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The Anachronical Structure of Herodotus' *Histories*[*]

Irene de Jong

THE PROBLEM: DISORDER

One of the most memorable scenes in the film *The English Patient* is when Almásy, having left behind his wounded lover Katherine in a cave in the desert, finally reaches a village and asks an English officer for a car so he can go back and save her. When the officer refuses, he desperately begs him to give him a car, any car: 'just give me the fucking car.' Not many viewers will realize that this scene in fact has been subtly prepared for in the first half of the film, during the first meeting between Almásy and Katherine. They are talking about literature, and Almásy claims that he does not need many adjectives: 'A thing is still a thing no matter what you place in front of it. Big car, slow car, chauffeur-driven car—still a car.' These words will acquire a dramatic significance through the events which follow.[1] In view of the important role which Herodotus' *Histories* plays in *The English Patient*, it seems appropriate to reverse the situation and use that story as a lead-in for a discussion of the *Histories*.

This example of subtle preparation in *The English Patient* well illustrates one of the reasons why the film is such a success. The story is beautifully constructed, all details slowly acquiring their significance, just as the identity of the English patient is gradually revealed. Measured against this standard Herodotus' *Histories* would seem to cut a poor figure, with its numerous digressions and

[*] I wish to thank J. V. Morrison and S. R. van der Mije for their comments, and Mrs B. A. Fasting for her correction of my English.

[1] I owe this observation to Susanna Morton Braund, who also kindly provided me with the exact wording (from *The English Patient: A Screenplay by Anthony Minghella* (London 1997), 24–5 and 148–9). The link between the two scenes is not found in Ondaatje's novel.

its lack of a clear structure. This has created a 'Herodotean question', almost as hotly debated as the famous 'Homeric question'. (The Homeric parallel, invoked here for the first time, will reappear as a leitmotif throughout my entire paper.) In the case of the historian, too, we have on the one hand analysts like Jacoby, who contend that Herodotus developed from a geographer and an ethnographer into a historian, and that his work consists of a series of independently conceived *logoi*, and on the other hand unitarians like Pohlenz, who claim that from the very beginning Herodotus aimed at writing a history of the confrontation between Greeks and barbarians, and that the various *logoi* were written as parts of that whole.[2] In 1971 Fornara cut the Gordian knot by suggesting that in fact both positions are valid: 'The unitarian view provides a proper estimate of Herodotus' skill at the final stage of his career. It is the necessary complement of a developmental hypothesis such as that of Jacoby and his followers whose purpose is to diagnose the problematic features in Herodotus' work. The one describes what we possess; the other attempts to explain how what we do possess could have come into the world.'[3]

But even a unitarian critic who merely sets out to describe 'what we possess' (without at the same time making claims, as Pohlenz does, about 'how it came into the world') is still faced with the problem of the structure of the *Histories*. In his admirable introduction to Herodotus, Gould graphically describes the situation as follows: '. . . to confront the detail of Herodotean narrative, to attempt to grasp its scale and shape and see order in the mass, is a mind-blowing and overwhelming experience. The first impression one has is of being buried under an avalanche of facts and at the same time utterly lost in a landscape bewilderingly criss-crossed and looped by stories without discernible paths or sense of structured connection.'[4] In other words, Herodotus, consummate storyteller where the individual stories are concerned, appears to have failed on the level of the story of his *Histories* as a whole.

Of course, numerous attempts have been made to find method in the madness of Herodotus' material. Gould himself suggests that the stories are connected via 'personal relationships' (kinship, revenge, obligation, guest-friendship, and so on).[5] To take one

[2] Jacoby (1913), Pohlenz (1937). A summary of the debate in Fornara (1971), 1–23 and Cobet (1971), 14–44.

[3] Fornara (1971), 12–13.

[4] Gould (1989), 42.

[5] Ibid. 42–62.

example, when Thrasybulus, tyrant of Miletus, is helped by Periander, tyrant of Corinth, the very fact that the latter is the former's *xeinos* (friend) suffices to briefly switch attention to him and insert the story about Arion, which took place during his reign (1. 19–25). Next we have Immerwahr, another important name in this debate, who contends that the *logoi* of the *Histories* are linked by recurrent thought-patterns, for example, that of 'the rise and fall of rulers'.[6] Finally there is Pohlenz himself, who in the course of his unitarian defence of Herodotus lays bare a number of unifying devices.[7] I mention here those which are relevant to the macro-structure of the *Histories*: (1) explicit cross-references (e.g. 'the treasure [of Croesus] was very great, as I have shown in the first of my *logoi*': 5. 36); (2) flashback and foreshadowing (e.g. '. . . Harpagus took over command—the Harpagus who was entertained by Astyages the Median king at an unlawful feast, and who helped to win the kingship for Cyrus': 1. 162); and (3) mention of a detail whose relevance only later becomes clear (e.g., the robbery by the Samians of a Spartan bowl in 1. 40 will become relevant in 3. 47, when the event is seized upon as a reason to declare war).

ANOTHER SOLUTION: 'ORDER'

In this paper I will continue along the lines set out by Pohlenz. For his three devices all have to do with the narratological category 'time', in particular, 'order'. Order is one of the oldest and best-researched aspects of narratology. It goes back to the Russian Formalists, who distinguished between 'fabula' (the material in chronological order) and 'sjuzet' (the material in the order in which we encounter it in the text), was further worked out by the German scholar Lämmert, who discussed various forms of 'Vorausdeutung' and 'Rückwendung', and was brought to near-perfection by the French narratologist Genette, who developed a refined set of concepts to analyse and describe the various ways in which the chronological order of the fabula may be transposed within the story.[8] It is these concepts which I will be using in this paper.

[6] Immerwahr (1966).

[7] See his own summary: Pohlenz (1937), 86–8.

[8] See Ejxenbaum (1971), Lämmert (1955), 100–94, Genette (1980), 33–85 (and cf. Bal (1985), 51–68; I have adopted her terms 'fabula' and 'story').

If we look at the way in which the events of the *Histories* are ordered, we see that by and large Herodotus follows the example of Homer. In the Homeric epics the time-span covered by the main stories comprises some fifty days. However, much larger stretches of time—the ten years of the war before Troy and the capture of that city, and the twenty years of Odysseus' absence from home and the peaceful end of his life—are also included by means of *external* analepses (flashbacks) and prolepses (flash-forwards). Indeed, even events from a more remote past, such as the youthful exploits of Nestor and the adventures of Bellerophontes, are included in this way. In the same way, Herodotus' main story comprises some eighty years: it starts in 560 BC (Croesus' conquest of the Ionian and Aeolian cities in Asia) and ends in 479–8 BC (the Greek capture of Sestus). Through external prolepses and above all analepses, however, the narrator describes a much longer stretch of time, from around 3000 BC (the reign of Min, the first Egyptian pharaoh) up to 430 BC (the execution of Spartan envoys in Athens).[9]

One important difference between Herodotus and Homer is that in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* the external analepses and prolepses are almost without exception voiced by characters,[10] while in the *Histories* it is quite often the narrator who goes back or forward in time. In my view, this difference is one of the factors responsible for the chaotic impression which Herodotus makes on us, in contrast to Homer's handling of time, which has been highly praised from Aristotle onwards. In principle, however, the system is the same: whenever the Herodotean narrator feels that his narratees need to be informed about the background of a person or situation, he stops the main story and goes back in time to provide that information. As Waters writes, 'as Homeric heroes state their own antecedents on the battlefield by offering their opponents a genealogical lecture, so must the antecedents of Kroisos be stated'.[11]

But—again like Homer—Herodotus also inserts *internal* prolepses and analepses, that is, retroversions to and anticipations of events falling *within* the time-span of the main story. Compare, for example, a Homeric internal analepsis like *Iliad* 22. 323 (Achilles

[9] Of course, the main story gets the most attention. Carbonell (1985), 139, 142–3 has estimated that 72% of the text is devoted to the period 560–479/8.

