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Rosaria Vignolo Munson
Swarthmore College, rmunson1@swarthmore.edu

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*The trouble with the Ionians:
Herodotus and the beginning of the Ionian
Revolt (5.28–38.1)*

Rosaria Vignolo Munson¹

THE LARGER CONTEXT

Placed at the very centre of Herodotus' work (5.28–6.42), the Ionian Revolt of 499–494 BC plays a pivotal role, both chronologically and causally, linking the Persians' Eastern campaigns to their invasions of Greece.² It also represents a crucial moment in Herodotus' history of the Ionians, which spans the whole work from beginning to end. The Ionians jump-start the *Histories*, one might say, and they do so because they find themselves at the receiving end of the first known Eastern aggressions against Greeks (1.5.3, 6.2–3). Croesus of Lydia completes 'the first subjection of Ionia', as the narrator summarizes at the end of the Croesus *logos*.³ The second is called 'enslavement', when Cyrus defeats Croesus and conquers his possessions.⁴ And so is the third, which occurs after the failure of the revolt we are examining:

οὕτω δὴ τὸ τρίτον Ἴωνες κατεδουλώθησαν, πρῶτον μὲν ὑπὸ Λυδῶν, δις δὲ ἐπεξῆς τότε ὑπὸ Περσέω

In this way the Ionians were enslaved for the third time, [having been conquered] first by the Lydians and twice in a row by the Persians. (6.32)

The Ionians become free from Persian domination after the Greek victory at the time of Xerxes' invasion. But the 1-2-3 count in the statement above proleptically alludes to a fourth subjection, beyond the chronological range

¹ I thank Carolyn Dewald and Donald Lateiner for reading earlier drafts of this paper and offering suggestions. All errors that remain are of course mine.

² Many narratives in Book 5 can be described as 'bridges' between larger or smaller units. The entire book is transitional, between East and West. On bridges in the *Histories*, both narrative and spatial, see Greenwood, Ch. 4 above.

³ 1.92.1; cf. 1.26. For less systematic attacks by the Lydian kings from Gyges to Alyattes, see 1.14.4–19.

⁴ First conquest: 1.92.1 (κατὰ μὲ δὴ . . . Ἰωνίης τὴν πρώτην καταστροφήν ἔσχε οὕτω 'this is how it happened with respect to the first subjection of Ionia'). Second conquest: 1.169.2 (οὕτω δὴ τὸ δεῦτερον Ἰωνίη ἐδεδούλωτο, 'and so it was that Ionia was enslaved for the second time').

of the *Histories* and not explicitly mentioned in our text.⁵ At the time of narration the Ionians are the tributary subjects of Athens.⁶

Herodotus' history of the Ionians is a narrative about being conquered. Its fragmented but ongoing structure mirrors both the marginality of the Greeks of Asia and, at the same time, their nagging long-range involvement in the causality of events bigger than them. 'Outside of Athens and Sparta, no other Greek nation is followed with such consistency in the work as are the Ionians.'⁷ They keep reappearing in the *logos*, though only to be upstaged at every turn by other agents or groups. They tend to trigger or suffer circumstances without determining them. They are capable of bouts of heroism and endurance,⁸ but they are also divided,⁹ and therefore weak,¹⁰ not sufficiently committed to the goal of liberty,¹¹ conflicted in their allegiances, and generally requiring the oversight or support of a larger power – first Lydia or Persia, then Persia or the mainland Greeks, and finally Athens or Persia (or Sparta) in Herodotus' time.

The narrative of the Ionian Revolt, which stretches across Books 5 and 6 of the *Histories*, is shaped like a dumbbell, narrow in the middle and bulkier at the two ends, namely, the *aitiē* section (5.28–35) – which represents the focus of our discussion – and the account of the preliminaries, course and aftermath of the Ionian defeat at Lade (6.6–33).¹² This final battle, from the point of view of the text, is both analogous and antithetical to the battle of Salamis, just as the entire Ionian Revolt comes across as a sort of botched-up preliminary of the Persian Wars.¹³ In both cases a partial and fragile coalition

⁵ On counting see Henderson, Ch. 12 below.

⁶ On the different meanings of the term 'Ionian', see the appendix in Tozzi (1978) 227–30. Herodotus exploits its fluidity to discuss the past in the light of the present. In its broader sense 'Ionian' denotes the Ionian stock (including, e.g., the Athenians themselves), regardless of geography. In its narrowest sense 'Ionians' are the Greeks of the twelve Ionian cities of the Asian coast (1.142), as opposed to Aeolians to the north and the Dorians to the south of them. In between these two meanings, Herodotus also uses 'Ionians' to refer to the Greeks of Asia in general (as at 1.92.1, 1.169.2 and 6.32 cited above), sometimes with the addition of the islands closer to the coast. But the Ionian subjects of Athens also include islands of the Aegean that were never part of a Persian satrapy.

⁷ Immerwahr (1966) 230. Cf. Neville (1979) 269–70; Stadter (1992) 803.

⁸ See p. 151 and n. 27 below.

⁹ 1.142.3–4: they speak different languages. 1.146–7: they have diverse ethnic origins. 1.18, 141.4, 143.1, 168–9: they follow different policies. 1.170, 5.36: they receive and disregard advice to unite politically.

¹⁰ Largely as a cause of disunity: see Neville (1979) 269, who cites 1.170 with 5.3. But see also 1.143.2–3; and softness is a factor at 6.12.

¹¹ The Samians 'did not want to be free' (3.143.2, narrator's gloss); the Ionians are cowardly as free men, but the best of slaves (4.142, opinion of the Scythians); they prefer slavery to hardships (6.11–12, reported speech of the Ionians themselves).

¹² '*Aitiē* section' and 'preparation section' (below) are terms coined by Immerwahr (1966) in reference to the patterned subdivisions of campaign *logoi* in Herodotus. See *ibid.* 345–6 for his schematic outline of the Ionian Revolt narrative.

¹³ On the parallel between Lade and Salamis, see Tozzi (1978) 43–4.

of Greek city-states follows the initiative of their most dynamic member (Miletus/Athens) and fights to achieve/defend their autonomy. This time, however, the leadership is bad, its strategic decisions misguided, and the commitment to the cause uneven. The coalition disintegrates and Miletus, unlike Athens, leads all to enslavement (6.32) instead of freedom, even though that freedom will in turn be viewed as another form of enslavement (see Thuc. 1.122.3).

The two fat ends of the Ionian Revolt narrative are in some respects the opposite of one another. The *aitiē* section is comic, the one on Lade tragic. At Lade, the Ionians reject the (valiant) Dionysius of Phocaea and end up with no leaders. The *aitiē* section is all about the doings of (rascally) leaders, while ‘the Ionians’ as a people do not appear at all beyond the introductory sentence, either as subject or object. But these contrasting extremes emphasize the motif of Ionian helplessness, which goes hand in hand with the Ionians’ relative lack of importance conveyed in the thin narrative middle. Thus, in the preparation *logos*, Aristagoras’ one-man mission to Sparta and Athens (5.36–97)¹⁴ is overwhelmed by two lengthy analeptic insertions that contribute to explaining, among other things, why the second city, and not the first, agreed to send aid. Here the main narrative becomes subordinate to the digressions, just as Ionian affairs (now and later) are viewed in terms of their effects on the free Greek world. The military operations of the revolt begin with the exploits of Athenians and Eretrians, who are the real protagonists of an attack on Sardis, cause a fire that burns the temple of Cybebe, suffer a defeat at Ephesus, and then withdraw (5.97.3–103.1). In the next phase (5.103–6.5), one third of the way through the narrative, we finally find the Ionians, acting on their own and as a group.¹⁵ They enlist the participation of the cities of the Hellespont as well as parts of Cyprus and Caria and achieve a short-lived success. But even here Herodotus frequently turns away from their actions to talk of something else: of Aristagoras, who flees to Thrace and dies, of Histiaeus’ whereabouts, of Darius’ angry reaction to the news of Sardis devastated by fire. The king makes a fuss about the Athenians but, somewhat like the narrator, pays little attention to the Ionians (5.105).

Herodotus’ entire Ionian Revolt *logos* bears signs of being founded on oral traditions influenced both by the unsuccessful outcome of the revolt itself

¹⁴ See Pelling, Ch. 7 below.

