

Thucydides' Persian Wars

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I. INTRODUCTION: HERODOTUS OR THUCYDIDES?

I examine in this paper the influence of Herodotus, the first Greek historian whose work survives intact, on his successor, Thucydides; and the influence of the Persian Wars, the climax of Herodotus' work, on Thucydides' conception of his subject, 'the war of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians'. This influence has often been thought slight: Herodotus and Thucydides have been regarded as 'two men who complement one another, but as opposites';¹ and it is claimed that Thucydides 'showed little inclination to imitate his predecessor'.² Indeed, scholars tend to stress how Thucydides reacted against Herodotus by insisting on accuracy, by rejecting the pleasures of story-telling, and by including no gods, few women, and not all that many non-Greeks.³ Thucydides' reaction against Herodotus is also thought to condition his claim that the Peloponnesian War was

greater than the Persian Wars. My aim is to propose a more complex view of the relationship between Herodotus and Thucydides: my method will be to explore first how Thucydides constructs his war in terms of the Persian Wars themselves, and then the links between Thucydides' account of Athens' invasion of Sicily and Herodotus' account of Xerxes' invasion of Greece.

A better understanding of Thucydides' relationship with Herodotus and the Persian Wars is vital for our grasp of the development of Greek historiography. Jacoby argued that it was the experience of Periklean Athens that gave Herodotus a deeper insight into the significance of the Persian Wars, and caused him to move from ethnography to history.⁴ Scholars nowadays are less confident that the form of Herodotus' history offers evidence for his development, and less confident in the reductive teleology of Jacoby's story. But there is an increasing tendency to replace one Athenocentric story with another: it is argued that Herodotus was responding to the experience of Greek division in the aftermath of the Persian Wars, and that his goal was to offer a comment on Athenian imperialism, the successor to Persian imperialism.⁵ It is all the more pressing to assess Thucydides' response to Herodotus and the Persian Wars in the light of these 'Thucydidean' readings of Herodotus. And his response is equally interesting for its influence on the subsequent development of ancient historiography: 'he set standards of research and accuracy for all time', but 'ordained that history should henceforth be primarily a matter of war and politics'.⁶

Studying the intertextual links between Herodotus and Thucydides also reveals the origins of the more settled generic awareness which emerged later in the history of historiography. Ancient critics who were looking on historians as possible models tended to concentrate on the stylistic influence of one historian on another. But a theoretical concern with other forms of imitation can also be found:

I am grateful to Lynette Mitchell, Simon Hornblower and Christina Kraus for the comments on a draft of this paper. All dates are BCE.

¹ U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Greek Historical Writing*, tr. G. Murray (Oxford, 1908), 7 (he proposed Theopompus as a synthesis).

² S. Usher, *The Historians of Greece and Rome* (London, 1969), 23.

³ For a balanced treatment of the differences between Thucydides and Herodotus, see Hornblower [034] ch. 2; Crane [103] illuminates some of these differences statistically.

⁴ 'Herodotos', *RE Suppl.* II (1913), 352–60.

⁵ e.g. C. Fornara, *Herodotus: An Interpretative Essay* (Oxford, 1971), 40–1; C. Meyer, 'The Origins of History in Ancient Greece', *Arethusa* 20 (1987), 53. Many others see contemporary allusion in Herodotus' work without relating it to his development as a historian.

⁶ Hornblower [034] 30. See especially Momigliano's essay 'The Place of Herodotus in the History of Historiography', *Studies in Historiography* (London, 1966), 127–42.

it underlies Lucian's satire of a historian who began with Thucydides' opening sentence, changing only the names; who then transferred the speech of Thucydides' Corcyrean envoy unchanged to Armenia; and who 'inflicted a plague on the people of Nisibis... lifting it totally from Thucydides except for the Pelasgikon and the Long Walls' (*De Hist. conscr.* 15). We can get some idea of what Lucian was satirising not just from the way in which historians imitated Thucydides in practice, but also from Thucydides' imitation of Herodotus. Thucydides' preface was echoed by later historians, but is itself carefully aligned with, and separated from, Herodotus.⁷ And just as Livy's debate between Fabius Maximus and Scipio on the Roman invasion of Africa echoes Thucydides' debate between Nikias and Alkibiades on the Athenian invasion of Sicily,⁸ so too Thucydides' debate echoes Herodotus' debate between Mardonios and Artabanos on the Persian invasion of Greece.

The suggestion that Thucydides' narrative has a broader form of intertextual relationship with Herodotus, that it invites its readers to conceive the Peloponnesian War, and in particular the Sicilian expedition, in terms of the Persian Wars, can be supported by many parallels in ancient historiography. Herodotus himself forges links between the wars he describes—above all, between Darius' invasion of Scythia and Xerxes' invasion of Greece;⁹ and these links 'are suggestive, pointing the way in which these very different and individual kings... fall into the same pattern of activity and failure'.¹⁰ Sometimes, the point may be to illuminate contrasts: Tacitus suggests a 'reversal of values at Rome' when he 'imitates Sallust by describing the war [against Tacfarinas] in terms of the Jugurthine War'.¹¹ Linking two wars may also be a way of measuring the status of the writer as well as the significance of the events he narrates: in his Plataia elegy, Simonides implicitly compared the Persian and Trojan Wars, and his own role and Homer's.¹² Arrian's application of the same technique to his account of the invasion of Persia by Alexander, the

⁷ See e.g. Moles [125]. [See also Dewald [134] = Chapter 6 above.]

⁸ See Rodgers [226].

⁹ See e.g. F. Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus*, tr. J. Lloyd (Berkeley, 1988), 35–40.

¹⁰ Pelling [185] 131.

¹¹ R. H. Martin and A. J. Woodman, *Tacitus' Annals Book 4*, 3rd edn. (Cambridge, 1998), introductory note on *Annals* 4.23–6.

¹² See Parsons's note on P. Oxy. 3965 (*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 59 (1992), 32).

new Achilles, suggests that the pattern of linking different wars is not just a 'literary' device, but also a reflection of the 'literary' way people conceive wars as they experience them—and even of the 'literary' reasons people make war.¹³

Talking of 'intertextual relationships' does not strictly imply anything either about authorial intention or about authorial knowledge. To discuss authorial 'intention' is less helpful than to discuss whether intertextual echoes contribute anything to our reading. But it is important to determine authorial knowledge if we want to know whether a particular echo signifies anything more than (for instance) a shared intellectual climate. The general assumption that Thucydides knew Herodotus' *Histories* has recently been challenged by J. J. Kennelly.¹⁴ It is not my purpose to refute his arguments here:¹⁵ it is enough to note that while he admits that Thucydides could have been exposed to Herodotus after 414 BC, the 'publication' date he proposes for Herodotus, he writes that 'Thucydides manifests no indication that this exposure influenced his own work'¹⁶—without considering any of the passages where this exposure has often been assumed. We will see in the second half of this paper that the assumption that Thucydides was exposed to Herodotus' work is justified. First, however, we need to put this exposure in context by analysing the ways in which the allusions to the Persian Wars which Thucydides himself makes as narrator, and which his characters make in the speeches he gives them, set up Thucydides' war as a successor to the war that ends Herodotus' *Histories*.

II. THUCYDIDES AND THE PERSIAN WARS¹⁷

A narrative of Athens' performance in the Persian Wars is offered by the Athenian speakers at Sparta in 432 who try to discourage Sparta

¹³ See J. L. Moles, 'The Interpretation of the "Second Preface" in Arrian's *Anabasis*', *JHS* 105 (1985), 163.

¹⁴ *Thucydides' Knowledge of Herodotus* (diss. Brown University 1994).

¹⁵ See the strong criticisms of Hornblower, *Comm.* [031] vol. 2, 25–38; also 137–45 < for a list of passages where scholars have suspected some intertextual allusion.