[10] Kullmann (1968).

[11] Waters (1974), 5.

looks at 'the bronze armour, the beautiful set, which he [Hector] had taken from Patroclus after killing him') with a Herodotean one at 5. 56–96, the period of Greek history after the death of Pisistratus (514–499 BC), which is inserted at the beginning of the Ionian revolt (499 BC). These examples reveal two important differences between Homer and Herodotus. First, the Homeric analepsis picks up an event which is also recounted by the narrator; in narratological terms it is a *repeating* internal analepsis. The Herodotean analepsis, by contrast, covers a period *not* covered elsewhere in the *Histories*; it is a *completing* internal analepsis. It will be obvious that the second type of temporal dislocation is more difficult to grasp than the first, and again we have discovered a factor contributing to the lack of transparency of the Herodotean structure. Secondly, while most of Homer's internal prolepses and analepses have a length of a handful of lines (the longest, *Iliad* 1. 366–92, takes up twenty-six lines), their Herodotean counterparts are often quite substantial (forty chapters in the example just given). This increase in scale is yet another complicating factor.

It may be instructive at this point to compare Herodotus' order with the chronological order to which we are accustomed in modern times and which is exemplified in Volume 4 of the *Cambridge Ancient History*. As the table of contents shows at a glance, here the Pisistratidae and Cleisthenes (chapters 4 and 5 of Part II) are discussed in their proper chronological place, before the Ionian revolt (chapter 8). Now while Herodotus' order may have the disadvantage of obscuring the chronological order, it is undeniably effective: by the time he resumes his main story (at the point where Aristagoras comes to Athens to ask for help against the Persians: 5. 97, cf. 55), we know much more about the—anti-Persian—atmosphere in the city. In fact, the last sentence of the internal analepsis runs as follows: . . . *σφι ἐδέδοκτο ἐκ τοῦ φανεροῦ τοῖσι Πέρσῃσι πολεμίους εἶναι* ('. . . it was resolved that they should be openly at war with Persia'; 5. 96. 2). After this, it is hardly surprising—although, according to Herodotus, nonetheless foolish—that the Athenians are easily persuaded by Aristagoras to join the Ionian revolt against the Persians (5. 98). This example shows that Herodotus does not insert his historical excursions at random,[12]

[12] So Jacoby (1913), 387 ('he was unable to put everything relevant in its proper place and therefore had recourse to the device of the excursus, which pop up *in surprising places* . . .' (my italics; all translations from the German in this paper are

but rather chooses places where they may be expected to produce the maximum effect.[13]

Looking again at the *Cambridge Ancient History*, it is also interesting to observe that the Persian attacks on the Greek mainland are treated in the section on the Greek states, rather than in that on the Persian empire. This is of course historically appropriate, since these events had a greater impact on Greek than on Persian history. In the *Histories*, however, the temporal framework is not that of Greek history but of Eastern history (the succession of the five rulers Croesus, Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius, and Xerxes). The explanations commonly given for this situation are that: (i) no adequate Greek chronography was yet available, whereas there did exist lists of Eastern kings;[14] or (ii) early Greek history was too fragmented.[15] These certainly may have been factors, but I think there is more to it than that. An important issue in ancient as well as modern warfare is the question of who started the hostilities. The one who starts is the one who is morally to blame. We may recall the *Iliad*, in which it is made very clear that it was the Trojans, first Paris and later Pandarus, who began the hostilities. Herodotus devotes the first five chapters of his work to the debate on who was responsible for the enmity between East and West, and then emphatically puts Croesus forward as his own candidate. When he then goes on to devote four books of his *Histories* to the expansion of Eastern imperialism, the message is the same: the barbarians are the aggressors, and the Greeks are fighting a just war to defend their freedom. Therefore, the Eastern chronological framework, far from being a technical *faute de mieux*, actually has ideological undertones.[16]

So much for my general remarks on 'order' in the *Histories*. Upon reflection, it seems only logical to take 'time' as an important—perhaps the most important—structuralizing and unifying principle in a historical narrative. Thus, turning again for a

mine), Fränkel (1960), 86–7, and Von Fritz (1967), 86, 113, 450. Waters (1985), 128 is puzzling: ('it is not possible to deal with this vast sweep of history in chronological order, even if all inessential information were excluded; thus it must be done in parallel logoi, placed in an *arbitrary* but *appropriate* order' (my italics).

[13] Cf. Carbonell (1985), 146–7. Cf. the deliberate placing of descriptive digressions at the moment a people becomes the object of Eastern imperialism.

[14] Pohlenz (1937), 30–1.

[15] Jacoby (1913), 348–9 and Von Fritz (1967), 113.

[16] It must form a counterweight to repeated claims on the part of the Persians that it was the Greeks who started the injustice (cf. 7. 8. 9, 11 *bis*).

moment to Homer, we may recall Schadewaldt's famous *Ilias-studien*, in which unitarian defence of the *Iliad* he also relies heavily on various forms of 'preparation' and 'retrospection'.[17] More generally, the Homeric analepses and prolepses have been amply investigated. In the case of Herodotus, however, we have only stray remarks, such as those of Van Groningen, who notes—but does not discuss—the Herodotean tendency to foreclose the issue of his story in the form of oracles, dreams, or warnings;[18] Hunter, who argues that *logoi* (direct or indirect speeches) often anticipate the *erga* (action);[19] and Waters, who mentions Herodotus' flash-back technique as one of the devices which the historian derived from Homer.[20] Even Pohlenz, who, as we have seen, takes a great interest in anticipation and retroversion as unifying devices, covers only a fraction of the material and the range of effects which can be achieved through these devices.

