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Persians in Thucydides

Rosaria Vignolo Munson

Thucydides' representation of Persia is inextricably linked to his response to Herodotus, who placed the Persians at the centre of his work.¹ The younger historian was well aware that for the Greeks of his time, as they were embarking on the long mutual war he describes, the most vivid cultural memory concerned their earlier resistance against the Persians, from which they derived a wealth of still current paradigms. After Xerxes' defeat, moreover, Persia continued to exist as a neighbouring power, which mainland Greeks may initially have viewed as marginal, but which ended up as the arbiter in their own war. This chapter examines Thucydides' representation of Persia's role in the history of the Greeks, what information about Persian agents, culture, and events he knows about or considers important, and his 'Persian' interactions with Herodotus.

I. THE PERSIAN WARS IN THUCYDIDES

Already in his first sentence, where he states that the Peloponnesian War affected both the Greeks and parts of the non-Greek world, and 'so to speak, most of mankind' (1.1.2), Thucydides appears to signal his awareness of the role that Persia will play after 412 BCE.² On the other hand, here and in subsequent introductory chapters,

¹ On Thucydides' knowledge of Herodotus, see esp. Hornblower (1992) and (1996), 19–38.

² 1.1.1; See Gomme (1945), 91; cf. 2.65.7.

Thucydides is looking not forwards, but backwards as he emphasizes the enormity of 'his' war in comparison to earlier ones. Persia was a great power (1.16) and Xerxes' invasion represented a time of danger for Greece (1.18.1–2). But for the benefit of readers who in retrospect might be inclined to consider the Persian attacks on Greece worthy of the Great Historical Watershed Award of all times, Thucydides minimizes it in quantitative terms that are hard to counter: it was a short affair, after all, quickly resolved in two naval and two infantry battles (1.23.1).

In a groundbreaking 1999 article, Tim Rood demonstrated Thucydides' awareness of the importance of the Greeks' resistance to Persia for their later history, and showed the influence of that conflict (and of Herodotus' account of it) on Thucydides' shaping of his own narrative. Rood's analysis served as a healthy corrective to the erroneous view that Thucydides has no interest in the Persian Wars and is contemptuous of Herodotus. We should recognize, however, that on this score Thucydides is sending somewhat of a double message. If the Persian Wars represent an important subtext in Thucydides' narrative, he also signals, especially in the first five books, that contemporary history has moved on.

In Thucydides, references to the Persian Wars occur mostly in speeches as a means for gaining the diplomatic advantage in international disputes just before or during the new Greek-on-Greek conflict.³ Two overlapping themes predominate. One is the magnification or devaluation of the role of different cities during the Greek resistance.⁴ The contrasting facts and interpretations put forth by Thucydidean speakers emerge as strands recycled from the fabric of Herodotus' comprehensive narrative, but here they appear dismembered and recontextualized, a fact that underlines the distinction, which both Herodotus and Thucydides make in their own way, between investigation and rhetorical attempts to capitalize on the past.⁵ Such arguments, however, are not usually effective in contemporary negotiations: most Thucydidean speakers who magnify the Persian War and their role in it lose the debate. Several speakers

³ In the first seven books speakers mention the Persians only when speaking about the Persian Wars. The (implicit) reference in Archidamus' speech at 1.82.1 (see below, p. 256) is an exception.

⁴ Athenians (1.73–75) vs. Sthenelaidas (1.86) and Corinthians (1.69); Plataeans (3.54, 56–9) vs. Thebans (3.62–4); Euphemos at Camarina (6.83).