¹⁶ Hornblower, *Comm.* [031] vol. 2, 150.

¹⁷ Some of the arguments in this section are drawn from my book, Rood [154].

from declaring war by showing 'what sort of a city' Sparta will face (1.73.3), and that they are themselves 'worthy to rule' (1.75.1):

We say that we alone braved battle against the barbarian at Marathon, and that when he came later, unable to resist by land, we went on board our ships in full force and joined in the sea-battle at Salamis... We showed an eagerness that was by far the most daring: when no one was helping us by land, we thought fit to leave the city, destroy our property... and run the risk of going on board our ships. (1.73.4, 74.2)

The Athenian ambassadors' story is part of 'the Athenian history of Athens'—the succession of noble deeds that was narrated regularly, and in similar terms, on occasions such as the annual Funeral Orations for the war-dead.¹⁸ It is no surprise, then, that they precede their story with the claim that they are 'rather tired of continually raising this subject' (1.73.2).

Elsewhere Thucydides 'probably gave less space in his speeches to traditional themes, especially the Persian Wars, than did the more conventional orators of his own day'.¹⁹ One reason Thucydides' speakers avoid events before the Persian Wars is that they share Thucydides' own methodological qualms about the reliability of ancient history (1.73.2, cf. 1.1.3, 20.1, 21.2). Thucydides' other Athenian speakers find different reasons for avoiding the Persian Wars themselves: Perikles refuses to give a narrative of Athenian deeds in his Funeral Oration to 'those who know them' (2.36.4: *en eidosin*); the Athenians at Melos say that they will not defend Athenian imperialism by appeals to the Persian Wars (5.89); and in the Kamarina debate Euphemos says that he will justify Athenian imperialism not by Athens' defence at Marathon, but by the presence of Ionians in Xerxes' force (6.82.4–83.2).

Hornblower is 'tempted to wonder whether it is Thucydides, rather than his speakers... who finds the Persian Wars a "disagreeable" theme'.²⁰ But the attitude to the Persian Wars shown by Thucydides' speakers need not be the same as the attitude of Thucydides

¹⁸ See Loraux [314] ch. 3. W. Kierdorf, *Erlebnis und Darstellung der Perserkriege* (Göttingen, 1966), 96 plausibly argues that this Athenian history was a regular part of political diplomacy.

¹⁹ Hornblower, *Comm.* [031] vol. 1, 118.

²⁰ (above n. 19).

himself. Within Thucydides' work, the account of the Persian Wars offered by the Athenians at Sparta is enough: by the time of the Funeral Oration, Thucydides' implied audience, as well as Perikles' Athenian audience, are *en eidosin*, 'among those who know'. That the Athenian ambassadors at Sparta call it disagreeable to raise the topic at all is tactful.²¹ And while the refusal of later speakers to speak of Athenian achievements in the Persian Wars is pointed, it is part of another story: not (as often supposed) a story about the decline of moral appeals in wartime, but a story about how different situations call for different rhetoric.²²

It is essential for the design of the narrative that the account of the Persian Wars that Thucydides does give is placed where it is. It prepares for Thucydides' account of Athens' rise to power straight after the Persian Wars (the *Pentekontaetia*): an account that justifies Thucydides' claim that the Peloponnesian War resulted from Spartan fear of growing Athenian power. And that this account starts immediately after the Persian Wars itself suggests that the Persian Wars are central to the origin of the Peloponnesian War—a suggestion reinforced by its focus on how the Athenians built on their naval advances during the Persian Wars.

Thucydides' telling of the *Pentekontaetia* also suggests that it is important for his narrative effect that the account of the Persian Wars is spoken by Athenians. The Athenian speech is echoed in the speech Themistokles makes at Sparta in 479/8 in which he asserts the Athenians' right to re-build their walls by appealing to the Persian Wars: 'When it was resolved that it was better to leave the city and go on board the ships, they formed that daring resolution without the Spartans; and in all their deliberations with the Spartans, they had appeared second to none in judgement' (1.91.5). The echoes imply that the spirit shown by the Athenians in resisting Spartan demands before the start of the Peloponnesian War was the same as that shown by Themistokles in resisting Spartan demands straight after the

²¹ Pl. *Menex.* 235d3–5 notes that one has to be a good speaker if one is to praise Athens in front of a Peloponnesian audience.

²² The use of the Persian Wars in Thucydides' speeches is discussed by L. M. Kubo, 'Thucydides and the Persian War', *Journal of Classical Studies* 19 (1971), 43–57 (Japanese, with English résumé), and Y. Z. Tzifopoulos, 'Thucydidean Rhetoric and the Propaganda of the Persian Wars Topos', *Parola del Passato* 281 (1995), 91–115.

Persian Wars. And that appeal is made in both cases to Athens' performance in the Persian Wars suggests that this spirit was born of those wars.

It is also telling that the terms used in the Athenian narrative recur in the *Pentekontaetia*. When the Athenians re-build their walls, the Spartans, though secretly angry, are still friendly to Athens because of their 'eagerness' (1.92: *prothumian*²³) against Persia, but their allies are already 'afraid of their daring in the Persian Wars' (1.90.1: *tolman*²⁴). The same Athenian qualities lead to the 'first open dispute' between Athens and Sparta: when Athenian troops summoned by Sparta do not manage to break the resistance of rebel helots besieged at Ithome, 'the Spartans feared the daring and the innovativeness of the Athenians (*to tolmeron kai neoteropoiian*)' and 'sent them away alone of the allies (*monous ton xummachon*), not revealing their suspicion [that the Athenians might help the helots]' (1.102.3). The qualities shown by the Athenians during the Persian Wars explain not just why they are feared by the Spartans, but also why they resent the step the Spartans take to rid themselves of their fear: 'they did not think they deserved to suffer this at the hands of the Spartans' (1.102.4: *ouk axiôsantes hupo Lakedaimoniôn touto pathein*). We recall the insistent claims made by the Athenians in 432 that they were 'worthy' (*axioi*) of empire,²⁵ and that one of the achievements against Persia on which they based that claim was the old lie that they 'alone' fought at Marathon (1.73.4: *monoi*). These echoes ensure that the Persian Wars form a vital part of the causal analysis of the *Pentekontaetia* without any need for a direct reference.

The *Pentekontaetia* suggests not just a continuity in Athenian spirit between the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars, but also a continuity in Athenian strategy. Perikles' policy of abandoning Attica and relying on naval power is made possible by Themistokles' strategic foresight in completing the Piraeus walls just after the Persian Wars:

Themistokles thought that the Athenians, having taken to the sea, were advancing greatly towards acquiring power... He wanted by the size and thickness of the wall to keep off the schemes of the enemy: a small number of

²³ Cf. Thuc. 1.74.1–2, 75.1.

²⁴ Cf. Thuc. 1.74.2, 4.

²⁵ Thuc. 1.75.1, 76.2–3; cf. also *êxiôsamen*, 'we thought fit', at 74.2.

the most useless men would suffice to guard it, while the rest would go on board the ships (*es tas naus esbêsesthai*)... He thought the Piraeus was more useful than the upper city, and he often would advise the Athenians, if ever they were hard pressed by land, to go down to the Piraeus and withstand everyone with their ships. (1.93.3–7)

Themistokles' strategic vision is also significant because 'going on board ship' was one of the great Persian Wars deeds on which the Athenians prided themselves: a symbol of their willingness to stay and fight for Greece despite the loss of Attica.²⁶ It is, therefore, not just a continuity in strategy, but also a continuity in spirit, that Thucydides suggests when he picks up the term later in the *History*. In 427, the Peloponnesians, thinking that the Athenians had been weakened by war and plague, planned an attack by sea as well as by land: 'the Athenians manned 100 ships, going on board (*esbantes*) themselves except the *hippeis* and *pentakosiomedimnoi*, and the metics' (3.16.1), ravaged the Peloponnese, and prevented the planned attack. During the oligarchic coup in 411, they show again that they are the same Athenians as of old: when it is thought that a Spartan fleet is sailing for the Piraeus, 'the Athenians at once went at a run, all together, to the Piraeus... and some went on board the ships that were lying ready (*es tas parousas naus esebainon*), while others began launching additional ships' (8.94.3).