How to explain this relative neglect of 'time' in the *Histories*? The answer seems to be that scholars have been distracted by Herodotus' apparent weakness where absolute chronology (i.e. dates) is concerned.[21] The following remarks, by H. Fränkel and D. Lateiner respectively, are illustrative:

> In Herodotus, time, as a means to connect the many things he has to say about different countries, is almost completely lacking. This is surprising for a historian, but, as has often been remarked, he has no interest in chronology. You could even say that he, and in general the archaic period to which he partly belongs, has no eye for the ever progressing time, like modern orientals (*sic*). He does not hesitate to stop time . . . He doesn't even shrink from reversing the order of things.[22]

> Chronological order provides the obvious principle of organization for most historians, but not for Herodotus. Chronological research is as necessary for him as for any other historian, but not for the structure of his historical study.[23]

[17] Schadewaldt (1938).

[18] Van Groningen (1953), 39–42.

[19] Hunter (1982), 191–2. She has analysed this phenomenon in great detail for Thucydides, see Hunter (1973).

[20] Waters (1974), 3.

[21] I say 'apparent' because Strasburger (1956) has convincingly shown that Herodotus' chronology is much better than is often assumed.

[22] Fränkel (1960), 85. His formulation makes it clear that he actually criticizes Herodotus for his handling of time. This curious twentieth-centurycentrism a little further on becomes even more glaring: 'Even more acutely we sense the *abuse* of *our* conception of time in Pindar' (my italics).

[23] Lateiner (1989), 114. In fact, Lateiner's position in his chapter on chronology

There is, to my knowledge, only one—brief—plea to take 'time' as the leading structuralizing principle of the *Histories*, by Carbonell: 'It is not space which orders and organizes the *Histories*. It is time which turns it into a rigorously chronological work, even if this rigour demands an apparent disorder.' Though essentially correct, this definition of Herodotus' procedure is not exactly felicitous. Here narratology again comes in handy, since it offers us the term anachrony, coined by Genette to refer to the various types of discordance between the order of the fabula and the order of the story.[24] I suggest that we call the structure of the *Histories* anachronical: its chronological framework is frequently overturned through long and complex—but effective—anachronies.[25]

A SET OF EXAMPLES

I will now look at a set of specific examples. For that purpose I have chosen analepses and prolepses concerning Xerxes' decision to launch the expedition against Athens which is to form the climax of the *Histories*.

The narrative germ for this decision, which will be taken in 7. 5–19, is the moment when Athens, persuaded by Aristagoras of Miletus, decides to send twenty ships to the Ionians of Asia Minor, who are rebelling against the Persians. This moment is highlighted by the narrator through the insertion of an internal prolepsis:

(1) *αὗται δὲ αἱ νέες ἀρχὴ κακῶν ἐγένοντο Ἕλλησί τε καὶ βαρβάροισι.*

These ships were the beginning of misery for the Greeks and the barbarians. (5. 97. 3)

Commentators have pointed out the resemblance to *Iliad* 11.04, *κακοῦ δ' ἄρα οἱ πέλεν ἀρχή*, 'and this was the beginning of his [Patroclus'] downfall', which is the first prolepsis of Patroclus' death. Plutarch, quoted approvingly by How and Wells, took offence at Herodotus calling the Athenian expedition to liberate

is not consistent: on p. 122 he speaks of 'non-chronological order', but somewhat later he states that 'aside from the dramatic placement of the history of Lydia, a generally chronological scheme of the major units obtains'.

[24] Genette (1980), 35–6.

[25] Note that Thucydides also inserts anachronies, for which see Hornblower (1994), but not on such a scale as to obscure his annalistic order and hence deserve the qualification anachronical.

Ionia κακά.[26] This comment is off the mark for two reasons: in the first place, it is more logical that with κακά Herodotus is referring not only to the Ionian revolt, but to the whole chain of events culminating in the Persian wars, which, though ending in victory for the Greeks, will bring them much suffering.[27] Thus—and this is my second point—throughout the *Histories* Herodotus makes it clear that he considers war evil (cf. esp. 6. 98, where he refers to the Persian wars and the wars for pre-eminance between the leading Greek cities as κακά).[28] This conception of war as bringing fame at the cost of sorrow is thoroughly Homeric.

What I find remarkable in 5. 97. 3 is Herodotus' prediction of misery to come, not only for the Greeks but also for the barbarians. In his proem, too, he announces that he will memorialize the glorious deeds of both Greeks and barbarians. Here again he is following the example of Homer, who shows equal compassion and admiration for Trojans and Greeks. (This 'chivalry' displayed by both authors does not, however, prevent them from designating the barbarians as 'the ones who started it', cf. above.)

The highpoint of the Ionian revolt is the sack of Sardes and the burning of the temple of Cybebe (5. 99–102). Again, the importance of this event is marked for us by the narrator through the insertion of an internal repeating prolepsis (not discussed by Pohlenz):

(2) . . . τὸ σκηπτόμενοι οἱ Πέρσαι ὕστερον ἀντενεπίμπρασαν τὰ ἐν Ἕλλησι ἱρά.

which burning the Persians afterwards made their pretext for burning on their turn the temples of Hellas. (5. 102. 1)

Indeed, of the five passages where Persians burn Greek temples (6. 19. 3, 96. 1, 101. 3; 8. 33, 8. 53. 2), there is one (6. 101. 3) which refers back to this place, telling us that the burning was an act of revenge. The detail σκηπτόμενοι in (2) is intriguing. How and Wells reject it as irrelevant: 'the Persians needed no excuse for destroying Hellenic shrines and the accidental destruction of a Lydian temple was clearly not the reason.' This may be historically true, but the detail is of prime importance in Herodotus'

[26] Plutarch, *De malignitate Herodoti*, 24; How and Wells (1928), 57–8.

[27] Pohlenz (1937) 16; Immerwahr (1966), 113.

[28] See Cobet (1986) 7.

(re)construction of events. This is the first of a number of places where either the Herodotean narrator (6. 44, 94, 7. 138) or Greek characters (7. 157) speak of the Persians using pretexts for what is in fact pure imperialism. Their interpretation is 'confirmed' in 7. 8. β.3, where Xerxes announces his intention to conquer all Greek cities, both guilty (of acts of war against him) and not guilty.

The idea of Persian revenge, in (2) only adumbrated by the narrator in the *ἀντ-* of *ἀντενεπίμπρασαν*, soon becomes explicit when Darius' reaction to the news of the sack of Sardes is reported:

(3) . . . *πρῶτα μὲν λέγεται αὐτόν, ὡς ἐπύθετο ταῦτα, Ἰώνων οὐδένα λόγου ποιησάμενον, . . . εἰρέσθαι οἵτινες εἶεν οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι, μετὰ πυθόμενον αἰτῆσαι τὸ τόξον, λαβόντα δὲ καὶ ἐπιθέντα ὀϊστὸν ἄνω πρὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀπεῖναι, καί μιν ἐς τὸν ἠέρα βάλλοντα εἰπεῖν· Ὦ Ζεῦ, ἐκγενέσθαι μοι Ἀθηναίους τείσασθαι, εἴπαντα δὲ ταῦτα προστάξαι ἑνι τῶν θεραπόντων δείπνου προκειμένου αὐτῷ ἐς τρὶς ἑκάστοτε εἰπειν· Δέσποτα, μέμνεο των Ἀθηναίων.*

