¹ Croesus, the man whom Herodotus states is 'the first of whom we know to have conquered some of the Greeks and exacted tribute (from them)' (1.6.2), is irrevocably the oracular (mis)reader *par excellence* in the *Histories*.⁶² Indeed one of the most familiar

⁵⁹ Asheri II 452; cf. Asheri (2007) 38ff. on Herodotus' tragic history. Fontenrose (1978) Q114 classes this oracle as 'not genuine'.

⁶⁰ Oracles at 1.47.3, 53.3, 55.2, 85.2, 91.

⁶¹ Much of the copious bibliography for this episode is collected by Asheri (2007) 59, n.3, but see esp. the contributions by Flower (1991); Evans (1991) 44-51; Christ (1994) 189-93; Hartog (1999); Kurke (1999) esp.152-65; de Jong (1999) 245-251; Fisher (2002) 218-20; Mikalson (2003) 161-164; and Kindt (2006). In terms of approach, I am most indebted to the contribution by Kindt, in which she convincingly shows how Croesus' misreading of oracles is a 'smart historiographic tactic on Herodotus' part' (49). For a hyper-sceptical, though somewhat strained reading of Herodotus' disbelief in the Croesus oracles, see Shimron (1989) 44-9. Although Herodotus' account on Croesus was undoubtedly the definitive version of his life in antiquity, there are various other references to Croesus in ancient Greek literature, though note in particular: Pl. *P.* 1.94, B. 3.23-62, X. *Cyr.* 7.2.9-29.

⁶² So Christ (1994) 189-93, who focuses on Croesus' intellectual failure in this narrative; cf. Kindt (2006) *passim*, Mikalson (2003) 149. For the view that this introductory *logos*, because of its highly paradigmatic status, was written after Herodotus had completed his work, see Lateiner (1989) 122.

motifs repeated throughout the work is the very challenge of successfully uncovering the precise meaning of an unclear oracle, and Herodotus most neatly captures the complexity of such an exercise in his Croesus *logos*.

In the first oracle that he receives, Croesus subverts the typical rules of oracular consultation by testing the accuracy of the oracular institution itself—behaviour that only emphasises Croesus’ imprudence in the eyes of Herodotus and his readership.⁶³ It is reported that since he wished to know which Oracle is the best for seeking advice, Croesus decided to test a number of different Oracles, asking them to foretell what he was doing on the hundredth day after he had sent out various messengers to the oracular shrines. Then, singling out the Delphic response, Herodotus informs us that the Pythia spoke the following lines (1.47.3):

οἶδα δ’ ἐγὼ ψάμμουτ’ ἀριθμὸν καὶ μέτρα θαλάσσης,
καὶ κωφοῦ συνήμι, καὶ οὐ φωνεῦντος ἀκούω.
ὁ δμή μ’ ἐς φρένας ἦλθε κραταιρίνοιο χελώνης
ἐψομένης ἐν χαλκῷ ἅμ’ ἀρνείοισι κρέεσσιν,
ἧ χαλκὸς μὲν ὑπέστρωται, χαλκὸς δ’ ἐπίεσται.

I know the number of grains of sand and the size of the sea;
I understand the deaf-mute and I hear the voiceless.
The smell has come to my senses of tough-shelled tortoise
Cooked in bronze together with lambs’ meat;
Beneath it lies bronze, just as bronze covers it.⁶⁴

This response—the only one of the recorded oracles available to Herodotus⁶⁵—was more than enough to satisfy Croesus, who, we are told retrospectively, purposefully carried out some improbable action, chopping up a tortoise and some lamb’s meat and cooking them all

⁶³ A Delphic invention, according to the hyper-sceptical Parke (1984) 212. For 1.46-56 as a ‘spectacular’ example of the “trap-interview” method of inquiry in Herodotus, see Demont (2009) 190-1.

⁶⁴ On the symbolic significance of this oracle, see Dobson (1979); and for a cartographic reading, see Purves (2010) 152-4.

⁶⁵ After quoting this Pythian utterance, Herodotus reports that all the other oracles were written down and each one read by Croesus (1.48.1). It is surely worth noting the fact that Herodotus was only able to discover the written record of the Delphic response (1.47.2) and from his inquiries found no written or spoken version of the other oracles. Thus it is certain that Herodotus did not rely solely on oral informants for this episode—a *logos* which serves as a clear reminder to both Herodotus’ immediate but also later readers on the difficulties facing the historical researcher.

in a bronze vessel with a bronze lid (1.48.2).⁶⁶ While Croesus is satisfied with the Delphic response, we as readers are confronted with accounting for the entirety of the Delphic response and surely feel unease with the first two lines of the oracle, which do not appear to refer to Croesus' absurd deed. Indeed it is not until much later in Book One that a fuller range of meanings embedded in this oracle are revealed by Herodotus, namely when Croesus' mute son intervenes at the moment that a Persian soldier is on the verge of slaying Croesus, shouting out 'fellow, do not kill Croesus' (1.85.4).⁶⁷ So while Croesus may indeed have felt contented with his reading of the oracle, Herodotus' reader is already attuned both to the potential for ambiguous prophecies, and in the faulty methodology employed by Croesus at the level of interpretation. As Kindt well notes, this is in fact the first of various opportunities for Croesus to establish a more sophisticated appreciation of the differences between human and divine knowledge, but such an opportunity is missed, as he fails to appreciate that the more important message is embedded in the first two lines of the message.⁶⁸ His exclusive interest in only the second part of the oracular message stands in clear contrast to the (successful) interpretative processes of Lichas and Themistocles, who demonstrate a more judicious approach towards their respective oracles.