¹⁵ See Ἴωνες at 5.108.2, 109.3, etc. We find the expression τὸ κοινὸν τῶν Ἴωνίων (‘the commonwealth of the Ionians’) at 109.3 in the speech of the Ionians at Cyprus, where there seems to be no commander.

and by later political circumstances in Ionia and the mainland.¹⁶ Different agents had different biases and/or the need to justify their actions, both then and now. The Ionians, who failed so miserably, would skirt responsibility and ‘accuse one another’ in Herodotus’ time (see 6.14.1). The other Asiatic Greeks (including, presumably, those of Herodotus’ Dorian birthplace, Halicarnassus) had not participated in the effort. The Spartans, too, had declined their support and were, at any rate, contemptuous of anything ‘Ionian’, in the broadest sense of the term.¹⁷ Delphi, of course, condemned all resistance to Persia and the outcome of this one, at least, validated its position (see 6.19). Finally, the Athenians of Herodotus’ day had particular cause for downplaying Ionian courage and competence. They were not very helpful to the Ionians at their initial revolt, but were victorious against Persia later. After the Persian Wars they proceeded to hold sway over those Ionians they had liberated (and other cities as well) – some of whom were now eager to revolt from *them*.¹⁸ Herodotus has both absorbed and transcended these viewpoints.¹⁹ He has produced a narrative that is entirely his, and an apology for no one. Modern historians consider it unreliable on a number of levels, but it communicates this historian’s interpretation of the role of the Ionians in the history of the Greeks.²⁰

THE RENEWAL OF EVILS: WHAT EVILS?

Before examining the *aitiē* narrative, let us look at how it ends and compare its end with its beginning. Several Ionian cities depose their Persian-supported tyrants and formally secede from Persia (5.37–8). This double event, in the words of Murray, ‘marks a decisive step in the creation of [the]

¹⁶ See most recently Thomas (2004); Murray (1988) 471–2. On Herodotus’ use of oral traditions, see Murray (2001a), esp. 32–3 for the Ionian Revolt, and (2001b). For various discussions of the biases of different groups of Greeks underlying Herodotus’ account, see especially Tozzi (1978) 38–41, Evans (1976), Wallinga (1984). Brown (1981) argues for the existence of more positive versions of the revolt which have not survived.

¹⁷ See above, n. 6. On Dorian beliefs about Ionian inferiority, see Thuc. 1.124.1, 5.9.1, 6.76–80, 7.5.4. See Alty (1982) 3–4. See also Introduction, p. 24 and n. 59 above.

¹⁸ See Thuc. 6.82–83.2. Fornara and Samons (1991) 106–7. Stadter (1992) 806–7 suggests that Herodotus’ narrative of the Ionian Revolt against Persia would have reminded the audience of the Samian Revolt from Athens in 441 (Thuc.1.115.2–117.3; Diod. 12.27–8; Plut. *Per.* 25–8). The Athenians appealed to common Ionianism for the purpose of imperial propaganda even while harbouring contempt for other Ionians and rejecting their own Ionian identity. See Alty (1982) 8–11 with Hdt. 1.143.3. Already Cleisthenes, according to Herodotus, renamed the Athenian tribes in order to distance Athens from the Ionians (5.69). See Introduction, pp. 25, 29–30 above.

¹⁹ Tozzi (1978) 41.

²⁰ Herodotus is our only source for the Ionian Revolt and modern attempts to derive from him a plausible reconstruction are innumerable. See especially Lang (1968), Tozzi (1978), Lateiner (1982a), Murray (1988), Osborne (1996) 322–5, Cawkwell (2005) 61–86. See Introduction, p. 13 above.

polarity between despotic Persia and Greek democracy; freedom from Persia and freedom from tyranny become identified.²¹ This could be sustained as a convincing historical interpretation, one that aligns the Greeks of Asia on the same side of the ideological divide as the mainland Greeks. It would also have suited Herodotus' overarching reconstruction (at least) of the Persian Wars past. It is not, however, Herodotus' interpretation. In his account of the outbreak of the Ionian revolt so far, the notion and vocabulary of freedom play no role.²² The narrator indicates instead that an 'interruption of tyranny' in Ionia (τυράννων . . . κατόπανσις, in the concluding statement at 5.38.2) coincides with a 'resumption of evils' for the Ionians.²³ He proclaims this evaluation at the outset, in the summary that serves to introduce the *aitiē* section and the entire *logos*:

μετὰ δὲ οὐ πολλὸν χρόνον ἀνανέωσις κακῶν ἦν καὶ ἤρχετο τὸ δεῦτερον ἐκ Νάξου τε καὶ Μιλήτου Ἴωσι γίνεσθαι κακά.

After a short time there was a *resumption of misfortunes*, and it was from Naxos and Miletus that *misfortunes began again for the Ionians*. (5.28)

And he repeats it again resumptively, after a brief analeptic insertion on the background of the cities involved:

Τότε δὲ ἐκ τούτέων τῶν πολιῶν ὧδε ἤρχετο κακὰ γίνεσθαι τῇ Ἰωνίῃ

At that time from these cities *misfortunes began for Ionia* in the following way. (5.30.1)

This is a remarkable set of introductions, since in the inserted Athenian narrative of Book 5 (inserted, that is, precisely within the Ionian Revolt *logos*) both the narrator and his characters agree that tyranny itself is a very bad thing, while liberation from tyranny and *isēgoriē* (cf. *isonomiē* in Ionia at 5.37.2) are precious assets, at least in Athens.²⁴ The Ionian Revolt, of course, is a war, and Herodotus calls war in general a *kakon*.²⁵ But when

²¹ Murray (1988) 475.

²² The notion of freedom occurs for the first time in the discredited speech of Aristagoras at Sparta (5.49.2). Von Fritz (1967) I T 341, 344, 347 (cited by Tozzi (1978) 44 n. 53) remarks on the rarity of words of the ἐλευθερία family in Herodotus' account of the Ionian Revolt as a whole. See p. 151 below for passages in the *Histories* where the notion of freedom is prominent.

²³ I am grateful to Liz Irwin for this insight. I follow Nenci and accept ἀνανέωσις. Stein, Hude, Legrand adopt the reading ἄνεσις ('relief'), but that requires doing violence to the grammar. See Nenci (1994) 188.

²⁴ See the narrator's interpretative gloss on the establishment of democracy in Athens (5.78) and the speech of the Corinthian Socles at Sparta on the evils of tyranny (5.92); on the latter see Moles, Ch. 10 below.

²⁵ See the narrator's generalization at 8.3.1: 'Internal struggle (στάσις) is a greater evil than a war (πόλεμος) fought in agreement by as much as war is a greater evil than peace.' At 1.87.1 Croesus says that 'no one would choose war over peace; for in peace, children bury their fathers, and in war fathers bury their children.' For Herodotus on the evils of war, see Munson (2001b) 211–17.

defence or liberation is at stake, the narrator normally likes to emphasize the valour of those who resist oppression. The entire narrative of the mainland Greeks' resistance to the Persians centres on that theme. Even beyond the Greek world the Medes, for example, are praised for being the first to revolt against the Assyrians (πρῶτοι . . . ἤρξαντο ἀπίστασθαι): they fought for their freedom (ἐλευθερίας), they were brave men (ἄνδρες ἀγαθοί), and they shook off servitude (δουλοσύνην, 1.95.2). The resistance of the Ionians themselves against Cyrus receives a celebratory nod (1.169.1). On that occasion, some of the Ionians left their cities rather than tolerate enslavement (δουλοσύνη). The others succumbed to their attacker but nevertheless 'behaved with valour each fighting for his city' (ἄνδρες ἐγένοντο ἀγαθοὶ περὶ τῆς ἑωυτοῦ ἕκαστος μαχόμενοι). A few chapters before the Ionian Revolt *logos*, the Perinthians, already defeated once by the Paeonians, were unsuccessful again when attacked by the Persians, but they fought like brave men for the cause of freedom (ἀνδρῶν ἀγαθῶν περὶ τῆς ἐλευθερίας γινομένων).²⁶

Language of this sort, whether in speeches or in the narrator's own voice, occurs only sporadically in the account of the Ionian Revolt, and only in the battle narratives.²⁷ Ambivalent or negative judgements overwhelm the positive ones, and pervasive throughout, as nowhere else in the *Histories*, is the notion of *kakon* and *kaka*, both in a passive and in an active sense.²⁸ In response to Dionysius' attempt to enforce military discipline, Herodotus reports an extraordinary collective direct speech in which the Ionians declare that they prefer slavery to their present hardships (κακῶν, 6.12.3). As he attempts to report the battle, the narrator is unable to say who was *agathos* or who was *kakos* because current reports amount to nothing more than mutual accusations by different groups of Ionians (6.14.1). To the Chians alone he attributes splendid deeds (ἔργα λαμπρά). They refused to play the coward (οὐκ ἔθελο-κακέοντες) or to descend to the level of most of their allies, who betrayed the cause and were *kakoi* (6.15.1–2). Here again the majority of the Ionians are quite different from the newly democratic

²⁶ 5.2.1; cf. 5.1.1. On the repercussions of this evaluation of the Perinthians for our interpretation of the Ionians in the Revolt narrative, see Irwin, pp. 50–1 above.