⁵ Cf. esp. Dewald (1999).

on both sides seem to recognize the irrelevance of the topic when they more or less explicitly decline to rehash that event.⁶

The second theme of Thucydidean discourses is to suggest structural analogies between the Persian War past and current circumstances.⁷ The Corinthians depict Athens as a polis *turannos* that conquers, rather than liberates, the Greeks, and represent Athens as unlike her former self and equivalent to Persia (1.68, 122.2–3, 123.3). Pro-Athenian speakers, by contrast, emphasize the continuity between the bold Athenians who embarked on the ships and defeated the Persians and their contemporary descendants, who ‘become islanders’ to resist the Peloponnesian invasions, or can fight on many fronts at the same time.⁸

The narrator in his own voice is more reluctant to make explicit comparative references.⁹ Aside from the dismissive evaluation at 1.23.1, we find only two more mentions of the Persian War in books 1–7. Thucydides’ statement that the Athenians in the imminence of the first Peloponnesian invasion were aggrieved at having to leave their farms ‘which they had just restored after the Median War’ (2.16) reformulates Pericles’ parallel with the evacuation of Attica at the time of Xerxes (1.144) by focusing on the renewal and multiplication of a painful experience.¹⁰ The second reference compares the Spartan hoplites at Sphacteria, who ended up surrendering to the enemy, to the Spartans at Thermopylae, who died defending the pass (4.36.3).¹¹ This clear allusion to Herodotus, underlined by an apology in Herodotus’ manner for comparing ‘small things with great’,¹² represents an early sign of Thucydides’ appreciation of the moral dimension of the war that will emerge more clearly in his account of the Sicilian Expedition. There the speakers’ explicit references to Xerxes’ invasion (6.17.7, 33.5, 83) are integrated in a narrative structure informed by intertextuality with Herodotus.

⁶ Rood (1999), 145.

⁷ The comparison is embedded in the speeches cited in n. 4, except that of the Plataeans. See also Mytileneans (3.10) and Hermocrates (6.33.5). Connor (1984), 93; and Rood (1999), 150.

⁸ 1.143.5, 144.3–4, 6.17.7. Cf. Rood (1999), 147.

⁹ Cf., however, 1.98.4 and Pelling (2000), 96.

¹⁰ Cf. Rood (1999), 149.

¹¹ Thucydides’ mention of ‘the path’ (4.36.3) echoes Hdt. 7.175.2 and 7.212.2. Hornblower (1996), 32–4 and 191. Thuc. 4.40.2 contrasts with Hdt. 7.226. See Foster, Ch. 8 above.

¹² Cf. Hdt. 2.10.1 and 4.99.5.

The moralistic slant of each campaign story is the same, with hubris punished in both cases.¹³ Finally in book 8, the evocation of the past is less tidy but, as we shall see below (§§VI–IX), the narrator will take on a greater share of the discourse and draw attention to parallels and reversals with respect to different moments of the Persian Wars.

II. THUCYDIDES AND THE NON-GREEK WORLD

In spite of the recent re-evaluation of the influence of Herodotus on Thucydides, it cannot be denied that, with a partial but notable exception (the Pausanias–Themistocles excursus, on which see below), Thucydides does not focus on Persia per se, its extent, its resources, its imperial structure, its people, or its king, not even in the parts of book 1 (the Archaeology and Pentecontaetia) that would have given him the occasion to do so. This stance vis-à-vis the Persians agrees with Thucydides' relative lack of interest in barbarians in general,¹⁴ and both are partly manifestations of what scholars have described (with some truth, *pace* Rudd) as his ideological rejection of Herodotus and of Herodotus' way of doing history.¹⁵

Perhaps more importantly, Thucydides' ignore-the-barbarian brand of Hellenocentrism reflects the geopolitical situation of his time and a post-Cimonian and Periclean focus on Athenian predominance in Greece and the Aegean, which sees Thrace and the coasts of Anatolia as the virtual eastern and northern borders of the empire. In Thucydides' synoptic view of different theatres,¹⁶ non-Greek peoples remain at the margins, more the object of the sideways glances when Greeks have dealings with them than of a curious gaze. Even his Sicilian insertion (6.1–6), though it represents a Herodotean literary manoeuvre in many respects, is no ethnography in the manner of Herodotus. Only rarely does Thucydides describe foreign customs synchronically, just as also in the historical narrative the *nomoi* and *tropoi* of foreigners do not usually appear among the most

¹³ For the specific narrative parallels and differences, see esp. Rood (1999), 152–64; Connor (1984), 175–6, 183, 197–202; and Cornford (1907), 88–220. See also the different intertextual argument of Kallet (2001), 85–95.