Elsewhere, the memory of the Persian Wars can be used to suggest not just the possibility, but also the desirability, of Perikles' policy. Perikles closes his speech urging the Athenians to resist Spartan demands before the war by appealing to the Athenian abandonment of their city before Salamis:

It is from the greatest dangers that the greatest honours come to both city and individual. Our fathers at any rate resisted the Persian without even the same resources, but leaving their resources, drove away the barbarian by judgement more than by chance, by daring more than by force... We must not fall behind them, but must resist the enemy in every way and attempt to hand down our resources to our descendants unimpaired. (1.144.3–4)

²⁶ Cf. *Esbantes/esbênai es tas naus* at Thuc. 1.18.2, 73.4, 74.2, 74.4, 91.5; and elsewhere: e.g. Lys. 2.30, 40; Dem. 18.204; and also the terms of the 'Themistokles decree' (ML no. 23), lines 13–14; Plut. *Them.* 10.4. At Thuc. 4.25.5, 100.5, however, the phrase is unemphatic.

And in Perikles' Funeral Oration, it is Marathon that underlies his presentation of the Athenians as people who 'eagerly repelled the invading enemy, barbarian or Greek' (2.36.4) and 'do not make the invading enemy resent being harmed by men like them' (2.41.3).

Perikles' attempt to inspire the Athenians to resist also helps to elicit the impracticality of his strategy: he is speaking at a time when the Athenians are confined in their city, not beating off invaders. In the narrative, too, Thucydides calls on the Persian Wars to explain why the Athenians find Perikles' strategy hard to follow: 'When their land was being openly ravaged, a thing which the young men had never seen before and the old only in the Persian Wars, it seemed terrible, as was natural (*eikos*); it seemed best to all, and especially to the young, to go out and not let it happen' (2.21.2). The reason why they do not tolerate the sight is suggested by Archidamos, leader of the invading force: 'the Athenians think that they deserve to rule others (*archein... tôn allôn axiousi*) and to invade and ravage their neighbours' land rather than to see their own ravaged' (2.11.8); and again the unstated but understood reason why they think that they deserve to rule others is their efforts in the Persian Wars.²⁷

Thucydides' account of the ravaging of Attica suggests that the Peloponnesian War does not simply look back to the Persian Wars: it is also in some sense a reliving of it. A sense that the Persian Wars are being relived is also evoked when Thucydides describes how hard it was for the inhabitants of Attica to move to the city and leave estates which (50 yrs!) they had lately restored after the Persian invasions' (2.16.1); and again the effect is to point to difficulties in Perikles' policy. The difference lies in the roots of the emotional engagement with the countryside implied by the two accounts: in the one case it is born of the self-regard of an imperial power, in the other of a deep attachment to a settled mode of life. The emotional—and sympathetic—tone in which Thucydides records the upsetting of that settled mode of life through the reliving of the Persian Wars reappears in his account of the revolt of Chios in 412: 'the Athenians devastated their country, which was beautifully stocked and had remained uninjured to that time since the Persian Wars: for after the Spartans the Chians are the only people I have known

²⁷ Cf. n. 25. That Thucydides supports Archidamos' proposal is suggested by the use of *eikos*, 'natural', at 2.11.8 and 21.2.

who have been at the same time both prosperous and prudent, and they ordered their city the more securely the greater it grew' (8.24.3); the Chians suffered 'in the unexpected turns of human life' (4).

These last two passages show that the Peloponnesian War could be conceived as a return to the destruction of the Persian Wars: other passages will show that it could be conceived as a perversion of the Persian Wars. In the *Archaeology*, Thucydides does not simply argue that the Peloponnesian War was greater than earlier wars; he suggests a contrast between Greek unity during the Persian Wars and Greek division afterwards: 'By a common effort (*koinêi*), they repulsed the barbarian; but not long later they split into two divisions, one under the Athenians, the other under the Spartans...' (1.18.2).²⁸ This division is a precondition of the increase in the power of Athens and Sparta by the time of the Peloponnesian War, and so of the greatness of that war; and the suffering caused by divisions between cities and within cities is another indication of the greatness of Thucydides' war. Whatever we think of that claim, 'it is the argument of a man who regarded war not as an occasion for glory... but as an evil':²⁹ a man who looks back to the Persian Wars as a time when the Athenians and the Spartans 'flowered with their alliance intact' (1.19: *ênthêsan*). The shift away from a common effort is further reflected in Thucydides' description of the battle of Sybota (scene of the first fighting between Athenians and Peloponnesians since the Peace of 446/5) as 'the greatest sea-battle ever fought by Greeks against Greeks (*Hellêsi pros Hellênas*) in terms of the number of ships engaged' (1.50.2): Salamis is the implied term of comparison.

The perversion of the Persian Wars is not just marked by the move from unity against an invader to disunity: Athens is now conceived by its enemies as the new Persia.³⁰ The analogy between Athens and

²⁸ Cf. Erbse [060] 102, who argues that the *Archaeology* depicts the difficult progress towards national unity as foil to its collapse in the Peloponnesian War.

²⁹ Gomme [281] 120.

³⁰ This conception is found in other texts too: cf. C. J. Tuplin, *Achaemenid Studies* (Stuttgart, 1996), 142–5, on old comedy; M. M. Henderson, 'Plato's *Menexenus* and the Distortion of History', *Acta Classica* 18 (1975), 35, who argues that implied links between the Persian and Athenian empires are part of the undermining of Athens' self-presentation in Plato's *Menexenus*; and note that M. C. Miller, *Athens and Persia in the Fifth Century BC: A Study in Cultural Receptivity* (Cambridge, 1997) argues that a deliberate 'Persising' was part of the Athenians' self-expression through their material culture (see especially 218–42 on the Odeion of Perikles).

Persia is implicit in the Spartans' proclamation that they were liberating Greece (2.8.4), in various speakers' calling Athens a tyrant city (1.122.3, 2.63.2, 3.37.2), and in references in both speeches and narrative to Athens' 'enslavement' of other Greeks (speeches: e.g. 1.68.3, 69.1, 121.5, 122.2, 124.3; narrative: 1.98.4). This implicit analogy is particularly striking when made by the Mytilenaians during the panhellenic festival at Olympia (3.10.3–5). And it is at another charged setting, Plataia, that the analogy is first made explicit:³¹ the Thebans use the same terms for past Persian behaviour and present Athenian behaviour, and counter the Plataians' claim that they alone of the Boiotians did not medize with the claim that they alone have atticized (3.62.1–2); and they draw an implicit parallel between the liberation from Persia won at Plataia in 479 and the liberation from Athens won at Koroneia in 446 (3.62.5, cf. 67.3). All this is in marked contrast to the Athenians' earlier claims: now rather than 'liberators', they are 'enslavers'; and later, as we have seen, it is Athenians who inflict on Chios the harm previously done by Persians.

The very prominence of the Plataian sections in Thucydides' narrative is another pointer to his conception of his war as a perversion of the Persian Wars. Much more could be said on this topic: the Persian Wars must be central to any attempt to explain why Thucydides has his war begin with the Thebans' attack on Plataia, why he exploits Plataia's destruction as an occasion for exploring moral issues and the way in which rhetoric deals with moral issues, why he includes so much religious detail in the Plataian debates, and why he makes the Plataians' self-presentation so close to that of the Athenians. The Persian Wars would surely also have been prominent in Thucydides' treatment of the fate of Athens at the end of the war.