²⁷ 5.112.1: At Cyprus the Ionians overcome the Phoenician navy fighting at the peak of their form (ἄκροι γενόμενοι), and the Samians are especially brave (ἠρίστευσαν). 5.109.2–3: Cyprians and Ionians exhort one another to pursue the goal of freedom and be men of valour. 6.10.1–11.2: before Lade the Ionians display 'stubbornness' in refusing the overtures of their former tyrants. Dionysius of Phocaea urges them to be free rather than slaves. In this last passage the term ἀγνωμοσύνη is somewhat more ambivalent than other praise terms in Herodotus. We find it describing the stiff but unsuccessful resistance of the Getae to Darius (4.93) and the *revolt* (ἀπέστησαν) of Aegina from Epidaurus (5.83.1).

²⁸ For the ambiguity of the term *kaka* (misfortunes or bad actions?), see 7.152.2, discussed by Munson (2001b) 225–30.

Athenians of the inserted narrative, since the latter no longer fought badly on purpose (ἐθελοκάκεον) after their liberation from tyranny, but went on to become first on the battlefield (5.78). Unfortunately the Chians, most valorous of the Ionians, also suffered a disproportionate amount of *kaka*, both during and after the battle (6.15–16; 26–7). So did Miletus, which the Persians destroyed, killing the male inhabitants and selling the women and children into slavery: this catastrophic outcome fulfilled an oracle that addressed the city of Miletus as ‘perpetrator of evil actions’ (κακῶν ἐπιμήχανε ἔργων, 6.19).

These and other disasters of the revolt are obviously the *kaka* said to begin for the Ionians in the summary introductions at 5.28. Even before the final defeat, the intradiegetic Ionians themselves echo the narrator and ask their former ruler Histiaeus why he had ‘caused them such a great evil’ (κακὸν τοσοῦτον ἐξεργασμένος, 6.3.1). But at one point in the narrative Herodotus projects the evil of the revolt both in time and in space. This happens at the moment of the Athenian intervention in support of the Ionians. If the beginning of the Ionian Revolt was the beginning of evil for the Ionians, the ships that Athens sent to Ionia turned out to be the ‘beginning of misfortunes for both Greeks and barbarians’:

αὐται δὲ αἱ νέες ἀρχῇ κακῶν ἐγένοντο Ἑλλησὶ τε καὶ βαρβάροισι. (5.97.3)

This proleptic reference to the Persian invasions of mainland Greece is soon re-emphasized within the narrative: when Phrynicus’ *Capture of Miletus* caused distress among the audience, its author was publicly punished with a fine for reminding the Athenians of *their own* misfortunes (6.21.2). Here the phrase οἰκῆϊα κακά seems to have a broader meaning than simply ‘family troubles’.²⁹

The Ionian Revolt plays a role in the causality of the Persian Wars because the support that the Athenians and Eretrians gave the rebels ‘woke up the war’ against the Persian king.³⁰ From the ‘beginning of evil’ statement at 5.97.3 to the section on deliberations for Xerxes’ campaign in Book 7, Herodotus keeps reminding us of the connection, both in his own voice and in character text.³¹ But Herodotus’ notion of the Ionian Revolt as

²⁹ Cf. Alty (1982) 13 and Nenci (1998) 188 who interpret it strictly as a reference to the ties of kinship between Athenians and the Ionians of Miletus.

³⁰ Cf. the Spartan to the Athenians at 8.142.2: ἡγείρατε γὰρ τόνδε τὸν πόλεμον ὑμεῖς (‘It was you who woke up this war’).

³¹ The accidental burning of the local sanctuary of Cybebe later served as a pretext for the Persians to set fire to Greek sanctuaries (narrator’s conclusion, 5.102.1). When Darius hears the news, he shoots an arrow in the air, prays to Zeus for revenge, and instructs a slave to remind him of the Athenians three times a day (5.105). The slave continues to do his job for nine years and eventually Darius dispatches two expeditions at least nominally for the purpose of punishing Athens and Eretria

an origin of misfortunes means both something less and something more than the fact that it led to the Persian Wars. Something less, because the narrative makes clear that imperialism is its own cause and the Ionian Revolt – or the participation in it by the mainland Greeks – was more a pretext than a cause of Persian aggression.³² Something more, because the proleptic range of the announcement ‘beginning of misfortunes for Greeks and barbarians’ at 5.97.3 turns out to have greater *amplitude* than the span of time occupied by the Persian invasions and Greek resistance.³³ Herodotus’ Homeric quotation, as it happens, was also used in his time in reference to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, and this correspondence agrees with Herodotus’ next mention of *kaka*.³⁴ In his interpretation of the earthquake of Delos, an event that occurred when the Persian fleet first sailed across the Aegean against Greece, the narrator’s prophecy of evils extends beyond the narrative range of the *Histories* and covers wars of the time of narration:

This [earthquake] was no doubt a portent that the god made manifest to men as a sign of *the evils that were going to happen* (τῶν μελλόντων ἔσεσθαι κακῶν). For in the time of Darius, the son of Hystaspes, Xerxes, the son of Darius, and Artaxerxes, the son of Xerxes, during these three consecutive generations, more *evils* (κακά) happened to Greece than during the previous twenty generations, some deriving to Greece from the Persians and some from the leading cities themselves fighting for the hegemony/rule/empire (ἀρχή). (6.98.1–3)

From West to East and from East to West: the two crossings are almost equivalent. At 5.97.3 Athenian ships cross over to Asia marking ‘the beginning of evils for both Greeks and barbarians’. At 6.98, the Persian crossing to Europe begins long-term future misfortunes for Greece.³⁵ In this second

(6.43.4 and 6.94.1–2). Xerxes mentions the need to exact revenge from the Athenians for initiating the hostilities by joining the Ionian cause (7.8β.2–3). See also the allusion cited in the preceding note. De Jong (2001) 101–5.

³² 5.102.1: σκηπτόμενοι. 6.43.4: πρόσχημα. 6.94.1: προφάσιος. 7.138.1: οὐνομα. Immerwahr (1956) esp. 253. Already Darius had set his eyes on Greece much before the time of the Ionian Revolt: 3.134; cf. 5.73, 97.2. For a full representation of the causality of Xerxes’ expedition, see 7.5–19. By then the motive of revenge was complicated by the ditching of Darius’ heralds and the Athenian victory at Marathon.

³³ The term is used by de Jong (1998) 235 in reference to this very passage.

³⁴ The phrase ‘beginning of evils’ is ultimately from *Iliad* 1.6, 5.63, 11.604 and refers to the disproportion between cause and result in the case of the Trojan War. But the latter is the Greek paradigm of all wars and in Thucydides 2.12.3 the last Spartan herald, expelled by the Athenians from Attica, exclaims that ‘this day will be the beginning of great evils for the Greeks’ (ἡδὲ ἡ ἡμέρα τοῖς Ἕλλησι μεγάλων κακῶν ἄρξει). Correspondingly, in Aristophanes’ *Peace* 435–6 Trygaeus prays that this day may bring the ‘beginning of many good things’.