Following on from this unsophisticated reading of the oracle, blindly believing that Oracles speak in the same language as mortals, Herodotus refers to a second appeal made by Croesus to the Oracles of Apollo at Delphi and of Amphiaraus.⁶⁹ On this occasion, Croesus sends a double-pronged enquiry, seeking to discover whether he should send an army against the Persians and whether he should add an army of allies. To this entreaty, Herodotus records that both Oracles gave a consistent response: 'if he was to march against the Persians, he would destroy a great empire' (ἢ ν στρατεύ ηται ἐ πὶ Πέ ρσας, μεγάλη ν ἀ ρχή ν μιν καταλύ σειν, 1.53.3).⁷⁰ Croesus is said to be 'overjoyed' (ὀ περή σθη) by this response,⁷¹ and

⁶⁶ Dobson (1979) 358 unconvincingly contends that in doing this, 'Croesus is performing a symbolic act of great impropriety... setting oracular accoutrements together in a less than sacral fashion', *pace* Fontenrose (1978) 113, who notes that the historical Croesus could hardly have been so impious.

⁶⁷ *Pace* Asheri I 109-10, who argues that this is not a reference to Croesus' mute son, but a proverbial saying. This, of course, surely leaves one to question why Herodotus would incorporate this particular proverb at this precise place in the text, especially since Asheri believed that the oracle was assembled retrospectively.

⁶⁸ Kindt (2006) 39. Similarly, Dobson (1979) sees the oracle as a 'moral reprimand' (58).

⁶⁹ Note also, *FGrHist* 90 F68(8), where Nicolaus of Damascus adds an oracle of Zeus to these. It is not clear which sanctuary of Amphiaraus Herodotus means, but Asheri I 110 notes that given the relatively obscure stature of the temple at Oropus in the sixth century, Herodotus is probably referring to the sanctuary at Thebes (cf. 8.134).

⁷⁰ The obscurity of this oracle was clearly felt in antiquity, since Lucian describes it as ἄ μφῆ κης (two-edged), διπρό σωπος (two-faced), and ἀ μφιδέ ξιος (ambiguous) (*Iupp. Trag.* 43). Perhaps unsurprising given the open-endedness of the Pythia's response, some also expressed doubts about the authenticity of this ambiguous oracle; for example, Cicero, who, before comparing it to the oracle given to Pyrrhus in Ennius, asks: *cur autem hoc' credam umquam editum Croeso? aut Herodotum cur veraciorem ducam Ennio?* ('But then again, why should I believe that this oracle was ever given to

naïvely opts for a straightforward explanation, presuming that it refers to the Persian Empire, and not allowing for the possibility that it in fact denotes his own *archē*.

Herodotus makes it explicit later in the narrative, through the use of a *prolepsis*,⁷² that Croesus' understanding of the oracle was inadequate: 'mistaking the oracle, Croesus made a campaign against Cappadocia' (Κροῖ σος δὲ ἄμαρτῶν τοῦ χρησμοῦ ἔποιέ ετο στρατὴ ἦν ἔς Καππαδοκί ἦν, 1.71.1).⁷³ This insistence on Croesus' mistake reinforces the narrator's view that it is possible to uncover the true meaning of this obscure oracle. Indeed the Loxian god's rather prolix response to Croesus at the end of the narrative (1.91) emphatically states that κατὰ δὲ τὸ μαντήιον τὸ γενόμενον οὐκ ὀρθῶς Κροῖ σος μέμφεται ('as for the oracle given to Croesus, he is incorrect to find fault with it', 1.91.4). Apollo's response thus chimes with Herodotus' presentation of consistent oracles both in this episode, and elsewhere in the *Histories*.⁷⁴

Following Herodotus' digression on Spartan and Athenian history, in which he incorporates his own inquiries,⁷⁵ including the various oracles given to the Spartans (see above), Herodotus somewhat ironically reports that Croesus 'was aware of all of these matters' (ταῦτα δὴ ὧν πάντα πυνθανόμενος ὁ Κροῖ σος, 1.69.1). Indeed, as Herodotus' readers will soon learn, Croesus may well have ascertained information about the Spartans' mixed success with the Oracle, but his own continued misreadings of oracular advice undoubtedly shows that he did not learn any lessons from the Spartan examples. Indeed, several chapters later, near the climax of his account on Croesus' demise, Herodotus records that Croesus had

Croesus? And why should I hold that Herodotus is more veracious than Ennius?') (*Div.* 2.116). Such concerns have been upheld by a number of Herodotus' more recent commentators: Fontenrose (1978) 113f. labels this as 'not genuine', and Asheri I 114 asserted that 'it was clearly composed *post eventum*'. Whether the oracle is authentic or not is of course impossible to prove, but it is interesting to note that Aristotle, who displays clear reservations about the utility of prophetic pronouncements, quotes (*Rhet.* 3.5) a hexametric version of the oracle ("Κροῖ σος Ἄλυν διαβάς μεγάλην ἀρχὴν καταλύσει").

⁷¹ Kindt (2006) 40 well observes that such an excessive response demonstrates a lack of critical reflection on the part of Croesus, something which, as we have seen, does not chime with Herodotus' reflective approach towards oracular interpretation. And although Herodotus does not immediately castigate Croesus' reading of the oracle, Grethlein (2010) remarks on how readers know that the Mermniads' reign will end with Croesus [1.13.2, cf. 1.8.2], and are thus 'very likely to grasp the oracle's ambiguity and read it is a *prolepsis* of a military disaster' (197). Cf. also Flory (1978) 150 with n.8, on this along with other (ominous) cases of gratuitously immoderate joy.

⁷² For other *prolepsis* foretelling Croesus' ill-fortune in the Croesus *logos*, see de Jong (1999) 245-6.