The Spartans' destruction of Plataia is itself part of Thucydides' story about the tarnishing of their great Persian War achievements in the Peloponnesian War. This story continues when Spartan hoplites are stranded and surrounded on the island of Sphakteria in 425: Thucydides' comment that they 'were caught in the same position as the men on Thermopylai' (4.36.3) points to the contrast between the Spartans' fight to the death at Thermopylai and their eventual surrender at Sphakteria. And this contrast explains why that surrender

³¹ Cf. Connor [035] 93.

was 'of all the events of the war the most unexpected for the Greeks' (4.40.1).³²

A contrast with the Persian Wars is also central to Thucydides' portrayal of the self-destruction of Corcyra as the archetypal illustration of the harm done by disunity within Greek states. During the early stages of the Corcyraian *stasis*, the oligarchs burn all the houses around the agora to prevent the *demos* from attacking, 'sparing neither their own nor others' (3.74.2: *pheidomenoi oute oikeias oute allotrias*). Just after the Persian Wars, by contrast, Themistokles had instructed the Athenians, 'everyone in the city, all together, men, women, and children', to build a new wall 'sparing neither private nor public building' (1.90.3: *pheidomenous mête idiou mête dêmosiou oikodomêmatos*)³³—a sentence resounding with a feeling of the civic unity that has been shattered at Corcyra. Two of the catchphrases that emerged from Athens' resistance to Persia are then evoked in Thucydides' account of the later stages of the *stasis* (some of the oligarchs are now suppliants): fearing a Peloponnesian naval attack, the Corcyraian democrats 'entered into discussion with the suppliants and the others as to how the city might be saved (*hopôs sôthêsetai hê polis*), and persuaded some of them to go on board the ships (*es tas naus esbênai*)' (3.80.1).³⁴ A dreadful perversion of the spirit of 480 follows when the threat of attack is gone: 'they led off the ships those they had persuaded to go on board and killed them' (3.81.2).

The implicit contrast with the Persian Wars is here a source of horror. Elsewhere Thucydides' evocation of the Persian Wars, whether explicit or implicit, whether from the narrative or from the speeches, has both an analytical and an emotional register: it is central to his presentation of 'the war of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians' as a war of disunity that springs from, and perverts, a war of unity. That his attitude to the Persian Wars was not dismissive will

³² Cf. Connor [035] 118 n. 19. For other geographical comparisons involving Thermopylai, see Hyp. 6.12; Paus. 10.22.8.

³³ Elsewhere Thucydides uses the phrase 'sparing neither x nor y' only in his emotive account of the massacre at Mykalessos (7.29.4). For its force, cf. Solon F4 West 12–13; Hdt. 9.39.2; Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.46; Diod. 13.58.2, 14.53.1; Arrian *Anab.* 1.8.8; Caesar *BG* 7.28.4.

³⁴ For going on board ships, see n. 26; and for the association of this act with safety, 1.74.1, 3; Hdt. 7.139.5.

be confirmed by analysis of his narrative of Athens' invasion of Sicily: this analysis will also show that his attitude to Herodotus was not dismissive either.

III. THUCYDIDES' AND HERODOTUS' PERSIAN WARS

Herodotus' account of Xerxes' invasion of Greece serves as a counterpoint to Thucydides' account of the Sicilian expedition. A surface similarity lies in the fact that Thucydides' Sicilian narrative has the same 'epic' scope as Herodotus' account of the Persian expedition: it includes a debate at Athens at which the decision to send an expedition is discussed, and a debate at Syracuse about how best to respond to the invasion; it has a catalogue that establishes the scale of the invasion; and it describes in detail the progress of the military campaign.

Far greater correspondences have been proposed: F. M. Cornford wrote that Thucydides 'with evident design' emphasized the parallel with Herodotus' account 'by perpetual coincidences of thought and phrase, and by the turn and colour of all this part of his narrative': 'In the debate upon the expedition we shall hear Nikias reiterate the warnings addressed in vain by Artabanus to the infatuate monarch, and Alcibiades echo the eager tones of Mardonius'.³⁵ An example of these coincidences of phrase occurs towards the beginning of the two accounts. Herodotus says that Darius, when he heard news of Marathon, 'was more eager to send an expedition against Greece' (7.1.1: *mallon hormêto strateuesthai*); and that after a revolt in Egypt, 'he was still more eager to send an expedition against both peoples' (7.1.3: *kai mallon hormêto ... strateuesthai*; cf. also 7.4). Thucydides presents an excursus illustrating 'the magnitude of the island which the Athenians were now eager to invade' (6.6.1: *strateuein hormênto*);

³⁵ Cornford [149] 201. In the course of his chapter 12, Cornford notes many of the echoes I will discuss; see also the references given by Hornblower, *Comm.* [031] vol. 2, 144. Note also K. Raaflaub, 'Herodotus, Political Thought, and the Meaning of History', *Arethusa* 20 (1987), 236 n. 40, who raises (sceptically) the possibility that it was Herodotus' debate that was echoing a real debate at Athens.

and later a speech by Alkibiades which makes the Athenians 'much more eager than before for the expedition' (6.19.1: *pollôi mallon ê proteron hormênto strateuein*), and a response by Nikias which only makes them 'much more eager' (6.24.2: *polu ... mallon hormênto*).

That both accounts stress an increasing urge for an expedition is itself a revealing sign of their similar colour: they exploit the gap between the expectations of participants and the reader's knowledge that the expeditions will fail. This cognitive gap also colours their descriptions of how the expeditions' departures serve as vehicles for display: after Xerxes' offer of a prize for the best-equipped Persian (Hdt. 7.8.8.1) 'everyone was very eager (*pas anêr ... eiche prothumiên pasan*), each wanting himself to receive the gifts' (7.19.2); at Athens 'the trierarchs, one and all, were particularly eager (*prothumêthentos henos hekastou*) for their ships to stand out in appearance and in speed, while the land forces ... contested with each other over their armour and personal equipment' (Thuc. 6.31.3). Thucydides also describes crowds flocking to watch the Athenian fleet depart, and the sailors themselves pouring libations from gold and silver goblets, and holding 'a contest as far as Aigina' (6.32.2: *hamillan*) as they sail out of the Piraeus: we recall with disquiet Herodotus' description of Xerxes 'looking on' at the Persian forces and 'desiring to see a contest of ships' (7.44: *tôn neôn hamillan*), and later pouring a libation from gold goblets (7.54). The brilliant display of the present is overshadowed by the destruction that awaits. And that destruction is captured in mirror-scenes: Herodotus' account of Xerxes' gaze at the more serious contest of Salamis (8.88, 90), Thucydides' accounts of the shifting emotions felt by onlookers during the final sea-battle at Syracuse and of the wretched departure of the Athenian force from Syracuse (7.71, 75).

That the debates which Herodotus and Thucydides present in Persia and in Athens are also coloured by the future is suggested by the presence of 'wise advisers': Herodotus' Artabanos and Thucydides' Nikias.³⁶ They are faced by similar opponents: young men who are moved by personal ambition (Hdt. 7.6.1: Mardonios wants to be

³⁶ Cf. N. Marinatos, 'Nicias as a Wise Advisor and Tragic Warner in Thucydides', *Philologus* 124 (1980), 305–10. Further links emerge from Artabanos' discussion with Xerxes at the Hellespont, where he appeals for longer deliberation about important deeds (Hdt. 7.51.1, cf. Thuc. 6.9.1: note also Thuc. 1.78.1 and 85.1 for the *topos*), and stresses the problem of supplies (Hdt. 7.49.5, cf. Thuc. 6.20.2).

ruler of Greece; Thuc. 6.15.2: Alkibiades wants personal wealth and fame), and who disparage the strength of the country which is to be invaded. Their response is to abuse their opponents for being self-seeking (Hdt. 7.10.7.1, Thuc. 6.12.2); to give a more accurate assessment of the strength of the enemy (Hdt. 7.10.7.2, Thuc. 6.20–2); and to warn against submitting to chance (Hdt. 7.10.8, Thuc. 6.23.3).