³⁵ The connection between the two passages is noted by Evans (1976) 35–6, de Jong (1998) 235, and Stadter (1992) 790–1, who draws a parallel between the two crossings. Cf. also Munson (2001b) 201–5. Liz Irwin has remarked to me on the analogy with the first five chapters of the *Histories*, with crossings for the purpose of abducting women. There barbarians begin, whereas here the Athenians go first.

case, however, the barbarians, though they are en route against Hellas, have paradoxically become less central because the most striking idea in the passage is that the *kaka* of the Persian Wars are followed, with no interruption, by those of the wars of Greeks against Greeks, including the Peloponnesian War. The narrative of the *Histories* focuses on the first conflict, but it elsewhere indicates that the transition to the second passes through an offensive stage against Persia, at the moment when the Greeks turn the war of resistance into one 'about the King's own country'. It is in close proximity to a proleptic reference to this second phase of the conflict, incidentally, that we find Herodotus' generalization that war is a *kakon*.³⁶

In the transition between defence and offence, between a war for freedom and one of conquest, the Ionians are a major factor. The Revolt of 499, as we shall see, is presented, through the words of Aristagoras, as a war with both aims. With its failure, the Ionians are again the subjects of Persia, and during the Persian invasions they fight against the Greeks on the Persian side.³⁷ After Salamis, however, they embrace the Greek cause in what Herodotus calls the second Ionian Revolt.³⁸ With the battle of Mycale the Ionians are definitively free from Persian domination, but Herodotus' narrative encodes the suggestion that that they will continue to represent a cause for Greek activism, both immediately and in the long term. This is due to their uncomfortable geographical situation and to their endemic inability to provide for their own defence. The Spartans are in favour of eliminating the problem by means of a radical measure:

Once they arrived at Samos the Greeks deliberated about an evacuation (ἀναστάσιος) of Ionia and how it was necessary to settle the Ionians in a region of Greece that was under their (i.e., the mainland Greeks') control and leave Ionia to the barbarians. For it seemed impossible to them that they sit in guard of the Ionians until the end of time. If they did not do that the Ionians had no hope to be happily rid of the Persians. (9.106.2)

The notion of a resettlement of the Ionians as the *conditio sine qua non* of their freedom emerges intermittently in the *Histories*.³⁹ Here, however,

³⁶ 8.3.1–2; cf. 8.108.4. ³⁷ 6.98.1; 7.51–2; 8.10, 19, 22, 85, 90.

³⁸ 9.90–2 (Samians appeal to Leotychides and the Greek fleet to free the Ionians); 9.98–9 (Leotychides writes messages urging the Ionians to defect; the Persians suspect their loyalty); 9.103–4 (Samians and Milesians help the Greeks at Mycale); 9.104: οὕτω δὴ τὸ δεύτερον Ἴωνίη ἀπὸ Περσέων ἀπέστη ('and so it was that Ionia revolted from the Persians for the second time'). The third Ionian Revolt, in 412, was against Athens (see Thucydides 8.5–17).

³⁹ During the Ionian resistance to Cyrus, Phocaeans and Teians migrated to Italy and Thrace respectively (1.164–9); Bias of Priene urged all the Ionians to move to Sardinia (1.170.2). See also the resettlement of the Samian oligarchs (6.22–4) and the migration of Byzantians and Chalcedonians after Lade (6.33.2).

transplantation appears engineered from the outside, in a way more appropriate to subject states. The measure would in turn entail evacuating the territories of the medizing Greek states (ἐξαναστήσαντας).⁴⁰ The Athenians step in to veto the proposal, making clear that the Ionians are their affair. ‘They thought that Ionia should absolutely not be evacuated and that the Peloponnesians had no business deliberating about their colonies’ (9.106.3). Soon after this time the Spartans will abandon, or be excluded from, the war effort and Athens will assume the leadership of the anti-Persian operations.⁴¹ Her alliance with the Ionians will become the empire over which the Greeks will fight with one another the wars Herodotus mentions at 6.98.⁴² Athens’ involvement with the Ionians and her entitlement to provide for her ‘colonies’ (ἀποικιέων, 9.106.3) begins precisely at the time of the Ionian Revolt, when Aristagoras ‘reminds’ the assembly that the Milesians were Athenian *apoikoi* and Athens was obliged to protect them.⁴³ For Herodotus, in other words, the ships that sail for Ionia at 5.97.3 become both the beginning (*archē*) of evils and, as at 6.93 quoted above, an empire (*archē*) of evils – the evils of war deriving from the Athenian empire.⁴⁴ Even without doing anything in particular, the Ionians are the occasion of both.

EVILS IN THE BEGINNING

Herodotus’ interpretation of the role of the Ionians in the formation of the Athenian empire and in the embattled state of Greece in his own time is connected to his view of the Revolt of 499–494 BC. Sandwiched between

⁴⁰ 9.106.3. For the Persian King’s wholesale deportations within, or in the neighbourhood of, the first Ionian Revolt narrative, see 6.119 (Eretrians) and 5.12–15 (Paeonians). It is the threat of deportation by the Persian king, says Histiaeus, that induced him to urge the Revolt (6.3). Herodotus also reports deportation in Sicily by the tyrant Gelon (7.156). Demand (1988) and (1990).

⁴¹ Hdt. 8.3.2; Thuc. 1.75.2; 95.1–2; Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 23.4.

⁴² These events fall outside the chronological range of the *Histories*, but Herodotus alludes or refers to them by external prolepsis. Thus the inclusion of Samians, Chians, Lesbians and other islanders in the Greek League, sanctified by an oath (9.106.4), and the departure of the Peloponnesians from the Hellespont while the Athenians remain in charge (9.114.2) foreshadow respectively the formation of the Delian League and the withdrawal of the Spartans after the Pausanias incident (8.3.2). For the historical reality of an early transformation of the Delian League into Athenian empire, see Fornara and Samons (1991) 104–5.

⁴³ 5.97.2. This argument, according to Herodotus, is the only one that differentiates Aristagoras’ Athenian from his Spartan speech. It is uncertain whether the fiction of the Attic origin of the Ionians of Asia may not have antedated the time of the Ionian Revolt. Sakellariou (1990); Connor (1993) 198–200; Hall (1997) 52–6.

⁴⁴ I agree with Liz Irwin (p. 47 n. 16 above), Christopher Pelling (p. 182 below) and John Henderson (p. 305 below), that Herodotus plays with different meanings of the word. See also the somewhat mischievous use of the adverb ἀρχήν (‘in the first place’, ‘at all’) at 9.106.3, which is immediately followed by (the accusative noun) Ἴωνίην, suggesting ‘Ionian province’, or something of the sort.

the two 'beginning of evils' introductions to the *aitiē* section is a brief analeptic passage about the situation of Naxos and Miletus before the misfortunes that began 'from' them. The narrative is elliptical, but it manages to make two preliminary points. The first is that both cities were then at the peak of their prosperity. The terms used to describe this wealth (*eudaimoniē*, *akmasasa*, and *proschēma tēs Ioniēs*) serve to reinforce the surrounding announcements of imminent *kaka*.⁴⁵ In Herodotus, however, prosperity is not an automatic cause of subsequent ruin. Reversals of fortune are more often than not the result of culpable or misguided human behaviour, represented in this case by the Milesian initiative to attack Naxos. This brings us to the second point of the insertion. Before becoming prosperous the Milesians were suffering from internal struggle (*stasis*), until they invited the Parians to reconcile them (κατήλλαξαν, 5.28) and the latter set things in order for them (κατήρτισαν, καταρτιστήρας, 5.28; κατήρτισαν, 5.30.1). The Milesians' request for arbitration and the benign Parian intervention provide a positive model for Greek cities helping each other recover from *stasis*. This contrasts with the Naxian oligarchs' partisan request in the *aitiē* narrative and Aristagoras' willingness, as regent of Miletus, to invest Naxos. Both magnify an intra-city *stasis* into a conflict between Greek city-states, of the sort that Herodotus also calls *stasis* (8.3.1). With the participation of Persia, Naxos' problems will include *polemos*, an external war.

The mutual exacerbation of internal party struggle and war is a very Thucydidean scenario, familiar to mid-fifth-century Greeks.⁴⁶ Herodotus' most original contribution to the history of the Ionian Revolt is perhaps, as we have seen, the view that it began a long new series of aggressive actions perpetrated by Greeks for the sake of *archē* (6.98). First it provides the opportunity for an intervention of Athens and Eretria across the Aegean. This intervention, as the speech of Aristagoras shows (see below), is implicitly motivated by imperialism as well as liberation, just as the Persian attacks on Greece that follow are for the sake of conquest no less than revenge. The mainland Greeks' resistance to the Persian invasions then turns into the

⁴⁵ Lateiner (1982b) shows how Herodotus habitually restricts his employment of terms denoting prosperity to foreshadow future calamities. For Herodotus' generalization on the instability of human fortune, see 1.5.3. Simon Hornblower (pp. 175–7 below) most particularly notices the parallelism between Miletus and her close friend and Western counterpart, Sybaris, whose prosperity is described in similar terms at 6.127.1 and whose fall is mentioned in connection with the fall of Miletus at 6.21.