. . . he is first reported, upon hearing these things, to have taken no account of the Ionians . . . but to have asked who the Athenians were; and being told he called for his bow, took it, laid an arrow on it, and shot it in the air, praying: Zeus, grant me vengeance on the Athenians. After that he ordered one of his servants to say to him thrice whenever dinner was served 'Master, remember the Athenians' (5. 105. 1–2)

Pohlenz aptly remarks that 'the "master, remember the Athenians" resembles the lightning which announces a thunderstorm. It indicates the direction which both history and Herodotus' story are going to take.'[29] There is, however, more to be said about this passage. This is the place to supplement Genette's typology of analepses and prolepses. I suggest that we need another pair, viz. *true* vs. *false* analepses or prolepses. Darius' prayer to Zeus is a false prolepsis, in that he will never succeed in carrying out his revenge on the Athenians. In fact, one of the pioneers of Homeric prolepsis research, Duckworth, allowed for the phenomenon of 'false foreshadowing': 'In most cases the expressions of hope, confidence, fear or despair are unfounded and cannot be considered as forecasting the future. Nevertheless they serve as a kind of false foreshadowing and so have an important place in the structure of the epic; they keep the interest of the reader fixed on the events in store for the characters, even though he knows the true outcome.'[30] In the case of the *Histories*, too, the readers know the

[29] Pohlenz (1937), 18. [30] Duckworth (1933), 21.

outcome of the story, the defeat of the Persians by the Greeks; being told about the aspirations of the Persian kings adds to their satisfaction with this outcome.

In accordance with his desire for revenge, Darius launches a punitive expedition against the Athenians, led by Mardonius. Its start is marked by a combination of internal analepsis and prolepsis:

(4) . . . ἐπορεύοντο δὲ ἐπί τε Ἐρέτριαν καὶ Ἀθήνας. Αὗται μὲν ὦν σφι πρόσχημα ἦσαν τοῦ στόλου, ἀτὰρ ἐν νοῷ ἔχοντες ὅσας ἂν πλείστας δύνωνται καταστρέφεσθαι τῶν Ἑλληνίδων πολίων . . .

. . . they marched against Eretria and Athens. These cities were the avowed goal of their expedition. But their real intention being to subdue as many Greek cities as they could, . . . (6. 43. 4–44. 1)

The mention of Eretria and Athens must suffice to make the narratees recall that these two cities had sent ships to the Ionians and participated in the capture of Sardis (cf. passages 1 and 2). At the same time, we are told that in fact the Persians have set their eyes on the whole of Greece. This is a false prolepsis, since Mardonius returns empty-handed (6. 44–5).

After this fiasco Darius undertakes a diplomatic offensive, asking the Greek cities to give him 'water and earth'. Some, but not all, do so (6. 48–9). He then decides to undertake a second military expedition:

(5) ὥστε ἀναμιμνήσκοντός τε αἰεὶ τοῦ θεράποντος μεμνῆσθαί μιν τῶν Ἀθηναίων . . . ἅμα δὲ βουλόμενος ὁ Δαρεῖος ταύτης ἐχόμενος τῆς προφάσιος καταστρέφεσθαι τῆς Ἑλλάδος τοὺς μὴ δόντας αὐτῷ γῆν τε καὶ ὕδωρ. Μαρδόνιον μὲν δὴ φλαύρως πρήξαντα τῷ στόλῳ παραλύει τῆς στρατηγίης, ἄλλους δὲ στρατηγοὺς ἀποδέξας ἀπέστελλε ἐπί τε Ἐρέτριαν καὶ Ἀθήνας, . . . ἐντειλάμενος δὲ ἀπέπεμπε ἐξανδραποδίσαντας Ἀθήνας καὶ Ἐρέτριαν ἀνάγειν ἑωυτῷ ἐς ὄψιν τὰ ἀνδράποδα.

. . . for his servant was ever reminding him to remember the Athenians . . . and also, having this pretext, Darius wanted to subdue all men that had not given him earth and water. He dismissed Mardonius from his command, because he had not been successful in his expedition, and having appointed others (Datis and Artaphrenes), he sent them against Eretria and Athens . . . And he charged them to enslave the Athenians and Eretrians and bring the slaves into his presence. (6. 94. 1–2)

Here we have no fewer than four internal analepses (the sending of

ships by Athens and Eretria, cf. passage 1; the scene with Darius' servant, cf. passage 3; Mardonius' unsuccessful expedition, described in 6. 44–5; and the partially successful diplomatic offensive in 6. 48–9),[31] a true prolepsis (the Eretrians will be enslaved: 6. 101–2 and 109), and a false prolepsis (instead of subduing all men who had not given Darius earth and enslaving the Athenians, the Persians will be defeated by the Athenians at Marathon).

When Darius hears about this defeat in 7. 1 he is even more eager to take up arms against Greece; but he dies before he can fulfil his plans, and Xerxes takes over. He will organize the third and last punitive expedition against Greece, led not by one of his generals but by himself; an event which takes up a full two books of Herodotus' *Histories*. In keeping with the significance of the moment, the launching of this third expedition is marked by a particularly large and complex knot of analepses and prolepses (7. 5–19).

It begins surprisingly: after repeated references to Darius' burning desire to march against Greece (7. 1 *bis*), the first thing we are told about Xerxes is that initially he was not at all eager to do so (7. 5), and had to be persuaded by one of his generals, Mardonius, and some Greeks, including the oracle-monger Onomacritus (7. 5–6). One of the functions of this prelude is to rehearse some of the arguments which Xerxes will later use to motivate his plan to launch an expedition (revenge for all the evil the Greeks have visited upon the Persians, and the attractions of Hellas), and to introduce one of his strategies (to build a bridge over the Hellespont).

Just as, in the Homeric epics, major turns in the plot are punctuated by assembly scenes, so at this crucial point Herodotus has Xerxes assemble the Persian nobles to discuss his plan. The first speaker is the convener Xerxes himself, who gives three reasons for his expedition against Greece: revenge, inherited imperialism, and the attractions of Hellas. Let us first take a closer look at the motive of revenge:

(6) . . . *οὐ πρότερον παύσομαι πρὶν ἢ ἕλω τε καὶ πυρώσω τὰς Ἀθήνας, οἵ γε ἐμὲ καὶ πατέρα τὸν ἐμὸν ὑπῆρξαν ἄδικα ποιεῦντες. πρῶτα μὲν ἐς Σάρδις*

[31] Curiously enough, this passage has been overlooked by Jacoby (1913) 337, who remarks that in 6.48 'the history of the first great Persian expedition against Greece starts unobtrusively ("klanglos"), . . . and as if nothing had happened before, with the stereotypical *μετά δὲ τοῦτο*.'