¹⁴ Cf. his reductive attitude at 1.5–6. Gomme (1945), 10.

¹⁵ See Greenwood (2006), 7.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 42–3.

compelling motives or causes.¹⁷ In his portrayal of barbarians, nothing compares with his exploration of the *ethos* and ethnic identity of Athenians, Spartans, Dorians, Ionians, or other Greeks.¹⁸

A partial exception is represented in Thucydides' treatment of Thrace, where he had family connections and property.¹⁹ The Thracians are the subject of an ethnographically informative passage (2.95–101) that includes a catalogue of tribes (2.96); measurements of distances ('at the fastest four days and four nights for a merchant ship with the wind astern the whole way, while by land a man travelling light by the shortest road, can get from Abdera to the Danube in eleven days', 2.97.1–2);²⁰ and the enumeration of the tribute and gifts paid to the Odrysian king and nobles in gold and silver, embroidered cloth and other objects (2.97.3). All this is worthy of Herodotus' Scythian and Thracian *logoi* or his catalogue of the tributes of Persian satrapies (see esp. Hdt. 3.97), showing what Thucydides can do when he has 'been there'. This discussion of tributes, however, leads to the report of a local Thracian custom that shows Thucydides' ideological distance from Herodotus' perspective:

For they established a custom opposite to that prevailing in the Persian kingdom, which also the other Thracians have, namely of taking rather than giving (it is more shameful for them not to give when asked than to ask and not receive), but anyway, they practised it as much as possible. For it was impossible to get anything done without a present. (2.97.4–5)

Thucydides here explains how Sitalces' empire has grown to the point of inviting comparison with the Persian, thanks to an elaborate tributary system. But with the inverted parallel he seems to pivot from the topic of imperial revenues to that of bribes: the Odrysians are takers, just as the Persians are notorious givers (especially to Greeks).²¹ Unlike Herodotus, Thucydides is no objective ethnographer and

¹⁷ See Ostwald (1988); cf. Munson (2001b), 43–5.

¹⁸ As Connor rightly saw (1984: 36–47), the national characters of Athens and Sparta in particular are for Thucydides an integral part of the causality of the war, and Thucydides pursues the issue throughout his history. Cf. e.g. 7.44, 58.

¹⁹ At 4.105 Thucydides says he had interests in the gold mines in the neighbourhood of Amphipolis and was influential with the natives in the area, where he was also general in 424 BCE. The name of Thucydides' father, Olorus, is evidence of Thracian descent. See Hornblower (1987), 1.

²⁰ For Thucydides' expression *ἀνὴρ εὐζωνος*, see Herodotus 1.72.3, 1.104.1, 2.34.2. Hornblower (1991), 372.

²¹ See below, 1.109.2 (pp. 248–9); 8.83.3, 45.

rather speaks as a public executive and a business mogul ('one can get nothing done without gifts'). Similarly, his generalization about the cowardice and ferocity of the Thracians in the account of the Mycalessus massacre (7.29.4) expresses in blistering terms the military man's contempt for non-Greeks with whom he has dealt directly.

III. PERSIANS IN THE PENTECONTAETIA

Aside from book 8, the greatest number of references to the Persians of the period after the Persian Wars in the voice of the narrator occurs in two analeptic narratives of book 1, the Pentecontaetia and the excursus on Pausanias and Themistocles. The first passage is an account of the growth of Athenian power from 479 to 434 BCE. It is preliminary to Thucydides' narrative of the war and does not claim to be detailed or complete.²² Here the Persians are marginal: in spite of the fact that these events are even further from Herodotus' topic than from Thucydides', Herodotus' scattered references provide more information on Persian events between the two wars.