⁴⁶ The *Musterbeispiel* is of course represented by the events involving Corcyra before (and as the immediate cause of) the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War as well as after (Thuc. 1.24–55; 3.70–85). Just as in this and other cases a hostile faction or city brings the Athenians in against their enemies, in Herodotus it may bring in the Persians. See e.g. the episode of the flashing of the shields at Marathon (6.115) and the story of Argive medism (7.152.3), the latter notable for the attached discussion of *kaka* (n. 28 above).

operations of Athens and her allies in the King's territory and the aggressions by Athens against Greek allies and rivals. The *final chapter* includes the Spartan invasions of Attica and the various inter-Greek hostilities in the Peloponnesian War. Accordingly, the beginning of all this, the Ionian Revolt, is in turn described as the direct result of what Herodotus considers the ultimate *kakon*, a Greek war of aggression against other Greeks.⁴⁷ This analogy with present conflicts was likely to resonate deeply with contemporary audiences and apparently it goes both ways. Recently, in fact, Lisa Kallet has made a powerful if surprising argument that *Thucydides* imitates Herodotus by modelling his narrative of the Sicilian expedition on his predecessor's account of the Ionian Revolt.⁴⁸

Herodotus' narrative is here all about conquest. The protagonists, aside from the Naxian 'Fats Cats' (ἄνδρες τῶν παχέων) who request help against their fellow citizens, are Greek or Persian individuals in power, subordinate to the Persian king.⁴⁹ Aristagoras, regent in Miletus (ἐπίτροπος, 5.30.1), is the nephew of the city's absent tyrant Histiaeus, the poster-child for Persian-supported Ionian tyranny.⁵⁰ Aristagoras also boasts that he is a *philos* of Artaphrenes, who is the satrap of Sardis and brother of Darius (5.30.5), and he embraces his uncle's relationship of *xenia* to the Naxian oligarchs (5.30.2–3). Finally, the kinship and guest-friendship network includes the Persian general Megabates, an Achaemenid cousin of Darius in charge of military operations against Naxos (5.32). A gloss of identification informs us that this Megabates is the man

to whose daughter, if the story is true, the Spartan Pausanias, the son of Cleombrotus, became betrothed when he fell in love with the idea of becoming tyrant of Greece. (5.32)

The appearance of Pausanias in this group creates a link between the events of the narrative and a later time, between Asiatic Greece and mainland Greece: all Greeks in love with power are in bed with Persia, in one way or another.⁵¹

⁴⁷ 8.3. Munson (2001b) 211–17.

⁴⁸ Kallet (2001) 85–97. Early parallels are represented by the appeal of the Naxian exiles to Miletus and the Egestans' request for help from Athens; Naxian and Egestan promise of *chrēmata* for the expedition; and by the roles of Aristagoras (both vis-à-vis Artaphrenes and at Sparta/Athens) and Alcibiades. For other parallels, see nn. 54, 55 and 62 below.

⁴⁹ Herodotus appears to have described accurately the network of Darius' Greek and Persian retainers and their mutual rivalries. See Georges (2000) 12–18.

⁵⁰ 4.137; 5.11, 23–25.1. On Persian policy towards Greek tyrants, see Austin (1990).

⁵¹ David Fearn, Ch. 3 above, makes a similar point concerning Alexander of Macedon, a *tyrannos* who hands over his sister to a Persian noble (5.21.2); on Pausanias see also Greenwood, p. 135 above and Pelling, pp. 189 n. 36 and 194 below.

The narrative of the expedition against Naxos is rich in unmarked attribution of motives, direct or indirect speeches and narrator glosses that leave no doubt that *archē* is the intended aim. Aristagoras is inclined to support the Naxian exiles with the pretext (σκηψιν) of their guest-friendship with Histiaeus, but his real motive is the calculation (ἐπιλεξιόμενος) that this is for him an opportunity to establish his rule (ἄρξει) in Naxos (5.30.3). Pretexts of this sort, based on reciprocity, are standard for expansionistic projects – one need only recall the Persian expeditions against Greece or, for favours returned, the one against Libya.⁵² The Naxian exiles, for their part, are in on the deal: they claim to be sure that as soon as Milesians and Persians showed up, the Naxians would do their bidding, and so would the neighbouring islanders. For none of those islands, explains the narrator, was yet subject to Darius (5.30.6). A similar negative gloss, anticipating an attempt to conquer, occurs in the passage, already cited, at the beginning of Herodotus' narrative of the Persians' venture in Libya.⁵³ To persuade Artaphrenes to give him a force for attacking Naxos, Aristagoras describes the real estate: the island is not large but beautiful and fertile, close to Ionia, and containing much wealth. Artaphrenes will acquire for the King not only Naxos itself, but also its neighbours, Paros (the old friend of 5.28), Andros and the other Cyclades (5.31.1–2); from there he 'will easily (εὐπετέως) attack Euboea, which is vast and prosperous, no smaller than Cyprus and exceedingly easy to capture' (εὐπετεῖ αἰρεθῆναι, 31.3). This speech establishes the pattern for Aristagoras' later attempts to enlist Spartan and Athenian help for the Ionian Revolt, where the alleged cakewalk is to go in the opposite direction and all the way to Susa. Also on those occasions he will use the discourse of conquest to advertise the fertility of the land, the types of wealth it contains and the opportunity for easy (εὐπετής) conquest beyond the immediate occasion.⁵⁴ As later the Athenians, so now

⁵² On 'pretexts' for a Persian invasion of Greece, see pp. 152–3 and nn. 31 and 32 above. See also 4.167.3: the Persians attack Barca under the πρόσχημα τοῦ λόγου ('specious claim') of helping Phertime achieve revenge, but the expedition was really for the sake of conquering Libya. On reciprocity in Herodotus, see Gould (1989) 63–7.

⁵³ 4.163.3: 'Many and diverse are indeed the peoples of Libya, and only few of them were then subject to the king.'

⁵⁴ 5.49.3–9, esp. 4 (εὐπετέες χειρωθῆναι, 'easy to conquer'); cf. 5.97.1–2, esp. 1 (εὐπετέες . . . χειρωθῆναι). Solmsen (1943) 199. For terms of the εὐπετ- family as Aristagoras' 'signature tune', see Pelling, pp. 179–83 below. Also Ceccarelli (1996) 51. David Fearn, p. 103 above, notices Herodotus' use of the term εὐπετεῖη in the Macedonian narrative (5.20.1). In Thucydides, Alcibiades promises the Athenians an easy conquest of Sicily (Thuc. 6.17). See Kallet (2001) 91. The advertisement of assets is in Herodotus especially a feature of the discourse of *Persian conquest of Greece*, the paradigm for conquest *tout court*. See 3.134.5 (Atossa to Darius); 7.5.3 (Mardonius to Xerxes). Michael Flower,

Artaphrenes is easily persuaded. Two hundred ships sail for Naxos, double the number Aristagoras had requested.⁵⁵

What Aristagoras essentially promises to Artaphrenes is – from the Cyclades to Euboea – the subjection of Greece, just as in Sparta and Athens he proposes the subjection of Persia. East to West or West to East – it is, once again, all the same, with Aristagoras as the embodiment of the tedious predictability of the pattern of conquest. Aristagoras' attack on Naxos, in fact, specifically anticipates Darius' expedition of 490, which sails across the Aegean, proceeding 'from island to island' (διὰ νήσων), because 'Naxos still uncaptured obliged them to do so' (this is a back-reference).⁵⁶ The Naxians flee, remembering 'what had happened before' (another back-reference), but the Persians enslave all those they can capture, burn the place, and then move on 'to other islands'. Herodotus' next entries are the Persian stop at Delos with his interpretation of the earthquake as omen of future *kaka*, where he explicitly lumps together the conflict with Persia and the subsequent inter-Greek wars (6.97–8). Naxos is both the origin of *kaka* at the time of the Ionian Revolt (5.28) and the marker of their continuation. She represents the first target of Aristagoras and Artaphrenes, and the first target of Artaphrenes and Datis on their way to Greece. Closer to Herodotus' day, the same island makes the front page for a third time. According to Thucydides, Naxos is the first member of the Athenian league to *revolt* and, more importantly, 'the first Athenian ally to be enslaved against the established rule'.⁵⁷ Aristagoras failed against Naxos, and the narrator introduces the narrative of how that happened with a summary statement that is proleptic at multiple levels: 'It was not to be that the Naxians would perish with *this* expedition' (5.33.2). But Naxos is squeezed between Persia and Athens, and to both she will eventually succumb.⁵⁸

however, has persuasively argued that Aristagoras' speeches at Sparta and Athens in favour of a *Greek conquest of Persia* reflect a panhellenist notion of a Greek invasion of Asia, which greatly developed in the fourth century but originated after Plataea. Needless to say, Herodotus is equally opposed to both. Flower (2000) 70–6.