ἐλθόντες ἅμα Ἀρισταγόρῃ τῷ Μιλησίῳ, δουλῷ δὲ ἡμετέρῳ, [ἀπικόμενοι] ἐνέπρησαν τά τε ἄλσεα καὶ τὰ ἱρά·

. . . I will not stop till I have taken and burnt Athens, for the unprovoked wrong that its people did to my father and me. First they came to Sardis with our slave Aristagoras and burnt the groves and the temples; . . . (7. 8. β.2)

To the by now almost trite analeptic argument of the burning of Sardes (cf. passages 3, 4, and 5) a minor detail is added: the Greeks burnt not only the temples (the plural is a rhetorical exaggeration) but also the groves. This detail does not appear in the actual description by the Herodotean narrator in 5. 101. Either Xerxes is simply giving a fuller account or—and this is more plausible—he has invented this detail in order to build up his case against the Greeks. The Persians are very fond of trees,[32] and burning groves is therefore considered a major offence.

A new analeptic argument is Marathon:

(7) *δεύτερα δὲ ἡμέας οἷα ἔρξαν ἐς τὴν σφετέρην ἀποβάντας, ὅτε Δᾶτίς τε καὶ Ἀρταφρένης ἐστρατήγεον, [τὰ] ἐπίστασθέ κου πάντες.*

secondly, the kind of things they did to us during the expedition of Datis and Artaphrenes, I think you all know. (7. 8. β.3)

Here, for obvious reasons, Xerxes only alludes to this painful event from the past. He even refrains from mentioning the earlier punitive expedition by Mardonius, which was also unsuccessful. What counts is that these events call for revenge, but no Persian likes to be reminded too much of the exact details. However, the 'I think you all know' is also addressed by the narrator to his Greek narratees, who, on the contrary, will only too gladly remember Marathon. Soon we will come across more examples of analepses and prolepses which are interpreted differently by the Persian characters in the story and the Greek narratees.[33]

I turn to the argument of inherited imperialism. Again, Xerxes looks to the past:

(8) *τὰ μέν νυν Κῦρός τε καὶ Καμβύσης πατήρ τε ⟨ὁ⟩ ἐμὸς Δαρεῖος κατεργάσαντο καὶ προσεκτήσαντο ἔθνεα, ἐπισταμένοισι εὖ οὐκ ἄν τις λέγοι.*

Now of the nations that Cyrus and Cambyses and Darius my father

[32] Cf 7. 5. 3 and Stein's note ad loc.

[33] For this phenomenon, whereby speeches in historiography have different messages for characters and readers, see Macleod (1982).

subdued and added to our realm, none need tell you, for you all know. (7. 8. α.1)

This *praeteritio* functions in the first place within the context of Xerxes' rhetoric; set on persuading his Persian generals to undertake the expedition against Greece, he spends the first part of his speech on making it clear that imperialism belongs to Persia, and therefore that what he proposes is nothing new. But, as in passage (7), his words are also relevant for the narratees. They, too, 'know the nations that Cyrus and Cambysus and Darius added', because they have been told about them by the narrator in the *Histories*. In other words, here we find the *raison d'être* for Books 1–4, which analysts complain have so little to do with Herodotus' main theme, the confrontation between East and West.[34] Simplifying matters somewhat, we can say that Herodotus needed this long run-up to allow this conversation to take place. Only now are the Greek narratees in the same position as Xerxes' Persian addressees, and able fully to appreciate his words. Again, this may be seen as a Herodotean exploitation and expansion of a Homeric technique, in that the Homeric narrator, too, is wont to inform his narratees beforehand, to enable them to understand an ensuing speech. For example, in introducing Andromache he mentions her father Eetion, thereby allowing this character to use the death of her father by Achilles as a powerful emotional argument in her attempt to persuade Hector to remain inside Troy (*Iliad* 6. 394–8, 414–20).[35]

The imperialism of the Persians is, according to Xerxes, actually sanctioned by the gods:

(9) *ὡς γὰρ ἐγὼ πυνθάνομαι τῶν πρεσβυτέρων, οὐδαμά κω ἠτρεμίσαμεν, ἐπείτε παρελάβομεν τὴν ἡγεμονίην τήνδε παρὰ Μήδων, Κύρου κατελόντος Ἀστυάγεα· ἀλλὰ θεός τε οὕτω ἄγει . . .*

As I learn from our eldest, we have as yet never been inactive, ever since Cyrus deposed Astyages and we took over leadership from the Medes. A god leads us this way (7. 8. α.1)

For all its brevity, this last remark contains a wealth of implica-

[34] Cf. e.g. Jacoby (1913), 333–52 and Von Fritz (1967), 113.

[35] A similar small-scale example from Herodotus is 7. 2, where the detailed information about Darius' (two sets of) sons allows us to savour Demaratus' advice in 7. 3.

tions. To start with, if we look back at the expansionism of Xerxes' predecessors, we find no divine motivation. On the contrary, rather mundane reasons play a role, the ultimate being Atossa's request to Darius to conquer Greece because she would like to have some 'Laconian, Argive, Attic, or Corinthian maidservants' (3. 134). When Xerxes now starts talking about a divine mission, he is perhaps inspired by the oracles of Onomacritus, which he had received just before this council (7. 6). Since the narratees know—what Xerxes does not—that Onomacritus had given him only positive oracles, carefully withholding the negative ones, they may already be smiling at Xerxes' trust in the gods. Moreover, knowing that gods usually lead mortals to their destruction[36] (and, of course, knowing the outcome of Xerxes' expedition), they may attribute an ominous connotation to Xerxes' words. Finally, the very next scene will show that Xerxes' claim to be led by the gods has a less pleasant meaning for him, when a series of divine dreams will literally force him to stick to his decision to march on Greece, against his own and Artabanus' better judgement (7. 12–19). (It is, of course, only in retrospect that the narratees can attach this ironic shade of meaning to Xerxes' words.)[37]

Xerxes' third reason is Hellas itself:

(10) *χώρην . . . τῆς νῦν ἐκτήμεθα οὐκ ἐλάσσονα οὐδὲ φλαυροτέρην παμφορωτέρην δέ*

a land neither less nor worse but more fertile than that which we now possess (7. 8. *α*.2)

Here he is repeating, in a slightly different form, what Mardonius had earlier said to him in private:

(11) . . . *τούτου δὲ τοῦ λόγου παρενθήκην ποιεέσκετο τήνδε, ὡς ἡ Εὐρώπη περικαλλὴς [εἴη] χώρη καὶ δένδρεα παντοῖα φέρει τὰ ἥμερα ἀρετήν τε ἄκρη . . .*

. . . he [Mardonius] would add to this that Hellas was a very beautiful country, one that bore all kinds of orchard trees, a land of high excellence . . . (7. 5. 3)

With regard to passage (11), Jacoby remarks that here Herodotus

[36] Commentators draw attention to Soph. *OC*. 252–4, 997–8 and Xen. *An*. 6. 3. 18.