Thucydides informs us that the pretext for the foundation of the Delian League was retaliation against the Persians.²³ In the account that follows, Athenian dealings with Persian interests occupy only about a third of the whole, with the balance mostly consisting of military or diplomatic actions involving other Greeks. As a selective sample of the character of the League's activities in its early years, Thucydides begins by listing aggressive operations in four places: Eion, Scyros, Carystus, and Naxos (1.98.1-4). The last of these is the occasion for Thucydides' important reflection on Athenian subjection of rebellious members of the League (1.99). The first, the only one involving the Persians directly, is brutally brief: under the leadership of Cimon the Athenians took Eion from the Medes and enslaved its inhabitants.

A proleptic narrative of the same event appears in Herodotus' account of Xerxes' march through Thrace, where two Persian governors will win the gratitude of the king for their gallant resistance at

²² Cf. Rood (1998), 225-48.

²³ *πρόσχημα*, 1.96.1. Cf. Hornblower (1991), 144.

the time of the Delian League operations Thucydides summarizes. One of these men was the governor of Eion, Boges, who refused to surrender under siege and immolated himself on a pyre with his children, wives, concubines, and all the city's gold and silver (7.107.1–2). The contrast between Herodotus' arresting description and Thucydides' account shows Herodotus, unlike Thucydides, focusing on the non-Greek side, and seizing the opportunity (in the midst of his account of Xerxes' aggression!) to illustrate and translate Persian notions of ἀγαθία through the spectacular actions of specific Persians. Also unlike Thucydides, Herodotus displays familiarity with the Persian nobility and its ethical and political stance.²⁴ More generally, Herodotus takes the conflict, contrast, possible analogies or overlaps between the Eastern and the Western world-views as his overarching theme.

From a historical or 'current events' perspective, this portion of Thucydides' work treats the Persians as old news. This markedly differs from the attitude of Herodotus, who is sensitive to the multi-levelled significance of the past he celebrates for the present of narration and of the continuity between earlier and later events.²⁵ Moreover, Herodotus places the Persian and inter-Greek wars along a continuum of imperialistic evils,²⁶ while Thucydides' Pentecontaetia as a whole arguably emphasizes the break between the two wars.

Already at the time of the capture of Sestos the Spartans have withdrawn from the common effort (1.89.2); soon they will abandon it for good (1.94–5). At Athens, although the alliance with Sparta is still intact (1.92), the hero of Salamis is intent on outwitting the Spartans, (1.90–3), and no longer the Persian king.²⁷ It is Thucydides' opinion (ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ) that Themistocles drew his lesson on the importance of defence by sea from the Persian War (see 1.93.7), but his antagonism with the Peloponnesians was new. The narrator appears to agree with this position.²⁸ Soon after Themistocles disappeared from the political scene, in fact, the definitive dissolution

²⁴ For Herodotus' access to Persian sources, see Munson (2009). On Thucydides' lack of familiarity with the Persians, cf. Westlake (1985), 43.

²⁵ Cf. esp. Fornara (1971), 57–84.

²⁶ Cf. 6.98; Stadter (1992); Munson (2001a), 201–5.

²⁷ Cf. Hdt. 8.75 and 8.110.2. See below, p. 254 and n. 60 for Thucydides' reference to variant versions of those Herodotean episodes.

²⁸ See Thucydides' praise of Themistocles' foresight at 1.138.3 and his emphasis on the impermanence of the Spartan–Athenian alliance at 1.18.3.

of the alliance between Sparta and Athens (1.102–3) confirmed that a new era had begun.

The Athenians, of course, continue to pursue a vigorous anti-Persian policy, but the focus of Thucydides' narrative is elsewhere. Cimon's double victory at the Eurymedon receives only a brief mention (1.100). The Athenians' massive and disastrous six-year campaign to Egypt in support of the rebel Inaros (1.104 and 109–10) seems to anticipate some of the themes of the Sicilian Expedition.²⁹ But Thucydides' choice not to develop this section makes what must have been a huge blow for Athens and a triumph for Persia appear rather inconsequential in the longer term.³⁰ It also minimizes the themes of bad counsel and overreaching that are so prominent in the Sicilian narrative, substituting an emphasis on the Athenians' resilience and activism in the pursuit of empire, which is the major theme of the Pentecontaetia.³¹ A few years later, in fact, Thucydides places the Athenians in Cyprus with two hundred new ships and again in Egypt (1.112.1–3).³² How these anti-Persian operations wind down remains unclear: of an end of the war with Persia he says not a word.³³