The colouring provided by these two advisers is best seen in their recourse to traditional notions of the danger of wanting or hoping for more than one has. Herodotus makes Artabanos warn that it is bad 'to desire much' (7.18.2: *to pollôn epithumeein*), and bad too 'to teach the heart to seek always for more than it possesses' (7.16.2: *pleon... tou pareontos*); his opponent Mardonios is described as 'desiring new deeds' (7.6.1: *neôterôn ergôn epithumêtês*). Thucydides presents a Nikias who warns against 'a fatal passion for what is absent' (6.13.1: *duserôtas einai tôn apontôn*), and is ignored: 'A passion (*erôs*) fell on all alike to sail... Those of military age felt a longing for the sight and spectacle of what was absent (*tês... apousês pothôi opseôs kai theôrias*), and were full of hope that they would come home safely... The desire (*epithumia*) of most of them was excessive' (6.24.3–4).³⁷

Thucydides did not seize every chance of mirroring Herodotus' account. He could have increased his emphasis on delusory hope by mentioning the oracle-mongers and seers who filled the Athenians with hope that they would capture Sicily: he exploits them only later, to make a different psychological point (8.1.1: after they learnt of their defeat, the Athenians were angry with those who had encouraged them to send the expedition). These oracles would have matched the oracles which the Greek exiles at the Persian court thrust before Xerxes, 'omitting anything that promised defeat for the barbarian, and selecting only those which were most fortunate (*ta eutuchestata*), saying how it was fated for the Hellespont to be yoked by a Persian' (Hdt. 7.6.3); Plutarch even claims that Alkibiades himself played the same trick before the Sicilian expedition (*Nik.* 13. 2).

Those 'most fortunate' oracles suggest another difference between the two accounts: Herodotus foreshadows the Persians' defeat at a supernatural level ('most fortunate' is how the oracles seemed to the exiles—an especially uneasy description when the oracles involve

³⁷ Cf. also 6.10.1, 13.1, and 24.2 for references to the Athenian *epithumia*.

'yoking'³⁸). Herodotus also describes portents such as an eclipse of the sun as the Persians leave Sardis: to Xerxes' interpreters, and to Xerxes' joy, this is a sign that 'god foretells to the Greeks an abandonment of their cities' (7.37.3: *ekleipsin tôn poleôn*); to the reader, it suggests not the abandonment of various small cities related by Herodotus (8.36.2, 50.2), but the abandonment of Athens (8.41.3: *exelipon tēn polin*)—the act of self-sacrifice which lingered in Athenian minds as the forerunner of victory at Salamis.

Here too it is the account of the departure of the Sicilian expedition in Plutarch's *Nikias* which mirrors Herodotus: one of the portents he describes (crows pecking at the Persian Wars dedication the Athenians had set up at Delphi: *Nik.* 13. 5) is itself eloquent of how Athens' defeat in Sicily could be conceived as a reversal of Athens' victory over Persia.³⁹ The only one in Plutarch's list of portents which Thucydides mentions is the mutilation of the Herms: he writes that 'it seemed an omen for the expedition' (6.27.3), but concentrates much more on its perceived political significance than on its perceived religious significance. Yet Thucydides' development of this political strand is itself ominous: accusations against Alkibiades' tyrannical ambition prepare for the destructive effect which Alkibiades' subsequent recall had on the Athenian expedition in Sicily.

Thucydides strikes many of the same notes as Herodotus not just in the dark foreshadowing of the early stages of his narrative, but also in his intellectual analysis of the mechanics of imperialism. Both historians distinguish between immediate and underlying causes by showing how an underlying drive for conquest is stirred by appeals for help arising from divisions within the enemy: Herodotus describes the pressure exerted by Greek exiles at the Persian court who want to regain their position at home; Thucydides describes the pressure exerted by an appeal from Egesta for help against Selinous and an appeal from Leontine exiles for help against Syracuse. In their campaign narratives, too, they focus on how local

³⁸ Especially in view of the stress on yoking in Aeschylus' *Persae* (on this link, see N. Fisher, *Hybris: A Study in the Values of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greece* (Warminster, 1992), 368). For the associations of *eutuchiê* in Herodotus, see 1.204.2, 207.2, and especially the Polykrates narrative: 3.39.3, 40 (7 times), 43.1, 44.1, 125.4.

³⁹ Paus. 10.15.5–6 (= Cleidemus *FGrHist* 323 F 10) specifies that the dedications were for the battle of Eurymedon.

tensions in the invaded country are affected by the threat from abroad: they suggest that the invading army is able to exploit divisions within the enemy (Herodotus famously comments that the Phokians would have medized had the Thessalians supported the Greek cause: 8.30); that those divisions are strengthened by the unwillingness of other states to commit themselves to one side or the other until the outcome is clear (Gelon and Corcyra in Herodotus, various Sicilian cities, above all Kamarina, in Thucydides), despite warnings that the invader will attack them in turn (Hdt. 7.157.3, Thuc. 6.78); but also that those divisions can to some extent be overcome by a shared fear (Hdt. 7.138.2, 145.1; Thuc. 7.33.2, cf. 6.21.1, 33.5). As the two sides clash, the middle ground is eroded: Herodotus calls neutrality *med-ism* (8.73.3); Thucydides has the Syracusan Hermokrates threaten vengeance if Kamarina refuses to help (6.80.4–5).

The underlying drive for conquest is explored in similar terms in the debates at Persia and in Athens. In Herodotus, Mardonios claims that attacking Greece will deter others from attacking Persia (7.5.2); and Xerxes says that 'if we remain quiet, they will not; rather, they will send an expedition against our land' (7.11.2). In Thucydides, Alkibiades explains that they have to help their allies since the function of allies is 'to cause grief to our enemies over there and prevent them coming over here' (6.18.1), and that 'if we do not rule others, there is a danger that we shall be ruled ourselves' (6.18.3). This concept of defensive imperialism was already formulated by the Lydian king Croesus (Hdt. 1.46.1): his attempt to remove his fear of growing Persian power merely hastened Cyrus' conquest of Lydia (Hdt. 1.79.1). As if aware of that precedent, Alkibiades justifies his view that one has to attack to defend by arguing that enemies abroad would themselves take preventative strikes at Athens (Thuc. 6.18.2). The reasoning of Xerxes and Alkibiades leads to a policy of endless expansion. And they do indeed suggest that one conquest is a step towards more conquest—be it conquest of the whole of Greece (Alkibiades at Thuc. 6.18.4) or conquest of the world (Xerxes at Hdt. 7.8.γ).

The urge to expand is fostered not only by the stories people tell about their opponents, but also by the stories people tell about themselves. Xerxes appeals to the custom he has inherited:

As I understand from the elders, we have never yet remained inactive since we took over the hegemony from the Medes... There is no need to mention among those who know them well the tribes which Cyrus, Cambyses, and my father Darius conquered and added to our possessions (*prosektêsanto*); as for myself, ever since I took over this throne, I have been considering how not to fall short of those who have held this position before me and how not to add less power to our possessions (*prosktêsomai*). (Hdt. 7.8.α)

Similarly Alkibiades counters Nikias' argument that it is dangerous to seek new conquests while already at war by arguing that 'our fathers obtained their empire even though they had the same enemies we have now... and the Persians as well' (Thuc. 6.17.7); and he too holds that rest is impossible for an active power: 'if it is inactive, the city, like anything else, will wear itself out' (6.18.6, cf. .3). The difference between them is that Xerxes' will to act is more positive: 'great achievements are done by great risks' (Hdt. 7.50.3). The link Xerxes expresses between risk and glory was traditional, and shared by Perikles (1.144.3): the glory Alkibiades seeks is personal (6.15.2, 16.1).