[37] For the retrospective reinterpretation of earlier parts of a literary work, see Sternberg (1978), 70.

suppressed his habit of inserting a geographical and ethnographical excursus at the point where a barbarian sets eyes on a strange country. In his view, Herodotus' reasons are aesthetic: to interrupt his main story at this dramatic point for a Hellenic *logos* would break the tension.[38] In my view, another consideration may have played a role. Herodotus will later present geographical information about Greece, not in the form of a separate *logos*, but as an integral part of his story; he will use Xerxes' march through Hellas as a framework for a description of that country, in the following manner:

(12) *διαβὰς δὲ τοῦ Λίσου ποταμοῦ τὸ ῥέεθρον ἀπεξξηρασμένον πόλιας Ἑλληνίδας τάσδε παραμείβετο, Μαρώνειαν, Δίκαιαν, Ἄβδηρα. ταύτας τε δὴ παρεξήιε καὶ κατὰ ταύτας λίμνας ὀνομαστὰς τάσδε, Μαρωνείης μὲν μεταξὺ καὶ Στρύμης κειμένην Ἰσμαρίδα, κατὰ δὲ Δίκαιαν Βιστονίδα, ἐς τὴν ποταμοὶ δύο ἐσιεῖσι τὸ ὕδωρ, Τραῦός τε καὶ Κόμψατος.*

Having crossed the bed (then dried up) of the river Lisus he [Xerxes] passed by the Greek cities of Maronea, Dicaea, and Abdera. Past these he went, and past certain lakes of repute near to them, the Ismarid lake that lies between Maronea and Stryme, and near Dicaea the Bistonian lake, into which the rivers Travus and Compensatus disembogue. (7. 109. 1)

Now why does the Herodotean narrator adopt this—unusual, but highly elegant—procedure?[39] I will suggest an answer to this question at the end of my paper.

So much for Xerxes'—largely analeptic—arguments for wanting to march on Greece. His—proleptic—expectations also deserve our attention:

(13) *μέλλω ζεύξας τὸν Ἑλλήσποντον ἐλᾶν στρατὸν διὰ τῆς Εὐρώπης ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα, ἵνα Ἀθηναίους τιμωρήσωμαι . . . οὐ πρότερον παύσομαι πρὶν ἢ ἕλω τε καὶ πυρώσω τὰς Ἀθήνας . . .*

I intend to bridge the Hellespont and to lead an army through Europe against Greece, in order that I may punish the Athenians . . . (Therefore) I will not stop till I have taken and burnt Athens . . . (7. 8. β. 1)

Like his father Darius (cf. passages 3 and 5), Xerxes wants to take

[38] Jacoby (1913), 349.

[39] We find it on only one other occasion, in embryonic form, in the Scythian expedition. Cf. e.g. 4. 85–7, where a description of the Pontus is integrated into the story through the device of making Darius view it from a high point.

revenge on the Athenians and burn their city. In his case, this is a partially true prolepsis, in that he will burn Athens (in 8. 53), but since he will then be defeated by the Greeks at Salamis, he will not really have his revenge on them.

But, again like his father (cf. passage 4), his aspirations are in fact much greater:

(14) *εἰ τούτους τε καὶ τοὺς τούτοισι πλησιοχώρους καταστρεψόμεθα, οἳ Πέλοπος τοῦ Φρυγὸς νέμονται χώρην, γῆν τὴν Περσίδα ἀποδέξομεν τῷ Διὸς αἰθέρι ὁμουρέουσαν. οὐ γὰρ δὴ χώρην γε οὐδεμίαν κατόψεται ἥλιος ὁμουρέουσαν τῇ ἡμετέρῃ, ἀλλά σφεας πάσας ἐγὼ ἅμα ὑμῖν πίαν χώρην θήσω, διὰ πάσης διεξελθὼν τῆς Εὐρώπης.*

if we subdue those men, and their neighbours who live in the land of Pelops the Phrygian, we shall show the Persian territories to have the same borders as Zeus' heaven, for the sun will not behold any other country bordering ours, but I will make all into one country, when I have crossed through the whole of Europe. (7. 8. γ.1)

Xerxes' object is no longer Athens, but Greece, Europe, indeed the whole world. Accomplishing this mission would make him Zeus' equal on earth. For the Greek narratees, simply formulating such a desire is courting disaster, and again (cf. passage 10) they will take these words as ominous.[40] Indeed, this desire will not be fulfilled, and after Salamis Xerxes himself will give up his attempts. Interestingly enough, he will be advised to do so by Queen Artemisia in the following words:

(15) *σὺ δέ, τῶν εἵνεκα τὸν στόλον ἐποιήσαο, πυρώσας τὰς Ἀθήνας ἀπελᾷς.*

as for you, you will do best to march home, since you have burnt Athens, which was the purpose of your expedition. (8. 102. 3)

In an effort to help the great Persian king save face, she focuses on his moderate ambitions of passage 13, tactfully leaving out the much larger ones of passage 14.

The first to react to Xerxes' speech is Mardonius, who is, of course, strongly in favour of the undertaking he himself initiated. He rehearses the points of revenge and inherited imperialism, and

[40] This is the first in a set of passages where Xerxes is compared to Zeus and hence pictured as a man who oversteps his mortal limits and therefore deserves to be punished; cf. 5. 49, 7. 56, and 8. 80.

adds one related to the ineffective way their Greek opponents fight. To back up this last point, he turns to the past:

(16) *ἐπειρήθην δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἤδη ἐπελαύνων ἐπὶ τοὺς ἄνδρας τούτους ὑπὸ πατρὸς τοῦ σοῦ κελευσθείς, καί μοι μέχρι Μακεδονίης ἐλάσαντι καὶ ὀλίγον ἀπολιπόντι ἐς αὐτὰς Ἀθήνας ἀπίκεσθαι οὐδεὶς ἠντιώθη ἐς μάχην.*

I myself have experienced their [the Greeks'] worth when by your father's command I marched against them, and I came as far as Macedonia and almost as far as Athens herself, but nobody stepped forward to fight me . . . (7. 9. α.2)

This is clearly a false internal analepsis, since the narrator (6. 45) and Darius (6, 94, passage 5 above) had concurred in branding Mardonius' expedition a failure.[41] Deeming an attack the best form of defence, Mardonius himself boldly broaches the topic which Xerxes had tactfully glossed over (cf. passage 7) and presents the first punitive expedition against Athens as well-nigh a victory. This one example of a false analepsis—and there are many more in the *Histories*—tells us a great deal about the ancient historians' relationship to historical truth: if historical characters can distort the past for their own rhetorical purposes, why should we expect the narrator to act differently? Once more, Herodotus here had a Homeric precedent, since in the epics too we see both characters and narrator 'making the past'.[42]

The third speaker is Artabanus (a specimen of the well-known Herodotean figure of the 'warner'), who alone dares to oppose the plan for an expedition. He too uses analepses and prolepses as arguments, carefully opposing them to those of the previous speakers. He begins by countering Xerxes' point of the inherited imperialism of his forefathers (cf. passage 8), bringing to the fore an expedition which was *not* successful:

(17) *ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ πατρὶ τῷ σῷ, ἀδελφεῷ δὲ ἐμῷ, Δαρείῳ ἠγόρευον μὴ στρατεύεσθαι ἐπὶ Σκύθας, ἄνδρας οὐδαμόθι γῆς ἄστυ νέμοντας· ὁ δὲ ἐλπίζων Σκύθας τοὺς νομάδας καταστρέψεσθαι ἐμοί τε οὐκ ἐπείθετο, στρατευσάμενός τε πολλοὺς καὶ ἀγαθοὺς τῆς στρατιῆς ἀποβαλὼν ἀπῆλθε. σὺ δέ, ὦ βασιλεῦ, μέλλεις ἐπ' ἄνδρας στρατεύεσθαι πολλὸν ἔτι ἀμείνονας ἢ Σκύθας.*

[41] Cf. Solmsen (1982), 84; Pohlenz (1937), 122.