On Persian operations related to the Egyptian war, Thucydides appears well informed. He reports the (presumably secret) royal mission of a certain Megabazus, who tried to bribe the Spartans into

²⁹ See esp. 1.110.1: 'Only a few of many managed to escape to Cyrene marching through Libya, but most died' (ὀλίγοι ἀπὸ πολλῶν πορευόμενοι διὰ τῆς Λιβύης ἐς Κυρήνην ἐσώθησαν, οἱ δὲ πλείστοι ἀπώλοντο); 1.110.4: '[the Phoenicians] destroyed most of the ships, and only a small number managed to escape' (διέφθειραν τὰς πολλὰς τῶν νεῶν, αἱ δ' ἐλάσσους διέφυγον πάλι); 'this was the outcome of the great expedition of the Athenians and their allies to Egypt' (τὰ μὲν κατὰ τὴν μεγάλην στρατείαν Ἀθηναίων καὶ τῶν ξυμμάχων ἐς Αἴγυπτον οὕτως ἐτελεύτησεν). Cf. 7.87.6: 'few out of many returned home; and these were the events in Sicily' (ὀλίγοι ἀπὸ πολλῶν ἐπ' οἴκου ἀπενόστησαν. ταῦτα μὲν τὰ περὶ Σικελίαν γενόμενα).

³⁰ Cf. Hornblower (1991), 173–8, who also explains what losing the control of Egypt would have meant for Persia. For a fuller account of the Athenian expedition to Egypt (c.460–454), see Diodorus 11.71–5.

³¹ Thucydides seems to have considered (or reconsidered) the Sicilian expedition in similar terms. The end of book 7 almost suggests the obliteration of all Athenian hopes, but at 2.65.12 Thucydides coolly observes that the disaster did not prevent Athens from pursuing the larger war for eight more years; likewise, the beginning of book 8 emphasizes Athenian resilience.

³² For this campaign, see also Plut. *Cim.* 18.5–9, and cf. Diod. 12.3–4, with Briant (2002), 579.

³³ On the Peace of Callias and its aftermath, see esp. Diod. 12.4.4–5. Andrewes (1961), 15–18; Kagan (1969), 107–13; Rood (1998), 229.

invading Attica, and he mentions the general of the Persian army in Egypt, Megabyzus son of Zopyrus (1.109.2–3).³⁴ In Herodotus, Zopyrus recaptures Babylon during the reign of Darius; Herodotus also mentions his son Megabyzus (confirming the role Thucydides attributes to him in Egypt) as well as Megabyzus' son Zopyrus (Hdt. 3.160.2). This younger Zopyrus may well have been one of Herodotus' sources for matters of Persian history drawn from his remarkable family tradition.³⁵ But since according to Herodotus he defected to the Athenians, he may also have talked to *Thucydides* about more recent events, including the strenuous Persian attempt to regain control of Egypt under his father's command.³⁶ If so, Thucydides has not fully exploited that opportunity. He says nothing about the initial revolt of Egypt from Persia, except that it was the occasion for the Delian League's intervention in support of Inaros. Herodotus, by contrast, brings up this revolt three more times in addition to the passage just cited (3.160.1). After saying that at the site where Cambyses defeated Psammenitos in 525 he saw proof that Persian skulls are soft and Egyptian skulls very hard, Herodotus adds that he was able to verify this phenomenon 'among the bodies of the dead at Papremis, where Achaemenes, the son of Darius, was defeated by Inaros of Libya' (3.12.4).