⁷³ For other instances of 'mistaken' (ἄμαρτῶν) oracles, see 4.164.4, 9.33.2, cf. 3.65.4. On the incommensurable "economies" that are Croesus' lavish gift offerings to Apollo and Apollo's riddling oracular messages, see further Immerwahr (1966) 156, Kurke (1999) 152ff.

⁷⁴ On 'divinely ordered' events in Herodotus, see Harrison (2003) 145.

⁷⁵ For the significance of this overlap between the characters' inquiries and the historian's inquiries, see Demont (2009) 187, and *passim*.

a mute son, whom he had attempted to do everything for, even sending for advice from the Delphic Oracle. The oracular response states:

O Lydian, king of many nations (βασιλεὺς πολλῶν),⁷⁶ greatly foolish Croesus,⁷⁷
 Wish not to hear that much-desired voice in your palace,
 The voice of your son; it were better for you that it is otherwise;
 For he shall first speak on an unlucky day.⁷⁸

Failing to connect this reference to ‘an unlucky day’ (ἐν ἡματι πρῶτον ἀνόλβω) with the earlier prediction that a great empire would be destroyed, Croesus nevertheless carries out his campaign against the Persian Cyrus. But yet again Herodotus proves the efficacy of the Delphic Oracle, when Croesus’ voiceless son cries out to stop a Persian from killing his father, just as Croesus is on the verge of losing his empire (1.85.4), thus fulfilling the oracular prediction. Finally, before he turns to recounting the famous scene of Croesus at the pyre,⁷⁹ Herodotus concludes that κατὰ τὸ χρηστήριόν τε καταπαύσαντα τὴν ἐωτοῦ μεγάλην ἀρχὴν (‘the oracle was fulfilled: [Croesus] destroyed his own great empire’, 1.86.1).

Herodotus’ extended narrative on the tragic fall of the devout Croesus,⁸⁰ a man who trusted in Oracles, but did not understand the essential differences between human and non-human communication, once again illustrates how oracles are used by Herodotus to structure his historical analysis. Croesus’ foolish desire to extend his empire beyond its natural boundaries⁸¹—an important moral lesson (though not exclusively) for Herodotus’

⁷⁶ Kurke (1999) 156-7 argues that this oracle, which contains certain phrasing previously used by Solon in his reflections on material wealth and happiness (Βασιλεὺς πολλῶν, ἄνολβος; 1.32.4-5), ‘functions as a kind of précis or recapitulation in miniature of Solon’s advice’ (156).

⁷⁷ On this, and other impolite or brusque expressions in Delphic oracles, see further PW (1956) II, XXV; but note the reservations of Fontenrose (1978) 139, who argues that no “historical” response contains an address made with an unflattering adjective.

⁷⁸ 1.85.2, cf. Crahay (1956) 186-8. Herodotus is curiously silent about Croesus’ instinctive reaction after receiving this particular oracle, a noticeable contrast with Croesus’ reported elation at 1.54 and 56 (ὕπερ ἡ δόμα ‘rejoicing exceedingly’; ἡ δόμα ‘taking delight’) concerning the oracles given to him at 1.53 and 55. For a broader connection between excessive joy and destruction in Herodotus, see Lateiner (1977) esp.177ff., Flory (1978) *passim*, esp.146-7, 150, 153, Chiasson (1983); cf. Menander, *Monost.* 88: Γέλως ἄκαιρος κλαυθμὸς τῶν παραίτιος.

⁷⁹ Cf. Bacchylides 3.58ff. For a useful discussion on the difficulty of assessing Croesus’ fate, due to the inconsistent (Greek and non-Greek) accounts of his life, see Asheri I ad.141-2.

⁸⁰ On the “Greekness” of Croesus’ religious world (as depicted by Herodotus), see Mikalson (2003) 161-4.

⁸¹ On Herodotus’ critical view of imperialism, see Alonso-Nuñez (1988) 130.

contemporary Athenian readers⁸²—is mirrored by his foolish and uncritical treatment of oracular predictions. But in contrast to Croesus, Herodotus' narrative shows that he is able to uncover the true value of each prediction; in the end, as Francois Hartog has well observed, 'the whole history of Croisos can be understood as a long *exemplum* or, as we might describe it, a great historical oracle.'⁸³ Ironically, then, oracles are an inadequate source of knowledge for Croesus, unable as he is to read them, but prove a vital source for Herodotus in his didactic presentation on the instability of human fortune.⁸⁴

In another no less extreme example whereby a powerful leader will face utter destruction, Herodotus shows how Arcesilaus of Cyrene's downfall, like that of Croesus, was predicated on the deficiency of his critical reflection after receiving an oracle. Having fled from his native Cyrene to Samos after being defeated in a series of civil struggles, Arcesilaus collects a large force of men, and proceeds to Delphi, wishing to discover the likelihood of a successful return to Cyrene. The priestess, Herodotus reports, stated that

For the lifetimes of four Battuses and four Arcesilauses, eight generations of men, Loxias grants to your house the kingship of Cyrene; however he recommends you to try no more than this. So you, return to your country and live there in peace. But if you find the oven full of amphorae, do not bake the amphorae, but let them go unharmed. And if you bake them in the oven, do not go into the tidal place; for if you do, then you shall be killed yourself, as well as the finest bull. (4.163.2-3).⁸⁵

However, after making his way back to Cyrene, and re-acquiring the supreme command with the help of his Samian supporters, Herodotus ominously warns that Arcesilaus 'forgot the oracle (τοῦ μαντηίου οὐκ ἔμνηστο), and sought justice against his opponents for his flight into exile' (4.164.1). Some of the Cyrenaeans are sent to be executed in Cyprus, while others

⁸² For Herodotus' complex presentation of (immoderate) Athenian imperialism in the Histories, see, *inter alia*, Strasburger (1955); Fornara (1971); Redfield (1985) 114-5; Ostwald (1991); Stadter (1992); Moles (1996) and esp. (2002); van der Veen (1996) 90-110; Payen (1997) 348-9; Clarke (1999) 223; Fowler (2003); Harrison (2007) 57-9, (2009); Bowie (2012) 274, *contra* Gould (1989) 116-20, who doubts the original audience read such a message in Herodotus' work. For the previous *communis opinio* that Herodotus was primarily an admirer of fifth-century Athens, see the bibliography listed at Moles (2002) 33, nn.2-3. For a fine discussion on the relationship between the intention of an author and the meaning of a text, see Skinner (2002) 90-102.