⁵⁵ This increase, which maximizes the damage when the expedition fails, is parallel to the increase of Athenian forces at the time of the Sicilian expedition (Thuc. 6.24). Kallet (2001) 91; also Lang (1968) 26.

⁵⁶ 6.95.2. Ceccarelli (1996) 52–3.

⁵⁷ Thuc. 1.98. Concerning Aristagoras' plan to conquer from Naxos to Euboea, Payen suggests that Herodotus is offering 'une évocation ramassée des événements' which from the Athenian enslavement of Naxos between 475 and 470 led to Pericles' subjection of Euboea in 446. Payen (1997) 213.

⁵⁸ 6.95–6; Thucydides 1.98.4.

TATTOOED IN THE HEAD

When the operations against Naxos come to nothing, Aristagoras organizes the Revolt of Ionia to avoid the consequences of his fall from grace with respect to the Persian king. The Ionians' liberation from Persia, in other words, and the concomitant end of tyranny in Ionia represent a default plan after an Ionian tyrant's attempt to bring a free and democratic Greek state under Persian rule. As his first action of open revolt, Aristagoras sends an envoy to arrest the pro-Persian Ionian tyrants accompanying the fleet. Next he sets aside his own tyrannical power and establishes in Miletus a nominal *isonomiē*. He does the same in the rest of Ionia: he banishes some of the tyrants while turning in those he had captured to their respective cities, which for the most part let them go. He also orders each of the cities to establish *stratēgoi*, and then leaves for Sparta and Athens in search of support (5.37–8). And so, the narrator concludes, 'the deposition of tyrants happened in the cities'.⁵⁹

All the singular verbs in this section and the passive form of the conclusion beg the question: what do *the Ionians* stand for, at this point? We should compare this account with two parallel narratives where collectivities play a more substantial role. The first is the inserted narrative of the liberation of Athens. Here the Spartans depose the tyrants, but Cleisthenes 'befriends the *demos*', and the Athenians respond by claiming and defending their freedom.⁶⁰ On a later occasion, the Athenians hold a public debate over whether and how to resist Xerxes, and Themistocles exercises his leadership in the context of the democratic assembly (7.143). The comparison between Miletus and Athens is implicitly encouraged by the presence in the Ionian Revolt narrative of Hecataeus. On one level Hecataeus, who at first objects to the rebellion, is an intradiegetic analogue of Herodotus and the polar opposite of Aristagoras.⁶¹ But when he settles for military success in a war he cannot prevent, he gives strategic advice worthy of Themistocles or, for that matter, of Pericles and others in Thucydides: obtain mastery of the sea and use the Branchidae treasure (5.36.2–3).⁶² But this is not Athens, there is no capable leader (unscrupulous or not) and there is no *demos*, either. The only collectivity that deliberates anything in Miletus is the apparently

⁵⁹ 5.38.2: τυράννων μὲν νῦν κατάπαυσις ἐγένετο ἀνὰ τὰς πόλεις. See p. 150 above.

⁶⁰ 5.62–6, 69–70, 72–5. See Ober (1993). On the parallel between Aristagoras and Cleisthenes, see Geoges (2000) 19.

⁶¹ Hecataeus uses the reverse of the geo-ethnographic cakewalk argument Aristagoras will take to Sparta and Athens. Armayor (2004) 324. For the practical wisdom here displayed by Hecataeus, and dear to both Herodotus and Thucydides, see Dewald (1985).

⁶² See Kallet (2001) 92 for a parallel with Thucydides 6.70, 71. See also Lateiner (1982a) 147.

narrow circle of Aristagoras' *stasiotai*, rather analogous to the Naxian oligarchs of the [previous section](#). Indeed, we find indications in the *Histories* that the Ionian masses disliked their pro-Persian tyrants and yearned for a constitutional form of government.⁶³ But Herodotus has structured this account in terms least likely to suggest popular participation.⁶⁴ In Ionia at this time freedom – or something of the sort – seems to come from the top and from the outside.⁶⁵ After the suppression of the revolt, democracies in the re-subjected Ionian cities will be established by Persia (6.43.3), and later by Athens.

More important to Herodotus than the theoretical and short-lived liberation of Ionia is the chain of events leading from the aggression at Naxos to the Revolt from Persia, in an absurd sequence that again only emphasizes individual agents (5.33.2–35). The expedition against Naxos fails because of a quarrel between Aristagoras and the Persian general Megabates. During a stop of the force at Chios, we are told, Megabates discovers a ship of Myndos unattended and proceeds to punish the negligent captain by tying him up with his head sticking out of the oar hole of his ship. This is too much for Aristagoras, since this Myndian fellow happens to be – wouldn't you guess – another *xeinós* of his. A shouting match ensues, and Aristagoras rails against Megabates: 'What business is this of yours? Didn't Artaphrenes send you to do my bidding and sail where I tell you to? What are you *doing*?' (5.33.4).⁶⁶ What is everyone doing indeed: it is hard to fathom why Herodotus has even chosen to report this speech, unless he is specifically signalling the triviality of the scene.⁶⁷ But trivial or not, Megabates is furious and warns

⁶³ This is implicit in the statement that the establishment of *isonomiē* was designed to induce the Milesians to support the revolt (5.37.2). Outside of this narrative, see especially 4.137: Histiaeus says that every Ionian city would opt for a democratic government if Darius' power should wane. 5.106.5: Histiaeus says that by revolting the Ionians have taken advantage of his absence to do what they had wanted to do for a long time. 6.5.1: the Milesians decline to receive Histiaeus because they are not eager for another tyrant, 'having tasted freedom'. Forrest (1979) 316.

⁶⁴ See p. 148 and n. 15 above, for the first appearances of the Ionians in Herodotus' narrative of the revolt. Cf. Burn (1984) 192: 'But the question which Herodotus frequently, as here, fails to ask, is not why the leaders acted as they did, but why people were ready to follow them.' We may forget about Burn's generalization ('frequently'); we should rather notice that what happens 'here' is deliberate and implies a judgement about the Ionians. Burns, like most other modern historians, then proceeds to supplement Herodotus' narrative by listing the factors that induced the Ionians to revolt: discontent with tribute, commerce, pro-Ionian tyrants and so on. But see Forrest (1979), who criticizes this approach, and Cawkwell (2005) 71–4, who does not accept most of the usual motives except for the simple desire to be free from foreign domination.

⁶⁵ Cf. the Greeks' proposal to transplant the Ionians (9.106; see pp. 154–5 above). Aristagoras' mission to Athens and Sparta contrasts with the Ionians' dispatch of an envoy to Sparta at the time of Cyrus (1.141.1, 152).

⁶⁶ τὶ πολλὰ πράσσεις lit. 'Why are you doing many things?' Nenci (1994) 199 notes that this is an expression of the *sermo quotidianus* that adds vividness to the exchange.

⁶⁷ Solmsen (1943) ignores this speech.

the Naxians, who have time to prepare to withstand the attack. After four months of an inconclusive siege, Aristagoras' plans of conquest have come to an end (5.33.4–34).