Later in the *Histories*, Herodotus specifies that this Achaemenes had become governor of Egypt after his brother Xerxes suppressed a previous revolt and instituted a harsher regime, and that Achaemenes subsequently died at the hands of the Libyan Inaros, son of Psammenitos (7.7).³⁷ In spite of Inaros' wrongdoings, says Herodotus in a third passage (3.15.3–4), his son Thamyris eventually obtained from the king the governorship of Egypt. From this and other cases Herodotus infers that 'the Persians are accustomed (*ἐώθασι*) to honour the children of kings; even if they rebel from them, nevertheless they at least give power back to their children'

³⁴ Besides the Megabazus and Megabyzus in this passage, and the kings, Persian individuals mentioned by Thucydides are Pissouthnes, Artabazus (son of Pharnaces I), Pharnaces II (grandson of Pharnaces I and son of Pharnabazus I), Pharnabazus II (son of Pharnaces II), Megabates, Artaphernes, Tissaphernes, Tamus, Arsaces, and Cyrus the Younger. Cf. Lewis (1977).

³⁵ See Wells (1907); Munson (2009), 464.

³⁶ See Ghimadaye (1983), cited by Hornblower (1991), 164.

³⁷ Cf. Thuc. 1.104.1 ('Sammetichus'). For fuller accounts of the Egyptian revolt and Athenian expedition there, see Ctesias F 14.36–8 Lenfant, and Diodorus 11.71 and 74.

(3.15.2). Herodotus is in the business of observing all sorts of differences among nations. Here his ethnographic impulse produces insights about the interface between culture and policy in the area of Persian relations with subject peoples. Throughout his work he holds up Persian affairs for display as implicit terms of comparison for the imperial challenges, especially revolts, of the type that Thucydides describes in his history of the Athenian Empire.

Thucydides, for his part, pays attention to the Persians only insofar as they potentially affect Greek interests. On the coast of Asia in particular it was not uncommon for factions in the cities of the Athenian League to seek help from the neighbouring satraps.³⁸ Thucydides omits most of these incidents, but the last Persian passage in his *Pentecontaetia* records that at the time of the secession of Samos, the Persian governor of Sardis, Pissouthnes son of Hystaspes, supported the rebels. On that occasion the Athenians were worried about the imminent arrival of the Phoenician fleet, which however never materialized (1.115–16). More spectacular, though equally inconclusive, had been earlier intrigues of Pausanias and Themistocles with the Persians. The section where Thucydides tells this story presents special features and deserves to be examined separately.

IV. PAUSANIAS, THEMISTOCLES, AND THE PERSIANS

The Pausanias–Themistocles section is composed of two analeptic passages inserted contiguously at the end of book 1 (1.128–34 and 1.135–8). At this point in the chronological development of the main narrative, the outbreak of the new Greek-on-Greek conflict is imminent. The Spartans have issued an ultimatum demanding that the Athenians drive out the almost two-centuries-old Alcmaeonid curse. The Athenians have responded by bidding the Spartans to clean up some curses of their own (1.128.1–2). Since the Spartans incurred one of these when they caused the death of Pausanias, Thucydides takes the opportunity to tell the latter's post-Persian War

³⁸ e.g. probably in Erythrae (see ML 40), Sigeum (*ATL* III 55), Miletus (*ATL* II 57–60) and Caria (*ATL* III 114–17 and 308). For the last, see Kagan (1969), 179, also 98–102; Briant (2002), 580.

story (1.127–34), to which he attaches the post-Persian War story of Themistocles at the point where the two stories appear to intersect (1.135–8). This internal transition further distances the sequence from its initial factual connection to the main narrative.

The insertion is an unexpected throwback to the past in more ways than one. Its optional character and the manner in which it spins off are in themselves typical of Herodotus. With both Athenians and Spartans accusing each other of religious offences committed long ago, Herodotus might have said that his *logos* required him to explain the circumstances of those earlier events (see e.g. Hdt. 1.95.1). By Thucydides' usual standards, however, these grievances are not genuine enough and therefore not causally important enough for the outbreak of the war to merit explanation. Just as they are mere diplomatic pretexts in the world of the narrated (1.126.1), so they also constitute a blatant pretext for the analepses from the point of view of Thucydides' discourse. Thucydides has already treated Themistocles and Pausanias (in this order) in the Pentecontaetia.³⁹ His choice to add more at this point or, to put it another way, to sever this material from its proper chronological context, provides a clue that the excursus has a paradigmatic and thematic role. The excursus represents a reflection on general issues that will be important in the rest of the work, such as the nature of leadership in connection to the Spartan and the Athenian character. It therefore prepares the reader for the entrance of Pericles, Thucydides' protagonist and the ultimate leader in the war that is about to begin.⁴⁰