⁸³ Hartog (1999) 188.

⁸⁴ On the instability of human fortune, see esp. Harrison (2000a) ch.2.

⁸⁵ For an attempt to restore the original(?) hexametric lines, see PW II, 31. On this, and the other Cyrenean oracles in Herodotus, see esp. the sensitive reading in Giangiulio (2001) 125-7, who well remarks on the inconsistent quotation of oracles in Herodotus' description of the Cyrene's foundation, which, combined with the lack of evidence for a written collection of Battiad oracles or indeed a chresmological poem on early Cyrenean history, leads him to surmise that Herodotus no doubt had accessed a set of oracular texts, but these had been 'echoed, complemented, or even manipulated by oral forms of communication and transmission' (127).

flee into the tower of Aglomachus, which Arcesilaus then piles wood around and sets fire to. Only then perceiving that this was what the oracle meant when it stated that he should not bake amphorae in the oven, Herodotus adds that Arcesilaus decides not to go back to Cyrene, believing that this was the ‘tidal place’ where he was prophesised to die. Herodotus then concludes this digression:

Now he had a wife who was a relation of his, a daughter of Alazir king of the Barcaeans, and Arcesilaus went to Alazir; but men of Barce and some of the exiles from Cyrene were aware of him and killed him as he walked in the town, and Alazir his father-in-law too. So Arcesilaus whether with or without meaning to missed the meaning of the oracle (ὁ μαρτῶν τοῦ χρησμοῦ) and fulfilled his destiny (4.164.4).

As in the Croesus episode, the Delphic Oracle predicts the end of a dynastic power,⁸⁶ reinforcing Herodotus’ view on the rise and fall of great powers (cf. 1.5.4). And just as is the case with Croesus, Arcesilaus does not pay due caution to the oracle; indeed, when he later attempts to avoid a tragic outcome by figuring out what is meant by ‘tidal place’, he assumes a far too rigid interpretation which ultimately proves to be incorrect. While it may seem surprising that Arcesilaus should be so unfortunate when he makes a concerted attempt to produce a sound reading of the oracle, it is noteworthy that he does so as an individual, like Croesus; a stark contrast to the successful, democratic reading of the ‘wooden wall’ oracle provided by Themistocles. So it is not necessarily enough merely to read the oracular text individually, one must be prepared to do so in a wider consortium of individuals, so that numerous voices may battle for the correct reading. For Herodotus’ use of oracles reinforces his wider views on *historiē* and his genre as discussed elsewhere in this study, namely the importance of providing multiple versions of an event with which the reader must grapple.⁸⁷ Over-confident readings that pay little heed to alternative explanations are anathema to the historian.

The cases of Arcesilaus and Croesus have both illustrated in dramatic fashion the tragic consequences of exercising un-curtailed power, as well as the necessity of understanding the deep rift between human and divine language. Such themes are repeated elsewhere in the *Histories*, for instance, in Herodotus’ account on the downfall of the sacrilegious Persian

⁸⁶ For analogous examples elsewhere in Herodotus where an oracle warns of the instability of power, see the oracular predictions at 1.13.2 and 5.92ε.2 in which the Mermnae and Cypselidae respectively are warned of the impending destruction of their dynasties.

⁸⁷ Cf. Fowler (1996) 79ff.

king Cambyses (3.61-66).⁸⁸ Having killed his brother Smerdis, after a dream warned him that a messenger would come to him with the news that Smerdis was sat on the royal throne with his head touching the sky (3.30.2),⁸⁹ Cambyses ultimately learns that this is really a reference to the Magus Smerdis (3.64.1). But when he subsequently sets out to thwart the usurpation of his throne, Herodotus reveals that Cambyses' unsheathed sword pierced his thigh.⁹⁰ Fearful for his life, Cambyses discovers that he is in a town named Ecbatana, the very place where the Oracle at Buto prophesised he would die.⁹¹ While Cambyses had initially misinterpreted this to mean Ecbatana in Media rather than a homonymous village in Syria,⁹² Herodotus remarks that 'having [now] understood the meaning of the oracle (συλλαβὼν δὲ τὸ θεοπρόπιον), he said: "here, Cambyses the son of Cyrus, is destined to die"' (3.64.5).⁹³ So Herodotus once again incorporates an oracle into his narrative, in order to show how presumptuous interpretations can have dire consequences. Indeed the stress on Cambyses' subsequent reinterpretation of the oracle ('having now understood the meaning of the oracle'), not only upholds the validity of the original verse—both in the eyes of Cambyses and Herodotus' readership—it also reinforces Herodotus' view that one should apply a cautious and reflective approach to oracular interpretation.