[42] See Andersen (1990). For the rhetoric of historiography, see Wiseman (1970), 27–40 and Woodman (1988).

For I also urged your father, my brother, Darius, not to lead his army against the Scythians, who nowhere have cities to live in. But he, in his hope to subdue the nomad Scythians, would not be guided by me; he led his army and came back after losing many of his best men. And you, king, intend to go against men who are much better than the Scythians. (7. 10. α.2)

He uses this internal repeating analepsis of the Scythian expedition (which was recounted by the Herodotean narrator in 6. 83–144) as a dissuasive paradigm in an a fortiori reasoning: if Darius did not manage to defeat the Scythians, what can Xerxes expect from taking on the Greeks, who are much better fighters than the Scythians?[43]

Next, Artabanus turns to Xerxes' plan to build a bridge over the Hellespont (cf. passage 13):

(18) *ζεύξας φὴς τὸν Ἑλλήσποντον ἐλᾶν στρατὸν διὰ τῆς Εὐρώπης ἐς τὴν Ἑλλάδα. καὶ δὴ καὶ συμήνεικε ἤτοι κατὰ γῆν ἢ [καὶ] κατὰ θάλασσαν ἑσσωθῆναι, ἢ καὶ κατ' ἀμφότερα· οἱ γὰρ ἄνδρες λέγονται εἶναι ἄλκιμοι, πάρεστι δὲ καὶ σταθμώσασθαι, εἰ στρατίην γε τοαύτην σὺν Δάτι καὶ Ἀρταφρένεϊ ἐλθοῦσαν ἐς τὴν Ἀττικὴν χώρην μοῦνοι Ἀθηναῖοι διέφθειραν. οὐκ ὦν ἀμφοτέρῃ σφι ἐχώρησε. ἀλλ' ἢν τῇσι νηυσὶ ἐμβάλωσι καὶ νικήσαντες ναυμαχίῃ πλέωσι ἐς τὸν Ἑλλήσποντον καὶ ἔπειτα λύσωσι τὴν γέφυραν, γοῦτο δή, βασιλεῦ, γίνεται δεινόν.*

You say that you intend to bridge the Hellespont and then lead an army through Europe against Greece. Now suppose it would befall you to be defeated on land or on sea, or even on both. For these men are called valiant, and this can be proven, seeing that the Athenians alone destroyed such a large army coming with Datis and Artaphrenes to Attica. Be it granted that they would not be successful on both fronts. But if they would attack us with their ships and defeat us in a sea battle and thereafter would sail to the Hellespont and break your bridge, that, king, would be a real threat. (7. 10. β.1–2)

In keeping with his status as warner, Herodotus allows Artabanus to give a fairly accurate prophecy of what will happen: the Persians will be defeated in a sea battle (Salamis) and the Greeks will consider sailing to the Hellespont to destroy the bridge (a plan from which they are only barely dissuaded; cf. 8. 97, 108, 111, 117, 110). This is an instance of the technique, found in both Herodotus and

[43] It is because of this paradigmatic function that the Scythian expedition is recounted in such detail; for the relation between the Scythian and Greek expeditions, see Immerwahr (1966), 106–10.

(especially) Thucydides, whereby one of two speakers in a situation of deliberation predicts exactly what will happen; in this way, the narratees are given a means by which to evaluate the relative merits of the arguments put forward in the discussion.[44] In the course of his prophetic vision Artabanus also weaves in a brief analepsis, the Persian defeat at Marathon, bringing to the fore precisely what Xerxes had preferred to allude to in the vaguest terms (cf. passage 7) and substantiating his own earlier claim that the Greeks are excellent fighters (cf. passage 17), thereby countering Mardonius' falsely optimistic picture of the Greek enemy (cf. passage 16).

To back up his prophecy concerning the dangers of a bridge over the Hellespont, Artabanus returns to the Scythian expedition, when Darius bridged the river Ister, and it was due to the loyalty of Histiaeus and his Ionians that the bridge was not destroyed and the Persians robbed of their return (7. 10. γ.1.2); this is an internal repeating analepsis of 4. 133–44.

He ends his speech with a long and typically Herodotean diatribe on the envy of the gods, which is intended to temper Xerxes' optimism about the gods supporting Persian imperialism (cf. passage 9). Even here we find, couched in general terms, a fairly exact prolepsis of what later will befall the Persian army (e.g. in 8. 37–8):

(19) *οὕτω δὲ καὶ στρατὸς πολλὸς ὑπὸ ὀλίγου διαφθείρεται κατὰ τοιόνδε· ἐπεάν σφι ὁ θεὸς φθονήσας φόβον ἐμβάλῃ ἢ βροντήν, δι' ὧν ἐφθάρησαν ἀναξίως ἑωυτῶν.*

In like way even a numerous host is destroyed by a lesser one, when the jealous god sends panic or thunder, whereby they perish in an unworthy way.

Artabanus shares the fate of most warners in Herodotus, and Greek literature in general, in that his warning is not heeded. In the last speech of this council scene, Xerxes angrily declares that he will carry out his plan to take revenge and thus earn himself an honourable place in his gallery of ancestors (cf. passage 8).

[44] Hunter (1973) 178: 'in major debates later *erga* eventually demonstrate the superiority of one *logos*.'