The need to match the deeds of the fathers which both Xerxes and Alkibiades express is familiar.⁴⁰ Thucydides' Perikles ends his first speech with a plea 'to hand down our resources to our descendants unimpaired' (1.144.4); he looks back in his second speech to the preceding generation as one which did hand down more than it received (2.36.2); and appeals in his final speech to the Athenians 'not to seem worse than the fathers' (2.62.3). Herodotus recounts how 'when Croesus and some Persians were sitting by him, Cambyses asked them how they thought he compared with his father Cyrus; they replied that he was better than his father, since he had kept all that Cyrus had and added Egypt and the sea to those possessions (*prosektêsthai*)' (3.34.4: Croesus ambivalently added that the one way he was not like his father was that he did not yet have the sort of son Cyrus had left behind). He also recounts how Darius, in bed with Atossa, is rebuked by her for 'sitting still when he has such great power, and not adding any tribes or power to the Persians' possessions (*prosktômenos*)' (3.134.1).

⁴⁰ Cf. also Aesch. *Pers.* 753–6 for the pressure on Xerxes to do better than Darius; and in general K. Jost, *Das Beispiel und Vorbild der Vorfahren bei den attischen Rednern* (Paderborn, 1936), ch. 3.

The pressure of inheritance felt by the actors in Herodotus and Thucydides is mapped out in the overall shape of their works. Perikles stresses in the Funeral Oration the achievements described in the Athenian speech at Sparta and in the *Pentekontaetia*. Herodotus spans the history of Persian expansion back to its founder, Cyrus, who is driven to further expansion not by a story about his father's deeds, but by a story about his own deeds (1.204.2): like Perikles' refusal to talk about the ancestors' deeds 'among those who know them' (2.36.4), Xerxes' refusal to talk about the deeds of Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius 'among those who know them well' is directed at both the historian's and the speaker's audience.

Herodotus and Thucydides also show how Persians and Greeks fail to control the imperialist urge through debate. Both present debates which take place after a decision has already been made and illustrate the difficulty of changing that decision. The end of the speech in which Xerxes sets out to his select council of nobles his plan of attacking Greece is revealing: 'This is what has to be done; but lest I seem to you to impose my own will, I throw the matter open, and bid whoever wants to express his opinion' (Hdt. 7.8.δ.2). The phrase 'whoever wants' (*ton boulomenon*) recalls the democratic assembly-formula 'who wants to speak?'—the hallmark of freedom (Eur. *Suppl.* 438–9). Yet for Artabanos to oppose Xerxes is an act of 'daring' (7.10.1) which inspires Xerxes' anger (7.11.1). That he was speaking for the majority, however, is shown by their joy when Xerxes decides to abandon the invasion (7.13.3). But it is then forcefully revealed to Xerxes in a dream that he cannot abandon the invasion anyway. Later, when Xerxes does announce that he is following the majority, the result is the unfortunate decision to fight at Salamis (8.69.2); but that Xerxes' other advisers think that Artemisia will be punished for warning him against fighting shows that their own advice has been guided by a perception of what he wants to hear. A free expression of opinion is also stifled by the Athenian democracy portrayed by Thucydides: Nikias speaks first under the constraints of a correct perception that he will not persuade Athenians (6.9.3), and secondly under the constraints of a false perception that he might be able to deter them by exaggerating the force required (6.19.2); and the enthusiasm of the many ensures that those opposed to the Sicilian expedition do not make their opposition felt (6.24.4).

The force of the Herodotean parallels drawn by Thucydides is to suggest that the Athenian invasion of Sicily is in some ways a re-run of the Persian invasion of Greece. This suggestion is enhanced by Thucydides' presentation of the defeat of the Athenian fleet at Syracuse as a reversal of its victory over the Persian fleet at Salamis—a presentation that itself recalls his construction of the Spartan surrender on Sphakteria as a reversal of the Spartan resistance at Thermopylai (see II above). It is here, in the final stages of the Sicilian narrative, that the two currents I have explored in this paper—Thucydides' Persian Wars and Thucydides' use of Herodotus' Persian Wars—merge.

IV. FROM SALAMIS TO SYRACUSE

In the debate which Herodotus presents taking place in the Greek camp before Salamis, Themistokles argues that they should not move from Salamis: 'if you engage by the Isthmus, you will be fighting in the open sea, and that will be not at all to our advantage, with our heavier ships and smaller numbers... whereas fighting in a narrow space (*en steinôi*) with a few ships against many, we will come out on top if things turn out as is probable: for fighting in a narrow space (*en steinôi*) favours us, fighting in an open space (*en euruchôriêi*) favours them' (8.60.α-β). Thucydides analyses the Athenians' defeat at Syracuse in the same terms: their greater skill and their greater numbers are useless in the narrow space of the harbour at Syracuse—where 'the most ships fought in the narrowest space' (7.70. 4).

The difference between the accounts is that Thucydides' tactical analysis extends back from the final battle over earlier sea-battles—and not just over the first sea-battles at Syracuse, but also over sea-battles earlier in the *History*: the final battle at Syracuse is seen to reflect the Athenians' enforced regression to the old-fashioned style of Sybota (1.49) from the skilful manoeuvring shown at Naupaktos (2.83–92).⁴¹ Herodotus, it is true, does develop at some length the

⁴¹ On Thucydides' method of analysing naval strategy, see Romilly [037] 140–60; V. Hunter [177] 85–94. Note in particular his use of *euruchôria* (2.83.2, 86.5, 90. 5, 91.1, 7.36.6, 49.2) and *stenochôria* (2.89.8, 7.36.4 bis, 49.2, 70.6—cf. 2.86.5, 90.1, 7.62.1 for other *sten-* words).

relation between numbers and space—but only in his Thermopylai narrative, where he describes how the Spartans hold a narrow path though greatly outnumbered by the Persians.⁴² In the Salamis narrative, by contrast, the only hint that Themistokles' advice is justified is the confusion in the narrows between retreating and advancing Persian ships (8.89.2⁴³): what wins the day for the Greeks is discipline (they fight *sun kosmôî... kai kata taxin*: 8.86). And Themistokles' argument about fighting in a narrow space is itself presented as a replacement: because the allies are present, he cannot now, as earlier, argue that they would disperse if the fleet moved to the Isthmus.

An even greater difference in the two accounts lies in their treatment of the actual fighting at Salamis and Syracuse. But although Thucydides' narrative of the final battle at Syracuse does not resemble greatly Herodotus' narrative of Salamis, it does not act in textual independence: it recalls Aeschylus' narrative of Salamis in the messenger speech of the *Persae*. 'Both describe with gathering emotion the exhortations before the battle,⁴⁴ the first successes of the ultimately beaten (770.2; *Pers.* 412), then the coupling of ships in the narrows (7.70. 4; *Pers.* 413) and the supreme agony of conflict, and finally the flight of the defeated with outcry and groaning (7.71.6, *oimôgêi te kai stonôî*; *Pers.* 426–27, *oimôgê d' homou kôkumasin*).⁴⁵ And Aeschylus' account of the crowding of corpses in the sea and the helplessness of those still alive (*Pers.* 419–26) is recalled in the piling of body upon body in the waters of the Assinaros (Thuc. 7.84–5).