Alongside these significant episodes in which Herodotus describes a subversive or misjudged reading of an oracle, Herodotus presents other types of oracle stories, for instance, those in which an individual or group of individuals fail to act on a divine message. Near the beginning of Book Eight, Herodotus discusses the wretched fate of the Euboeans, since they had brought trouble upon themselves for ignoring an oracle of Bacis. The Oracle told them:

φράζεο, βαρβαρόφωνος ὄταν ζυγὸν εἰς ἄλλα βάλλῃ

⁸⁸ Herodotus provides an extended account on Cambyses' sacrilegious behaviour in Egypt at 3.27-37, for which see further Asheri II 433-4. Cf. also the fine discussion in Roveri (1963) 39-41, who well brings out the paradigmatic nature of this episode: 'Il *lógos* non è dunque solo la caratteristica di un gusto narrativo, ma il modo in cui la ἱστορία di Erodoto si esprime, disponendo i dati della ἀύτοψία e della ἀκοή secondo una logica di paradigma, in cui la *paideia* del ἱστορῶν può manifestarsi in tutta la sua varietà' (41).

⁸⁹ Hollmann (2011) 85 rightly notes the acoustic nature of this dream, which in turn enables Cambyses to assign the referent Smerdis to his own brother. For an interesting discussion on Cambyses' conflicting motives in this scene, see Baragwanath (2008) 118.

⁹⁰ To which Herodotus adds ironically τροματισθεῖς δὲ κατὰ τοῦτο τῆ ἀύτῳ πρότερον τὸν τῶν Αἰγυπτίων θεὸν Ἄπιν ἔπλεξε, cf. Harrison (2000a) 85-6. For other instances of a thigh wound in the *Histories*, see e.g. 3.78.2; 6.5.2, 134.2.

⁹¹ See also 2.83, 152.3, 155; for this oracle cf. Lloyd II 270 ff., III 140ff.

⁹² Harrison (2000a) 139 remarks well on the 'additional authority' that this misunderstood detail offers the oracle story.

⁹³ Asheri II 462: 'the interpretation of the oracle is typically Herodotean: it seeks to show the infallibility of oracular responses, but also the deficiency of the human faculty of interpretation and the inevitability of fate', cf. Kirchberg (1965) 30-2.

βύβλινον, Εὐ βοίης ἄ πέχειν πολυμηκάδας αἶ γας.⁹⁴

Whenever a foreign-voiced man should strike the sea with his yoke of papyrus,
Be sure to lead your much-bleating goats far away from Euboea. (8.20.2).

The reference here is, of course, to Xerxes' earlier bridging of the Hellespont (7.54-6), but the Euboeans, who lack Herodotus' panoptical view of these affairs, naïvely regard Bacis' oracle as negligible. Thus Herodotus concludes this account in somewhat didactic tones, evoking his Croesus *logos*: 'since they made no use of these verses (τοῖ σι ἔ πεσι, cf. 2.116.6 [see §4.3 above]), both in their current evils and those soon to follow, it happened that they fell upon the greatest amount of suffering.'⁹⁵ Once again, Herodotus is emphasising the importance of full and critical engagement with an oracle; failure to do so can have catastrophic implications.

For our final example, in the last book of the *Histories* Herodotus relates another nugatory reading of an oracle; on this occasion by the Persian general Mardonius before the battle of Plataea (9.42-3). Mardonius, whom Herodotus has already reported on a separate occasion to have sought the advice of a number of Oracles (his selection of oracular centres reminiscent of Croesus and his Oracle test in Book One, see above),⁹⁶ quizzes the leaders of the Persian battalions and the generals of the (medising) Greek troops to establish if anyone knows of a prophecy (*logion*)⁹⁷ that foretells the Persians' doom in Greece. Since nobody responds,⁹⁸ Mardonius then recounts the details of an oracle that he had himself ascertained, predicting that the Persians would sack the temple at Delphi and then face destruction (9.42.3). Subsequently he is able to persuade his men that by avoiding this site, they will be able to avoid ruin and conquer the Greeks.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ Bowie, ad loc. persuasively suggests that πολυμηκάδας, a hapax in Greek literature, is a reference to the numerous languages spoken in the Persian army.

⁹⁵ τούτοις οὐ δὲ ν τοῖ σι ἔ πεσι χρησαμένοις ἐ ν τοῖ σι τότε παρεῖσι τε καὶ προσδοκίμοις κακοῖ σι παρῆ ν σφι συμφορῆ χρῆ σθαι πρὸ ς τὰ μέγιστα.

⁹⁶ 8.133-6. On the various different oracular centres that Mardonius consults, see Bowie ad loc. with bibliography.

⁹⁷ For other uses of *logion* denoting prophecy, see Powell (1938) s.v. λό γιον.

⁹⁸ Herodotus remarks that 'all of those addressed were silent, some not knowing of the oracles, others knowing them but did not consider themselves free to speak out' (9.42.2); cf. Marincola & Flower, 185: 'noisy Greek debate about the meaning of an oracle [e.g. the 'wooden wall' episode]...is here replaced by the stony silence of the Persians.' See also Mikalson (2003) 157, who lists this with a number of other episodes in Herodotus whereby the Persians (elsewhere represented as un-Greek in their religious beliefs and systems) are 'acting and thinking in very Greek ways'.

⁹⁹ This however appears to contradict Herodotus' earlier account on the Persian attack on Delphi in 480 (8.35-9), so HW II 306-7. How & Wells' tentative suggestion that Mardonius might only have learnt of this oracle in 480-79 after he sent the Carian guide Mys to consult several oracles (8.133-6) would certainly be consistent with the Herodotean account, cf. Marincola & Flower, 185-6.

Immediately following this scene Herodotus offers an especially terse and damning assessment of Mardonius' judgement. He writes:

I know that this oracle (τοῦτον δ' ἔγωγε τὸν χρησμόν),¹⁰⁰ which Mardonius said referred to the Persians, was in fact made in reference to the Illyrians and the army of the Enchelees, not the Persians.¹⁰¹

In a clear display of his own superior knowledge and understanding of oracular language, Herodotus continues (9.43.1-2):

There is, however, a prophecy made by Bacis concerning this battle: "By Thermodon's stream and grassy Asopus, will be a gathering of Greeks and the foreign-tongued cry; there beyond their allotted share and portion many bow-bearing Medes shall fall, when this day of destruction arrives".¹⁰² *I know that these [verses] and other similar ones given by Musaeus referred to the Persians* (ταῦτα μὲν καὶ παραπλήσια τούτοισι ἄλλα Μουσαίῳ ἔχοντα οἷδα ἐς Πέρσας).