Disagreement between Greek and Persian retainers of the Great King is of course plausible,⁶⁸ but modern historians tend to be especially sceptical with regard to this narrative.⁶⁹ Some argue that it reveals the existence in Herodotus' time of two different traditions: certain sources, perhaps even Persian, would have blamed the failure of the Naxian expedition on Ionian or Carian lack of discipline (*à la Lade*: cf. 6.12), while the Ionians attributed the fault to the Persian commander.⁷⁰ If this is true, Herodotus has accepted both versions and by combining them he has reconciled (so to speak) a modern quarrel and projected it onto the past.⁷¹ The result is hardly credible, but that may be precisely the point. It is a ridiculous scene that hits a new register and draws attention to the element of comedy, which was present throughout the narrative and which we are no longer allowed to ignore. The wheeler-dealer, super well-connected, fast-talking Aristagoras differs, as it turns out, from most, if by no means all, other actual or aspiring kings and tyrants in Herodotus because he is a character of comedy, a *miles gloriosus*, and a trickster *manqué*.⁷² After his Naxian blunder, he makes a mess in Ionia to get out of trouble with the king, but stays in Miletus during the campaign of Sardis (5.99.2). Being 'not a champion of courage' (ψυχὴν οὐκ ἄκρος), he runs for his life as soon as things get tough, leaving the Ionians behind to do what they can and fight like champions (ἄκροισι γενόμενοι).⁷³

Equally ludicrous is the figure of Histiaeus, who is about to enter the narrative as the second instigator of the Ionian Revolt. Histiaeus' mobility and thief-in-the-night *modus operandi* makes him a more ambiguous figure,

⁶⁸ Forrest (1979) 318–19 and see n. 49 above. Compare, earlier in the narrative (5.23–4), the rivalry between Megabazus and Histiaeus, another powerful cause of the Ionian Revolt (5.35.4): see Greenwood, Ch. 4 above.

⁶⁹ It is unlikely that Megabates would shoot himself in the foot in this way. See How and Wells (1912) II.13; Lang (1968) 28. The Naxians, moreover, would not have needed intelligence from Megabates to figure out that they would shortly be under attack. Murray (1988) 473.

⁷⁰ Tozzi (1978) 132; see also Burn (1984) 196.

⁷¹ On past and present quarrels in Herodotus, see Munson (2001b) 217–31.

⁷² For the pattern of kingship, see Dewald (2003). There are plenty of successful tricksters in Herodotus: e.g., Democedes, Themistocles (both especially analogous to Histiaeus: see Greenwood, pp. 132, 135–7 above), Amasis and Artemisia, to name just a few. Several use trickery to gain tyrannical power (Deioces, Peisistratus). See Dewald (1985), Lateiner (1990).

⁷³ Compare 5.124.1, referring to Aristagoras, with 5.112.1, of the Ionians fighting in the waters of Cyprus. Both are, once again, colloquial expressions. Of only two references to the Ionian Revolt in Thucydides (4.102.2 and 6.4–5), both having to do with flight, one mentions the flight of Aristagoras to Thrace (and the other the flight of the Samian oligarchs to Zancle after Lade).

but he too, like Aristagoras, is a con artist with big pretensions and a disastrous career.⁷⁴ When Darius in Susa accuses him of having caused the outbreak of the Revolt, he deceives the king into sending him back to Ionia to set things in order. From there, he swears, he will not change his undergarment before he has subjected *Sardinia* ‘the largest of islands’ (5.106.6), just as Aristagoras has promised Naxos and Euboea, ‘a large and prosperous island’ (5.31.3).⁷⁵ He actually gets only as far as *Sardis*,⁷⁶ where he clashes with Artaphrenes, attempts to take on the leadership of the Revolt, is rejected by several Ionian cities who have had enough of tyrants, and sets up his own semi-piratical operations in the Hellespont and Ionia, not without causing considerable damage to his fellow Greeks along the way (6.1–5, 26).⁷⁷ Eventually he is killed by his Persian captors, who are jealous of his ties to the king and unimpressed by his language skills (6.29–30). It is perhaps significant that although they impale his body, they embalm his *head* and send it to the king. We have already seen one manhandled head in this narrative. A second is coming up soon.⁷⁸

If we view the Ionian Revolt as a bungled version of the Greek resistance against Persia, Aristagoras and Histiaeus are degraded versions of the brilliant trickster Themistocles who, self-serving or not, does save Greece from enslavement instead of almost doing the opposite. But the closest analogues for this clownish duo appear only a few chapters earlier in Book 5. Here two Paeonian brothers ‘wishing to rule the Paeonians as tyrants’, dress their sister in her best clothes and parade her in front of Darius at Sardis as she carries water on her head, leads a horse to the fountain, and spins flax – all at the same time.⁷⁹ Darius is amazed and asks from which people they come, who are the Paeonians, where they live, and what are they doing in Sardis. The brothers respond that they have come to offer their submission and that the Paeonians are Trojan colonists who inhabit a settled land on the river Strymon, near the Hellespont. After learning

⁷⁴ Histiaeus’ tendency to operate at night (6.2.1; 6.5.2) is noted by Tozzi (1978) 30.

⁷⁵ Ceccarelli (1996) 49–50. *Sardinia* is where the Ionians, according to Bias, should have founded their unified and autonomous city (1.170.1–2). By promising *Sardinia* to Darius, says Ceccarelli, Histiaeus is offering him ‘l’essence du désir d’indépendance des Ioniens’.

⁷⁶ 5.106.6; cf. 6.1, 2. The joke Σαρδῶν/Σάρδιεις is noted by Macan (1895) I.256 and will be used to good effect by Henderson, p. 297 below. *Sardinia* is also a prospective place of refuge for Aristagoras, who, however, ends up preferring Myrcinus, the stronghold in Thrace Histiaeus had fortified (5.11, 23–4): two more elements thematically connecting Aristagoras and Histiaeus.

⁷⁷ Especially the Chians, the recipient of greatest *kaka* at the time of Lade (6.26–7; cf. 6.15).

⁷⁸ See p. 164 below. Cf. also the strange fate of Onesilus of Salamis, the instigator of the revolt in Cyprus (5.114) with Serghidou, pp. 282–5 below.

⁷⁹ The parallel is only noticed, as far as I know, by Dewald (2003) 37–8. In a broader sense, of course, the Paeonian rustics provide a paradigm for all aspiring tyrants and tyrannies. See Irwin and Osborne, Chs. 1 and 2 above.

in addition that all Paeonian women can multi-task as well as these men's sister, Darius sends word to Megabazus and orders that the Paeonians be deported to Asia (5.12–13). Darius' questions to the Paeonians anticipate his later enquiry about the Athenians.⁸⁰ The answer of the brothers and the commercial starring the sister match Aristagoras' advertisement of the Naxian venture (5.31.1). The forced deportation of the Paeonians to Phrygia anticipates that of the Eretrians to Cissia (6.119.4) at the time of Darius' Marathon campaign. Just as the Paeonian brothers attract the attention of Darius to their people, so Aristagoras and Histiaeus help to direct Persian imperialistic efforts toward Greece.⁸¹ The thematic connection between the Revolt and the Paeonian narrative is emphasized by a factual one: Darius deports the Paeonians from Europe to Asia, and Aristagoras re-transplants them back home to annoy the king (5.98).

Unlike the Paeonian brothers, Aristagoras and Histiaeus are mutually complementary and play their respective roles in turn: the death of the first leader marks a major break, what is now, at any rate, the end of Book 5. After that the narrative begins again centred around the second leader and repeating some of the earlier themes.⁸² Aristagoras and Histiaeus converge in the narrative only once and from a distance, precisely at the point of transition between the (failed) expedition against Naxos and the beginning of the (doomed) Revolt in Ionia, in a passage where we also find the very first occurrence of the term 'revolt' (ἀπόστασις). In a spectacular comic scene, Aristagoras is surveying the quagmire he has produced when an extraordinary messenger bursts upon the stage:

Aristagoras was unable to fulfill his promise to Artaphrenes. At the same time, what irked him was the expense the expedition required, and he was upset that the army had done badly and that Megabates had slandered him, and he thought he would be stripped of his kingship in Miletus. Upset by each of these things, he deliberated a revolt. And it just so happened that the man with the tattooed head (τὸν ἔσπιγμένον τὴν κεφαλὴν) arrived from Susa. He was sent by Histiaeus, with a message bidding him to revolt against the king. (5.35.1–2)

Aristagoras' position in Miletus is focalized through the megalomaniac Aristagoras himself, which is the only conceivable reason (but a very good reason) why it is termed a kingship (βασιληίη).⁸³ But the perspective soon

⁸⁰ 105.7. Nenci (1994) 172. Cf. Irwin, p. 54 n. 36 above.

⁸¹ See Dewald (2003) 38: 'The Ionian Revolt . . . is, in some respects, the story of the Paeonians writ large, with Aristagoras and Histiaeus cast in the role of the two rustics, Pigres and Mastyes.'

⁸² 6.1–6, with another secret message and requests for forces.