⁴² See especially 7.177 and 211.2 for preventing the Persians using their numerical strength; and for the narrow space, 7.175.1, 176.2 *bis*, 211.2, 223.2. Cf. already *Iliad* 7.142–4 for the tactical implications of a narrow space.

⁴³ Cf. 8.16.2 for the disturbance to their own side caused by the number of Persian ships at Artemisium, another battle fought in a 'narrow space' (7.176.1 *bis*).

⁴⁴ Thucydides' comment on Nikias' exhortation (7.69.2: 'he added other arguments which men would use at such a crisis... appeals to wives, children, and national gods') is illustrated by *Pers.* 403–5: 'free your fatherland, free your children, women, the seats of your paternal gods, and the tombs of your ancestors.' Note that Diodorus has Nikias invoking Salamis in a speech before the final battle at Syracuse (13.15.2).

⁴⁵ Finley [052] 47. Note that the Salamis narrative in Lysias' Funeral Oration (2.37–9) has many elements in common with Thucydides' account of the final battle at Syracuse: as elsewhere in this speech, direct Thucydidean influence seems likely; but it would also be interesting to know how fifth-century funeral orations described Salamis.

The comparison between Salamis and Syracuse is suggested not just by the way Thucydides evokes Herodotus and Aeschylus, but also by the way he constructs the Persian Wars himself in this part of his work. He lets Hermokrates draw the comparison towards the start of the Sicilian narrative:

There have been few large expeditions, Greek or barbarian, that have gone far from home and been successful: they cannot come in greater numbers than the people of the country and their neighbours, all of whom unite in fear; and even if they fail through lack of supplies in a foreign land, they nonetheless leave fame to those against whom their plans were laid... These very Athenians, after the Persians' unexpected defeat, grew in power through the fame of being the object of their attack; and this may well happen with us too.⁴⁶

And at the end Nikias perhaps refers to the Persians when he tries to encourage his troops with the thought that 'men have been saved from dangers even greater than these' (7.77.1).

As before, the memory of the Persian Wars suggests points of contrast as well as points of comparison. The Greeks did not press against the Persians in retreat or cut them off by destroying their bridge at the Hellespont: the Syracusans determine to stop the Athenians escaping, and continue to press them hard until the end. And it is because they persevere and do not let the Athenians sail away that the Syracusans win the fame foreseen by Hermokrates: 'their achievement would seem fine in the eyes of the Greeks: for the rest of the Greeks would either be freed or released from fear... and they themselves would be thought responsible for this, and greatly admired by men now and by men to come' (7.56.2). Syracuse emerges as a new Athens: Perikles had called Athens 'a city worthy to be admired' and boasted that 'we will be admired by men now and men to come' (2.39.4, 41.4); and the basis for Athens' reputation was that it had given freedom.

Syracuse also emerges as similar to Athens in the way it achieves its renown.⁴⁷ Hermokrates persuades the Syracusans to resist Athens at sea by 'saying that the Athenians' skill at sea was not inherited from their fathers nor a skill forever, but that they were more landmen than the Syracusans, and had been forced to take to the sea by the Persians

⁴⁶ 6.33.5–6: see Connor [035] 175–6.

⁴⁷ Cf. Edmunds [131] 23, 140.

(*anangkasthentas... nautikous genesthai*); and that against men with daring like the Athenians, those who confronted them with daring seemed most difficult' (7.21.3). This echoes Thucydides' own account of the Persian Wars in the *Archaeology*: 'as the Persians approached the Athenians... went on board ship and took to the sea (*nautikoi egen-onto*)' (1.18.2).⁴⁸ Another parallel with Athens is that the Syracusans 'offered their own city to stand in the fore of the danger' (7.56.3): Athens too had offered its city 'to stand in the fore of the danger' (*prokinduneusai*: 1.73.4, the only other occurrence of the word in Thucydides⁴⁹).

To stress that Thucydides presents Athens' invasion of Sicily as a re-run of the Persian invasion of Greece is not to obscure the differences in the accounts. Whereas Herodotus presents Greeks and Persians as being in many ways different,⁵⁰ Thucydides suggests that the similarity between the Syracusans and the Athenians is not restricted to their response to invasion: the Athenians come to regret attacking 'cities which were similar in character—democracies, like themselves, and possessing ships, horses, and greatness' (7.55.2, cf. 8.96.5). Indeed, it is because the Syracusans are a democratic naval power that they are able to respond to invasion as they do: contrast the oligarchic Spartans, who were 'very different in character', and helpful opponents 'especially in the case of a naval power' (8.96.5).

V. THE WAY OF ALL TYRANTS

It remains to discuss how the broad similarities between the invasion narratives of Herodotus and Thucydides affect our reading of

⁴⁸ Cf. Hdt. 7.144.2 on the war between Athens and Aigina shortly before the Persian invasion as what 'saved Greece by forcing the Athenians to become seamen' (*anankasas thalassious genesthai*).

⁴⁹ Cf. Romilly [018] note ad loc.: 'Les idées et les expressions évoquent les Athéniens à Salamine.' The word was commonly used of Athens' performance in the Persian Wars: e.g. Dem. 18.208, Lys. 18.27, Isoc. 4.75, Plut. *Them.* 9.2; and this association was doubtless felt when it was applied to past and future events (Isoc. 4.62: helping the Herakleidae; Lyc. *Leoc.* 50: battle of Chaironeia).

⁵⁰ But see C. B. R. Pelling, 'East is East and West is West—Or Are They? National Stereotypes in Herodotus', *Histos* 1 (1997), on how Herodotus undermines many perceived differences.

Thucydides. The close Herodotean links at the start of his narrative reflect a shared feeling of the shape a story should have. And Thucydides' appropriation of Herodotus is itself part of the shape of his story: the link between the Athenians' greatest triumph and their greatest disaster is but one of many reversals which mark Thucydides' Sicilian narrative as 'tragic'. The idea that Syracuse reverses Salamis also makes a historical point: Hermokrates learns a strategic lesson from Athens' performance at Salamis, and the Syracusans want to emulate that performance.

The pattern of echoes has also suggested that Thucydides 'turned against Athens the tremendous moral which his countrymen delighted to read in the *Persians* of Aeschylus and the History of Herodotus'.⁵¹ And another Herodotean echo has led some scholars to contend that this 'tremendous moral' is a theological one: they argue that when Thucydides refers to the 'total destruction' of Athens' force in Sicily (7.87.6: *panôlethriai*), he alludes not just to Herodotus' representation of Troy's 'total destruction' (2.120.5: *panôlethriêi*), but also to the explanation Herodotus there gives of Troy's destruction—that 'great wrongs meet with great punishments from the gods'.⁵² Nikias' final speech is also cited as evidence of Thucydides' preoccupations: 'if our expedition was offensive to one of the gods, we have been punished enough' (7.77.3). Unlike in Herodotus,⁵³ however, there is no overt authorial support for a claim of divine involvement; the Herodotean echo, and Nikias' speech, contribute, rather, to the heightened and tragic tone of the end of the Sicilian narrative.

For Cornford, Thucydides' difference from Aeschylus and Herodotus is that his schema is 'non-theological', though 'mythical'.⁵⁴ There is no need here to discuss in detail Cornford's 'mythical' schema—his suggestion that Thucydides presents the Athenians as driven by

⁵¹ Cornford [149] 201.

⁵² N. Marinatos Kopff and H. R. Rawlings, 'Panolethria and Divine Punishment', *Parola del Passato* 182 (1978), 331–7; for good remarks, see Connor [035] 208 n. 57, and Fisher, *Hybris* (above n. 38), 402–8, both of whom think that Thucydides leaves a religious interpretation open.