This *logos* is a quintessential example of how oracles function in Herodotus: it re-emphasises the difficulty in oracular interpretation; it reiterates Herodotus' faith in oracles as accurate sources of (past, present, and future) knowledge; and it indicates to Herodotus' readers the untapped breadth of his personal knowledge of myriad oracles ('I know these [verses] and other similar ones'). Given the lessons learnt elsewhere in the *Histories* about the potential gains made from a close and considered response to a prophetic utterance, such an overt and confident display of oracular knowledge ultimately serves to delineate the authority of the historian. For Herodotus, oracles are thus an indispensable source for doing history, enabling him to transcend the myopic perspective of many of his protagonists; they provide Herodotus with a greater vantage point, allowing him to consider local and panoptic perspectives, traversing different points on the timeline of history much more freely.

7.5 Oracles as Proof

We have seen above how Herodotus' *Histories* is often actively engaged in the interpretation of oracles, pronouncements that range from the very clear to the very opaque. Whilst it is

¹⁰⁰ Cf. 1.20 ('I myself know this, having heard it from the Delphians').

¹⁰¹ Compare Pherecydes of Athens, *FGrHist* 3 F 41e=EGM F 41c, who connects the same oracle with a different occasion. This is a rare example where it is demonstrable that a particular oracle was known before Herodotus.

¹⁰² On the possible Homeric correspondences in this oracle, see Marincola & Flower, 187-8.

true that many oracles in Herodotus are indeed interpreted successfully,¹⁰³ it is also the case from the passages discussed that the more ambiguous an oracle is, the more likely that its recipient has failed to establish a correct reading. It is precisely at these moments that Herodotus extemporises most explicitly about both the manifold problems of oracular interpretation, and the importance for his own genre of establishing a coherent reading of these texts. Moreover, it has been demonstrated how Herodotus selects from important oracular collections, namely those of Bacis and Musaeus, sometimes quoting from them in an ostentatious show of the sources available to him.

Before I move on to considering the wider significance of the myriad oracular sessions that appear in Herodotus, it is important to consider further the significance of oracles as a form of rhetorical proof in the *Histories*. Just as Herodotus' inclusion of certain inscriptions might be intended to supplement a particular theory, e.g. the use of Cadmeian inscriptions to explain the Phoenician origins of the Greek language (5.56-61, see §3.5 above), so too certain Herodotean references to oracles appear to act as an additional proof of a particular story or variant account which he believes to be true. Near the start of the *Aigyptios logos*, at the centre of his extended thesis on the geography of Egypt—a section rich with Herodotean proofs and polemic¹⁰⁴—Herodotus lists an oracle in support of his view that Egypt is considerably larger than “the Ionians” posit (2.18).¹⁰⁵

Evidence in support of my opinion that Egypt is the size I show it to be in this account can also be found in an oracle delivered by Ammon, which I learned about after I had formed my own opinions about Egypt.¹⁰⁶ (μαρτυρέει δέ μοι τῆς γνώμης, ὅτι τοσαύτη ἐστὶ Αἴγυπτος ὅσηντινὰ ἐγὼ ἀποδείκνυμι τῷ λόγῳ, καὶ τὸ Ἄμμωνος χρηστήριον γενόμενον: τὸ ἐγὼ τῆς ἐμεωτοῦ γνώμης ὕστερον περὶ Αἴγυπτον ἐπιθύμην.) For the citizens of Marea and Apis, living in the part of Egypt which borders Libya, considering themselves Libyan and not Egyptian, and disliking the religious law that impugned them from eating cows' meat, sent to Ammon saying they had nothing of or no part of Egypt: they said that they lived outside the Delta and did

¹⁰³ Portents also are typically interpreted successfully, cf. Hollmann (2011) 247. In contrast, dreams—almost exclusively attached to non-Greeks in Herodotus—seldom lead to a positive outcome; see further Hollmann (2011) 75-93.

¹⁰⁴ For Herodotus' argumentation in this excursus, see further Thomas (2000) 176-8; cf. too Lloyd (2007) 236, 246-262 *passim*.

¹⁰⁵ The Ionians, whom Herodotus first objects against at 2.15, had almost certainly written on this topic, as can be seen from Hecataeus, cf. §2.4 above. For additional, more elusive figures even than Hecataeus who may have influenced this account, see Lloyd I 127ff.

¹⁰⁶ Similarly, 2.104.1. Cf. 1.78 where Herodotus reports a foreboding omen seen by Croesus, and its subsequent interpretation by the Telmessians, who correctly interpret it as a sign of the conquest of Lydia. Hence the Telmessians' reading reinforces the accuracy of Herodotus' preceding narrative.

not share in the customs of its people, and they wanted to be able to eat all types of food. But the god did not allow them to do this, for he said that all the land watered by the Nile was part of Egypt, and all are Egyptians who live in cities below Elephantine and drink out of the river. *Such was the oracle delivered to them.*