⁸³ Ferrill (1978) 391 finds this explanation unconvincing, but we must imagine it as part of Aristagoras' monologue. See also Georges (2000) 23, who remarks that the anomalous use of the term points to the Ionian tyrants' satrapal style.

changes to that of narrator and audience with the definite article that enhances the proleptic force of *the* (evidently notorious) man with the tattooed head.⁸⁴ The emphasis on coincidence (συνέπιπτε) agrees with the fatally haphazard progress of events so far:⁸⁵ the message is, again, that if a couple of adventurers had not found themselves in a tight spot, the revolt would not have happened, nor the ‘beginning of evils’, nor perhaps the Persian invasions of Greece, at least not at the time when they did.⁸⁶ But, Herodotus proceeds to explain, Histiaeus was languishing as a virtual prisoner at Darius’ court and thought that destabilizing Ionia would provide him with his only chance for being sent back to Miletus (5.35.3–4). He therefore inscribed the secret message for Aristagoras on the shaved head of one of his slaves and let the man’s hair grow back before sending him on his way. To summarize the causes of the Ionian Revolt: the head of some Carian stuck in an oarlock *and* an inscribed skinhead.⁸⁷

The tattooed communication that travels from East to West, from Histiaeus to Aristagoras, stands at the intersection of writing and mutilation, two means by which despots exercise their dominance.⁸⁸ In the Greek view, as in the text of Herodotus, tattooing and branding are Persian punitive practices for prisoners of war and wrongdoers.⁸⁹ At the level of performance, however, this pathetic envoy also recalls the stereotypical slaves or loser figures of Old Comedy. The beaten-up Xanthias of Aristophanes’ *Wasps* howls that he is being ‘tattooed to death by a stick’.⁹⁰ In the *Frogs*, Pluto threatens Cleophon and others with tattoos (στίξας) and fetters; the *Birds* contains a

⁸⁴ I can only think of ‘the path’ at 7.12.2 as an approximate (non-comic) parallel. Sudden and vivid introductory images are otherwise Herodotus’ specialty; see e.g. Arion on the dolphin in the introductory statement at 1.23.

⁸⁵ Wood (1972) 117 n. 6. Cf. 5.30.2, ἐτύγχανε (bis); 5.33.2, ἔτυχε; also 5.36.1, συνέπιπτε. On convergences and coincidences see also Pelling, p. 185 below.

⁸⁶ Hornblower (2004) 301. On the role of the Ionian Revolt in the causality of the Persian Wars, see pp. 152–3 above.

⁸⁷ Steiner (1994) 158 and n. 83 remarks that the latter makes literal the Ionians’ linguistic use of calling paper ‘skins’ (5.58.3).

⁸⁸ Steiner (1994) esp. 154–9. An inorganic version of Histiaeus’ message is represented by Demaratus’ waxed-over tablet (7.239.3). See also the message of Harpagus urging Cyrus to persuade the Persians to revolt (ἀπίστασθαι) from Astyages, a letter sown up in a the belly of a hare (1.123.4–124). For a survey and discussion of all written messages in Herodotus, see Ceccarelli 2005.

⁸⁹ 7.35: Xerxes brands the Hellespont (verb στίζειν). 7.233.2: the Persians ‘branded with royal marks’ (ἔστιξαν στίγματα βασιλῆϊα) the Thebans who deserted from the Greek side at Thermopylae, beginning with their general Leontiades whose son Eurymachus, Herodotus specifies, participated in the attack of Plataea that began the Peloponnesian War (cf. Thuc. 2.2–5). There is a difference between branding (with hot irons) and tattooing (with ink and needles), and according to Jones (1987) στίζειν more properly denotes the second procedure.

⁹⁰ *Wasps* 1296: ἀπόλωλα στίζόμενος βακτηρία (‘I am dead tattooed by a stick!’)

mention of a ‘tattooed runaway’ (δραπέτης ἔστιγμένος).⁹¹ Prisoners of war at the time of the Samian war were apparently marked with symbols on their forehead. Plutarch, who tells this story, quotes two lines of the *Babylonians* about the *demos* of Samos being ‘much lettered’ (πολυγράμματος), that is to say, both ‘inscribed’ and ‘learned’, two Ionian stereotypes combined in one word.⁹² The figure of the runaway slave is a recurrent metaphor also in Herodotus’ representation of the Ionians. The Scythians call them ‘master-loving chattel least likely to flee’ (ἀνδράποδα φιλοδέσποτα . . . καὶ ἄδρηστα μάλιστα, 4.142).⁹³ Correspondingly, Aristagoras’ own flight from the action is called a δρασημόν, and takes him to Thrace, which, as the nearby ethnographical section points out (5.6), is the land of both slaves and tattoos (though not of tattooed slaves).⁹⁴ In his speech before Lade, Dionysus of Phocaea declares that this is the time for the Ionians to choose whether to be free or slaves or, to be more precise, runaway slaves (δρηπέτησι). We all know their response.⁹⁵

According to Aristotle (*Poetics* 1449a32–4).

Comedy is the representation of morally inferior men (φαυλοτέρων), not however in all manner of evil (κακία), but in the sphere of the ridiculous, which participates of the shameful (αἰσχροῦ). For the ridiculous is some sort of blunder (ἀμάρτημα) and shame (αἴσχος) without pain or destruction (ἀνώδυνον καὶ οὐ φθαρτικόν).

It is doubtful that fifth-century Greeks would entirely concur with this qualified formulation. The iambic and comic tradition appear more than ready to apply laughter to all manner of painful topics, including physical suffering, war, enslavement and destruction.⁹⁶ In Herodotus, at any rate, laughter represents an intermittent strand in the fabric of a profoundly serious attempt to reconstruct and understand the past and its significance in the present. Such a reconstruction foregrounds, as in the narrative of the Ionian Revolt, the awareness of short- and long-term *kaka*. But here a self-consciously literary initial comedy balances the final tragedy of Miletus,

⁹¹ Schol. Aeschines 2.83 confirms the Greek practice of tattooing runaway slaves. Plato *Laws* 854d proposes the regulation that ‘if anyone, slave or foreigner, is caught committing sacrilege, his crime should be written on his face and hands’.

⁹² Plut. *Per.* 26.4. Cf. Aristophanes, fr. 71 K-A. Jones (1987) 149–50. For an analogy between the Ionian Revolt and the Samian Revolt against Athens, see n. 18 above.

⁹³ For discussion of this evaluation see Introduction, pp. 21–5 above.

⁹⁴ 4.142 (Scythians); 5.126.1 (Aristagoras’ flight). The Thracians sell their children for export (5.6.1); in this culture, however, tattoos are a status symbol for the well-born (5.6.2). Asheri (1990) 141–3. For the Thracian ethnography, see Irwin, Ch. 1 above.

⁹⁵ 6.11.2; cf. 6.12.3: ‘It is better for us . . . even to suffer slavery in the future rather than being subjected to the present one’.

⁹⁶ See Halliwell’s commentary on this chapter of the *Poetics* (Halliwell (1987) 85).

which moved the Athenian theatre to tears (6.21). The weight Herodotus attributes to the self-serving manoeuvres of two rascally buffoons may represent another concession to the apologetic traditions by which the Ionians themselves preferred to wash their collective hands of any involvement in an episode in their history that almost everyone, rightly or wrongly, considered inglorious. But if Herodotus is often willing to embrace local versions of events, he also inserts them in a broader context and pushes them to their logical consequences, with the result that they occasionally turn against the groups whose interests they were designed to serve.⁹⁷ Here, to be sure, the Ionians get their wish and are largely absolved from the moral responsibility for the ‘beginning of evil’ for themselves and others. This, however, comes at a cost: they are also stripped of initiative, valour, determination, love of freedom and hatred of tyranny. As the central and helpless element in a triptych, between Aristagoras and Histiaeus, between East and West, they bear a striking resemblance to their ridiculous unspoken embodiment, the man with APOSTASIS branded on his head.

⁹⁷ There are many examples of this practice. In Book 5, see e.g. the way he combines the stories of the two Cleistheneses. But the clearest case is Herodotus’ account of the origins of Spartans and Athenians at 1.56–8, where the propaganda traditions of each city lead Herodotus to an ambivalent conclusion: the Spartans were Greek but outsiders to Greece, while the Athenians are autochthonous but of barbarian origin. See Thomas (2001): 222–5, Sourvinou-Inwood (2003) esp. 122–31; Munson (2005) 8–10.