⁵³ See 7.139.5 and 8.13 for explicit claims; and also e.g. Xerxes' dream and the prominent idea of transgressing natural sea-boundaries (Nikias' advice that the Athenians keep the same 'boundaries' with Sicily (6.13.1) is the only hint of that idea in Thucydides).

⁵⁴ Cornford [149] 242. Cf. Hunter [177] 181 n. 7: 'an outlook less religious [than Herodotus]', but no less metaphysical.

'non-human agencies' (Fortune, Delusion, Hope, Eros) in their move from success at Pylos to destruction in Sicily. The specific links between Thucydides and Herodotus do touch on the role of desire and hope, but they touch far more on the imperialist drive from which those passions spring—a drive common to both Persia and Athens.

It is preferable to see Thucydides' implied comparison between Athens and Persia as drawing 'attention to the natural drive towards empire which Thucydides sees as so powerful a force in political activity: states as different as Persia and Athens are subject to this ambition and are driven by it beyond their own control'⁵⁵—rather as Persian rulers as different as Darius and Xerxes are subject to the same ambition.⁵⁶ And through the speeches Thucydides, like Herodotus before him, analyses how states are driven beyond their own control: not just how they are driven by fear towards the destruction they fear, but also how they are moved by the stories they tell about themselves—stories of imperial self-worth and stories of the need to expand and do better than those who have gone before.

Thucydides' analysis of the self-defeating will to expand reveals another, deeper, historical point to his implicating Athens' greatest naval triumph in Athens' greatest naval defeat. The Athenian performance during the Persian Wars was not just a lesson for others; it was that performance, and the way it was perceived, that fostered Athenian expansion in the immediate aftermath of the Persian Wars, and Athenian over-expansion in their more distant aftermath.

VI. CONCLUSION: HERODOTUS AND THUCYDIDES

My analysis of Thucydides' Sicilian narrative confirms that he knew Herodotus' work and that he expected his readers to know it; it suggests, too, that his attitude towards his predecessor was far from contemptuous. This suggestion could be strengthened in other ways. We can point to Thucydides' exploitation of Herodotus for factual information in his speeches;⁵⁷ and to some profound methodological

⁵⁵ Rutherford [126] 61.

⁵⁶ See Pelling [185].

⁵⁷ See Hornblower, *Comm.* [031] vol. 2, 122–37.

similarities in their treatment of the past.⁵⁸ We can also point to other ways in which they explore human limitations: they use the figure of the wise adviser precisely to suggest the difficulty of giving wise advice,⁵⁹ and they explore the paradoxical patterns (self-fulfilling fears, self-destructive successes) that make rational deliberation difficult.

The suggestion that the traditional view of Thucydides' attitude to Herodotus should be revised would be further strengthened if Thucydides' conception of Athenian expansion as in some sense a successor to Persian expansion were itself derived from Herodotus. As I noted at the start of this paper, Herodotus is now commonly read as offering a comment on Athenian imperialism: such readings are supported by the consciousness of the force of the Persian Wars tradition that Herodotus (like Thucydides) shows. Herodotus presents a debate over who should hold the left wing at Plataia at which the Athenians start by telling of their ancestors' famous (mythical) deeds; then argue that 'there is not much point in mentioning these; for people who were good (*chrēstoi*) then might be worse now, and people who were bad (*phlauroi*) then might be better now'; and appeal instead to a recent event—the battle of Marathon—to show that they are 'worthy' (*axioi*) of the disputed position (9.27). Their speech anticipates the way later Athenian actions could be (and perhaps were) used against such appeals to Marathon: in his account of the congress at Sparta in 432, Thucydides presents the Spartan Sthenelaidas responding to the Athenians' claim that they were 'worthy' of empire because of their actions during the Persian Wars with the same argument ('if they were good (*agathoi*) then against the Persians, but are bad (*kakoi*) now against us, they are worthy (*axioi*) of a double punishment, because they have turned from good to bad': 1.86.1).⁶⁰ Herodotus also hints at the future when his

⁵⁸ See R. L. Fowler, 'Herodotos and his Contemporaries', *JHS* 116 (1996), 76–7, where he notes that Thucydides' 'language and technique [in the *archaeologies* of books 1 and 6] are thoroughly Herodotean', and questions whether his methodological remarks in book 1 are directed at Herodotus; his whole article is a valuable reminder that the loss of other historians warps our view of the relationship between Herodotus and Thucydides.

⁵⁹ See Pelling [185].

⁶⁰ This point is made independently by S. Ubsdell, 'Herodotus on Human Nature: Studies in Herodotean Thought, Method, and Exposition' (unpublished D.Phil. thesis; Oxford, 1983), 312–13.

Athenians say that 'in such circumstances it is not proper to dispute (*stasiazein*) over places in the line' (9.27.6): this recalls how the Athenians were earlier said to be aware that if they 'disputed' (*stasiasousi*) over the leadership of the fight against Persia, Greece would be destroyed, 'thinking rightly, for internal strife is worse than united war by as much as war is worse than peace' (8.3.1)—and how Herodotus there looks ahead explicitly to their actual seizure of the hegemony, and implicitly to the 'internal strife' that resulted from this.

This example suggests that, just as it is valid to read Thucydides' Peloponnesian War as in some sense a commentary on the Persian Wars, so too it is valid to read Herodotus' Persian Wars as in some sense a commentary on the Peloponnesian War. It is also valid to read Herodotus' Persian Wars stories, like Thucydides', as political stories: his argument that the Phokians would have medized if the Thessalians had resisted (8.30) undermines local appeals to performance in the Persian Wars;⁶¹ and he wrote that his claim that the Athenians were the saviours of Greece would be 'resented by most people' (7.139.1). But what is not valid is to make Herodotus' story about Athenian imperialism his overriding message, the basis of his historical thought; that is, to make it central to our own stories about how he came to write history. It is precisely the political and emotive significance of memory and history that is acknowledged by characters within the works of Herodotus and Thucydides, and revealed by those works as a whole, that should make us suspicious about all easy constructions of the origins of history-writing.

This political and emotive significance also suggests that Thucydides' construction of Athens' defeat in Sicily as a reversal of Athens' victory over Persia is not simply a 'literary' device: 'history is something lived through; and part of the experience of the Sicilian expedition must have been the sense of a national downfall and the shock at the undoing of such might and splendour'.⁶² So too Thucydides' construction of the Peloponnesian War as a whole suggests that part of the experience of that war—a war between Greeks that was not a war between neighbours, but a war between two extensive power-blocks—must have been the sense of a contrast with the resistance to Persia.

⁶¹ R. Osborne, *Greece in the Making* (London, 1996), 342, argues that this 'probably reflects a widely used structure of argument'.

⁶² Macleod [050] 146.

I have stressed a few points of contact between Thucydides and Herodotus; the differences remain great, and important for their influence on the (partial) restriction of (some branches of) historiography to politics and war. But Thucydides' Persian Wars suggest that even the differences that remain are part of a complex story. Perhaps Thucydides' anti-Herodotean reaction reflects not his rejection of Herodotus, but his perception that Herodotean history was not adequate to convey the intensity of the suffering caused by the realization of the tensions Herodotus had so perceptively intimated.

EDITOR'S POSTSCRIPT

On the similarities between the debate on the Sicilian expedition and that over Xerxes' expedition against Greece (arguing that Herodotus was published after the Sicilian expedition), see now also K. A. Raaflaub, 'Herodot und Thukydides: persischer Imperialismus im Lichte der athenischen Sizilienpolitik', in N. Ehrhardt and L.-M. Günther (eds.), *Widerstand—Anpassung—Integration: die griechische Staatenwelt und Rom: Festschrift für Jürgen Deininger zum 65. Geburtstag* / hrsg. von (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2002), 11–40.

Harrison [374] acknowledges a debt to this study and explores the Syracuse–Athens parallel further (see also Hornblower [389]).