So Herodotus discovers an oracle in which the god Ammon at some point earlier told the citizens of Marea and Apis that Egypt consists of all those places which are watered by the Nile. This oracle does not function as Herodotus' only proof on the matter, however, as prior to this Herodotus also argues by way of analogy, stating that Egypt is all the land inhabited by Egyptians, 'just as Cilicia is inhabited by Cilicians, and Assyria by Assyrians' (2.17.1). Herodotus nonetheless determinedly points to the confirmatory nature of Ammon's declaration, confidently crystallising his previously formed γνώμη that Egypt is far bigger than the Ionians hold.¹⁰⁷ In this way, we can see how Herodotus as narrator finds coherence in an oracle, and ostentatiously applies it as a source that ultimately chimes with his own views on a controversial matter.¹⁰⁸

A passage which operates in a similar fashion to this is one that involves the *logopoios* Aesop (2.134).¹⁰⁹ Herodotus attempts to discredit those who argue that the Thracian courtesan Rhodopis was responsible for the construction of the Egyptian king Mycerinus' pyramid.¹¹⁰ As we have seen elsewhere in this study, Herodotus starts by refuting 'those Greeks who do not speak correctly' (φασὶ Ἑλλήνων...οὐκ ὁρθῶς λέγοντες, 2.134.1), arguing that Rhodopis, rather than living in the age of Mycerinus, was in fact a contemporary of the king Amasis—much later than the age in which the pyramids were constructed. And

¹⁰⁷ Thomas (2000) 178 admits that while Herodotus (significantly) points to the results of his *historiē* (i.e. his discovery of an oracle) 'after [author's italics] forming his own opinion (*gnōme*)', the god is brought in 'presumably in case there could any longer be any doubt about the matter'. Hence Thomas implicitly recognises that not all proofs are equal for Herodotus' contemporary readership, and that an oracle will likely be considered more unequivocal than Herodotus' opinion.

¹⁰⁸ But note, interestingly, that Herodotus provides no indication of whether he is relying here on somebody else's reading of this oracle, perhaps passed down to him by one of his Egyptian informants, or if indeed he is presenting the fruits of his own interpretation of the prophecy. Even so, regardless of the manner in which Herodotus discovers this message, it is the oracle itself that is most supportive in developing Herodotus' central thesis.

¹⁰⁹ Though Herodotus does not cite any Aesopic fables, it is perfectly clear that he was familiar with such "low" forms of exposition. A particularly illuminating example is the *logos* Cyrus recounts to the Ionians and Aeolians (1.141), about the flute-player who, in failing to entice the fish of the sea through his music, captures a great multitude of fish in a net, before remarking proverbially on their fickle nature: παῦσθέ μοι ὀρχεόμενοι, ἐπεὶ οὐδ' ἐμέο αὐλέοντος ἠθέλετε ἐκβαίνειν ὀρχεόμενοι (1.141.2). The story not only appears in the Aesopic corpus but also fits into other Greek and Near-Eastern story-patterns, for which see further Ceccarelli (1993). On the complex and subtle influence of Aesop in Herodotus' work, see the thought-provoking ideas expounded by Kurke (2011) ch.11.

¹¹⁰ For other instances whereby Herodotus repudiates a Greek tradition in his *Aigyptios logos*, see 2.2.5, 16.1, 45.1-2; on Herodotus' elaborate argumentation, which runs over into 2.135 (where Herodotus shows that Sappho was another contemporary of Rhodopis) see also Lloyd III 85-6.

he continues that she was also a slave of Iadmon, ‘a fellow-slave with Aesop the *logopoios*’ (2.134.3). Now in full polemical mode, Herodotus writes:

καὶ γὰρ οὗτος Ἰάδμωνος ἐγένετο, ὡς διέδεξε τῆδε οὐκ ἦκιστα: ἐπεὶτε γὰρ πολλάκις κηρυσσόντων Δελφῶν ἐκ θεοπροπίου ὅς βούλοιο ποινήν τῆς Αἰσώπου ψυχῆς ἀνελέσθαι, ἄλλος μὲν οὐδεὶς ἐφάνη, Ἰάδμωνος δὲ παιδὸς παῖς ἄλλος Ἰάδμων ἀνείλετο. οὕτω καὶ Αἴσωπος Ἰάδμωνος ἐγένετο.

For [Aesop] too was a slave of Iadmon, as this, by no means least, shows plainly: when the Delphians, following an oracle, issued a lot of orders for anyone who wished to accept compensation for the taking of Aesop’s life, nobody would accept it other than the son of Iadmon’s son. Thus, Aesop was also Iadmon’s [slave]. (2.134.3-4).

While Herodotus does not quote the oracle directly here as he does with Ammon’s oracle, it is nevertheless clear that Herodotus ends this argumentative chapter with his clearest proof that Iadmon was the master of Aesop—one that involves a Delphic proclamation. By making this connection between Aesop (whom he has proved to be the slave of Iadmon) and Rhodopis, Herodotus is now justly able to assert that people are wrong in making Rhodopis the builder of Mycerinus’ pyramid. And although less ostentatious than his use of oracles elsewhere, the oracle forms a crucial part of his arsenal of firm proofs in this particular narrative.

A further piece of oracular proof can be found in his parenthetical remarks on the Delian earthquake (6. 98).¹¹¹ After Datis, the Persian general responsible for the sacking of Eretria, left the uninhabited island of Delos, Herodotus states that the island was shaken by an earthquake, something which, he has been assured, had never happened either before or right up until his time (καὶ πρῶτα καὶ ὕστατα μέχρι ἐμεῦ σεισθεῖσα). He then posits that this was an omen sent by the god to warn people of the immense troubles about to befall them, namely the Persian wars, as well as the (then current) inter-*poleis* quarrels within the Greek world. To further solidify this interpretation, he adds that there was also an oracle which had been recorded (χρεσμῶν ἧν γεγραμμένον) saying: ‘and I will shake Delos, previously unmoved’. So here Herodotus explicitly appeals to a piece of written oracular

¹¹¹ Cf. Thuc. 2.8.3, where this earthquake is dated not to 490 but in 432 on the eve of the Peloponnesian War. Hornblower II 124 cautiously reads this as an instance of Thucydidean polemic, but insists that we should resist the automatic assumption that it is directed against Herodotus. On oracles in Thucydides, see Marinatos (1981), Dover (1988), Hornblower I 206, 270, 307, Bowden (2005) 73-7.

evidence, precisely because it re-affirms his view that the true cause of this environmental disaster was indeed a divine one.