THE 'KNOWLEDGE IS POWER' MOTIF

It is with regret that I leave Herodotus' story at this point, just as it is about to take a surprising turn in the form of Xerxes' nocturnal change of mind and harsh correction by a series of divine dreams. But I want to return to passage 17. Let us for a moment follow Artabanus in his recollection of the past and see how the narrator described the moment when he advised Darius against the Scythian expedition:

(20) *Παρασκευαζομένου Δαρείου ἐπὶ τοὺς Σκύθας . . . Ἀρτάβανος ὁ Ὑστάσπεος, ἀδελφεὸς ἐὼν Δαρείου, ἐχρήιζε μηδαμῶς αὐτὸν στρατιὴν ἐπὶ Σκύθας ποιέεσθαι, καταλέγων τῶν Σκυθέων τὴν ἀπορίην. ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ ἔπειθε συμβουλεύων οἱ χρηστά . . .*

While Darius was making preparations against the Scythians, Artabanus . . . asked him not to make an expedition against the Scythians, summing up the difficulties of handling them. But when he could not persuade him, though his advice was good . . . (4. 83. 1–2)

The argument employed here by Artabanus versus Darius is that the Scythians are difficult to handle (because of their nomadism). Interestingly enough, this very argument has been prepared for by the narrator in the course of his long ethnographical and geographical excursus on the Scythians:

(21) (the Scythians have made one very clever discovery:)
τοῖσι γὰρ μήτε ἄστεα μήτε τείχεα ᾖ ἐκτισμένα, ἀλλὰ φερέοικοι ἐόντες πάντες ἔωσι ἱπποτοξόται, ζῶντες μὴ ἀπ' ἀρότου ἀλλ' ἀπὸ κτηνέων, οἰκήματά τέ σφι ᾖ ἐπὶ ζευγέων, κῶς οὐκ ἂν εἴησαν οὗτοι ἄμαχοί τε καὶ ἄποροι προμίσγειν;

For when men have no cities or walls, but all are housebearers and mounted archers, living not by tilling the soil but by cattle-rearing and carrying their house on their waggons, how should not these be invincible and impossible to deal with? (4. 46. 3)

I draw attention to the echo *τὴν ἀπορίην* (passage 20) ≈ *ἄποροι* (passage 21), which underlines the connection between the two passages. We see that a descriptive excursus, the main butt of the analyst school, does in fact have a plot function, in that it provides the narratees with the necessary background information to understand and appreciate Artabanus' argument in passage 20. We

are dealing here with the same phenomenon discussed in connection with passage 8: exploiting and expanding what is essentially a Homeric narrative technique, Herodotus provides his narratees with the necessary information—whether geographical, ethnographical, or historical—to understand a speech by one of the historical characters. It is interesting to see that Herodotus' method, in its turn, will be followed by Thucydides, for example, at the beginning of the Sicilian expedition. He first notes that most of the Athenians were ignorant of the great size of the island and the large number of its inhabitants (6. 1), next proceeds to describe size and number in an ethnographic excursus of five chapters (6. 2–5), and only then has his historical characters declare themselves on the subject (6. 11, 17, 20).

Let us consider this phenomenon a little longer, whereby the Herodotean narrator provides information to his narratees, who, armed with that information, can appreciate and evaluate the words of the historical characters in the story. It seems related to an important leitmotif (or 'thought pattern' in Immerwahr's terminology) which runs through the *Histories*: the 'knowledge is power' motif.[45] At many points in the story we hear about characters who lack, desire, or provide information—whether true or false—about their opponent. Thus, when Darius is exhorted by his wife to conquer Greece, he sends spies to gain information about this new object of imperialism (3. 134–8). As the narrator emphatically notes, these spies were the first Persians to set eyes on mainland Greece.[46] Again, Darius has to be told in passage 3 about the Athenians. Mardonius gives Xerxes a brief and—from a military point of view—completely useless description of Greece (passage 11). In the council scene Xerxes relies on Mardonius' false information regarding the Greeks' military capacities and brushes aside Artabanus' correct information. He will only discover his opponents' valour the hard way, through defeat. We can now appreciate why Herodotus chose to present the geographical information about Greece in close connection with Xerxes' march

[45] The leitmotif has not yet been discussed anywhere. Cf., however, Lewis (1977), 148: 'and it seems to me to be a theme of the History that the Persians gradually discover what the Spartans are like.' He discusses 1. 102; 7. 101–5; 7. 209; 7. 234; 9. 48. I owe this reference to Rosalind Thomas. See also Dewald (1985) and Christ (1994).

[46] Other instances: 1. 59, 71, 102, 152; 3. 4, 17–25; 4. 44; 5. 36, 49–50, 73, 105; 7. 101–5, 209, 234; 9. 48.

through that country (cf. passage 12): it shows us the process by which this Persian king gradually gets to know Greece.

One particular instance of this leitmotif deserves special attention. It is found at the moment when the Ionians are deliberating over whether to attack the Persians:

(22) *οἱ μὲν δὴ ἄλλοι πάντες γνώμην κατὰ τὠυτὸ ἐξεφέροντο, κελεύοντες ἀπίστασθαι, Ἑκαταῖος δ' ὁ λογοποιὸς πρῶτα μὲν οὐκ ἔα πόλεμον βασιλέϊ τῶν Περσέων ἀναιρέεσθαι, καταλέγων τά τε ἔθνεα πάντα τῶν ἦρχε Δαρεῖος καὶ τὴν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ.*

All the rest spoke their minds to the same effect, favouring revolt, save only Hecataeus the historian; he advised them that they would best be guided not to make war on the king of Persia, recounting to them the tale of the nations subject to Darius, and all his power. (5. 36. 2)

Once more (cf. passage 8), the narrator allows a character to make a very brief analepsis ('recounting to them the tale of the nations subject to Darius, and all his power'), in the knowledge that he himself has provided the full information in the preceding books. Seeing that this time the speaker is a historian, I suggest that in fact this passage contains a 'metahistoriographical' message; it can be taken to represent Herodotus' justification for his many descriptive and historical digressions (and therefore, in a sense, for his anachronical structure). They are not the result of a biographical accident (that he happened to start his career as an ethnologist), but of his professional conviction that this kind of information is necessary in order to understand history (and his own story). Only people who have correct information about their opponent can take the right decision or give the right advice.[47]

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have tried to approach the problem of the structure of Herodotus' *Histories* from a fresh angle, that of narratology, and

[47] Perhaps we could even go one step further, as both John Moles and Jim Morrison have suggested to me, and add that Herodotus thought that knowledge of the past was necessary in order to take the right decisions in the present. In other words, his *Histories* have a didactical or political function (specifically, they warn imperialist Athens of his own time not to make the same mistakes as the oriental despots portrayed in his text, cf. Moles 1996). Though I find this suggestion attractive, I feel I am not yet well enough at home in Herodotus and Herodotean scholarship to take up a position.

in particular the aspect of 'order'. Even the single sample chosen for discussion, the prolepses and analepses which have to do with Xerxes' decision to march on Greece, shows both the quantity and quality of these devices in Herodotus. Narrators and characters employ them for different reasons (to inform, warn, persuade, and so on) and with very different effects (irony, suspense, and so on). Further research in this field will certainly enrich our interpretation of the text. I am thinking in particular of the many *implicit* prolepses and analepses.[48] To take one example, the mere fact that somebody is called περιχαρής (exceedingly glad) in Herodotus in fact signals that he will end badly.[49] This type of research may have a bearing on the even more controversial question of the genesis of the text. Thus I hope that, after my discussion of the dense network of prolepses and analepses in the Persian council scene (7. 5–11), no one will be inclined to agree with the following remark by Fornara: 'VII–IX is a "book" in itself . . . It can even be separated from what precedes without contextual damage.'[50]

[48] This distinction derives from Bal (1985), 65–6.

[49] Lateiner (1977), (1982), Chiasson (1983).

[50] Fornara (1971), 38.