7.6 Historiographical Implications

The various sections of this chapter have emphasised the subtle use of oracular literature and oracular stories in his *Histories*. Oracles offer the historian the opportunity to reflect on the nature of his inquiry, reaffirm the accuracy of a particular *logos*, as well as emphasise the potential gains for the individual or community of individuals that is willing to adopt a critical and open approach to divination. Indeed, as Barker's analysis well shows, it is striking how often obscure oracles are successfully interpreted in democratic (and often Greek) contexts.¹¹²

Furthermore, the cases of Themistocles and, perhaps most strikingly, Croesus, acutely demonstrate how Herodotus and his future readers must fully grapple with the complexities and ambiguities attached to the oracular text, ultimately trying to establish its true significance. But as the example of the Siphnian episode well illustrates, Herodotus intentionally writes a number of fixed oracular verses into his text, which, though not correctly interpreted by an individual or group of individuals, demonstrates the possibility of establishing a correct and stable reading.¹¹³ In doing so, Herodotus is able to reassert the authority of the prophetic word and lend additional authority to his own work, thus further legitimatising the validity of his historical project.

¹¹² Barker (2006) *passim*.

¹¹³ On the wider issue of translating a text into a more familiar vernacular, without detracting from its original splendour, see the stringent remarks of Nabokov (1955) (in Venuti [2000]), e.g.: 'I want such [copious] footnotes and the absolutely literal sense, with no emasculation and no padding – I want such sense and such notes for all the poetry in other tongues that still languishes in "poetical" versions, begrimed and beslimed by rhyme' (83).

Chapter 8

Inquiries

We joyfully detach from the work of Herodotus any and every fragment which is, or may be, derived from the direct evidence of his own sense. But these grains of gold are of necessity...comparatively scanty.

— Reginald Macan¹

Nothing that precedes the *Histories* can prepare the reader for Herodotus' unique work. But equally, his achievement can only truly be appreciated by recognising the way in which he absorbs and transcends his influences. Our investigation into intertextual and allusive relationships in Herodotus has illustrated the danger of reading the *Histories* without bearing in mind the wide range of literary traditions which were at Herodotus' disposal. Though his text is relatively sparing in terms of direct allusions to his sources of information, our reading of his more opaque allusions to a number of different genres and texts has illustrated the diverse body of material which Herodotus interacts with in forming his work.

The nuanced interaction with different types of text in the *Histories* generates considerable authority for the narrator, since this often allows him to juxtapose their methods and approaches to the past against his own superior account. Although Homer is aware of the true version of Helen's whereabouts, he can only obliquely relate this to his audience, bound as he is by certain generic constraints that are expected of epic poetry. Simonides' heroisation of the recent war-dead at Plataea is mirrored by Herodotus' account of collective Hellenic *kleos*, but the historian's inclusion of unflattering traditions concerning the Corinthians' behaviour during the Persian Wars—not to mention the many other squabbling, self-interested Greek *poleis*—highlights that his account is non-partisan, striving first and foremost to present the truth, as unearthed by his painstaking inquiries.

But Herodotus is clearly no historian in any modern sense of the word; his interaction with other literary traditions does not appear in a way that is expected of an academic monograph. He seldom cites authors and their works, though it is patently clear from our investigation that his knowledge of poetic, inscriptional, prose and oracular texts is substantial. Nevertheless what is clear with Herodotean historiography is that the reader is expected to

¹ I.i lxxxviii.

grapple with the problems of *text*.² For an inscription like the Croesan dedication at Delphi might say that it is a Lacedaemonian dedication, but further research (i.e. *historiē*) reveals that the text is falsely inscribed. And an oracular text might well be understood by many of Herodotus' protagonists to suggest one particular meaning, but Herodotus repeatedly demonstrates that numerous interpretations fall short of the exacting criteria needed to succeed (as his work does) at locating the inner logic of these divine texts. Herodotus' repeated signalling of the profound intellectual challenges presented by texts does not therefore mean that he questions their utility as a tool for conducting *historiē*; on the contrary, they allow him to establish an authoritative narrative persona, since he is not so easily fooled by such (potentially) ambiguous items. Indeed he even relates at various parts of his work, such as when refers to the Cadmeian inscriptions, that a text may even provide a distinctive and compelling form of proof for the historian.

There is still much that the reader will never know about how Herodotus' *Histories* was compiled and the manner in which he acquired his information, but our study consistently demonstrates that it is necessary not to under-estimate the complex interaction with textual traditions in his work. It may well be that some (or even many) of Herodotus' *legetai* statements are a genuine reflection of the fact that he conducted interviews with various figures and communities, but this should not lead us to conclude that he was an oral historian in the way that is typically conceived. Herodotus' age was one of widespread intellectual curiosity, and also one that was the inheritor of a long and diverse literary heritage—the Greeks' poetic heritage was still alive and well, for example, in the tragic works of Sophocles and Euripides. These different literary traditions played a significant role in crafting popular memory, and Herodotus is consciously committed to producing a work that will outperform them all vis-à-vis the accurate preservation of the ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά of humankind. This inquiry into Herodotus' own inquiries stands thus as a modest testament to his towering intellectual achievement: Historiography.

² Cf. the classic series of essays in Barthes (1984), esp. 'Le discours de l'histoire'.

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