These insights explain the anomalous position of the section, but not so much its oddity in form and contents. The Pausanias–Themistocles excursus appears to replace what we have called Thucydides' overall rejection of Herodotus (see above, p. 244) with an imitation of Herodotus, adopting this author's favorite structure, diction, historical method, and focus. It includes aspects of what we would expect Thucydides to regard as legendary (a partial sense of τὸ

³⁹ 1.89.3–95.7; see above, §III. For the 'Herodotean' flavour of Thucydides' narrative about Themistocles and the walls at 1.89.3–93.7, see Blösel, above, pp. 216–18.

⁴⁰ Most concise on this point is Finley (1942), 139. On 'Pausanias–Themistocles' from a literary viewpoint, see also esp. Cornford (1907), 135–7; Konishi (1970); Westlake (1977); Connor (1984), 48–9; Carawan (1989); Hornblower (1987), 26 and (1991), 211–12; Patterson (1993); Rood (1998), 138 and 180. There is also a substantial bibliography on the difficulties of this passage from the point of view of the historical Pausanias or Themistocles or both; see e.g. Lang (1967).

μυθῶδες at 1.22.4): a biographical interest of Eastern stamp,⁴¹ the introduction of probably fictional letters,⁴² attention to personal motives, and the appearance of a female character in an active role.⁴³ Here we also find the subdivision of the narrative through summarizing introductions and conclusions,⁴⁴ a leisurely narrative pace and simple style,⁴⁵ the Herodotean use of certain words,⁴⁶ metanarrative references to research, hearsay, or tradition,⁴⁷ the presence of poetic or exotic-sounding expressions,⁴⁸ celebration through superlatives,⁴⁹ and the description of enduring memorials.⁵⁰ Many of these features individually occur elsewhere in Thucydides. But the sheer accumulation of them in a single narrative at the end of book 1, when we have already grown accustomed to a certain Thucydidean style, is designed to throw the reader off balance.

The way in which the excursus deals with Persia is also Herodotean and contradicts what we have noticed so far about Thucydides' criteria of selection. In the first place, it highlights Persian customs and institutions in an uncharacteristic way. The term *σατραπεία*, which Herodotus defines as a province of the

⁴¹ Cf. Momigliano (1993), 34–8.

⁴² Pausanias to Xerxes (1.128.7), Xerxes to Pausanias (1.129.3), and Themistocles to Xerxes (137.4), the first two introduced with the prospective *τάδε* (instead of *τοιαῦτα*) in the Herodotean manner. Cf. in Herodotus the letters of Harpagus to Cyrus (1.124), Amasis to Polycrates (3.40). Cf. Westlake (1977), 102–3. For a detailed re-examination of the Themistocles excursus, see now Blösel, Ch. 9 above, pp. 223–36.

⁴³ Admetus's wife at 1.136.3; cf. in Hdt. Mitrades's wife (1.111), etc. For Gomme (1945), 438 the supplication episode resonates of tragedy, while for Carawan (1989), 154 the scene recalls Odysseus' supplication of Arete (*Od.* 7.133–81). Herodotean storytelling frequently combines epic and dramatic elements.

⁴⁴ For prospective introductions, see e.g. *ἐγένετο δὲ τοιόνδε* at 1.128.3, and see further 128.4, 128.6, 129.3. For retrospective conclusions, see 1.129.1 (*τοσαῦτα μὲν ἡ γραφή ἐδήλου*) as well as the solemn close of the entire double narrative at 1.138.6.

⁴⁵ 'Here the lion smiled', says the scholiast with relief.

⁴⁶ e.g. *Σπαρτιάται* as synonym for *Λακεδαιμόνιοι* at 1.128.3, 131.1, 132.1 (as frequently in Hdt.). The expression *τὸν Ἑλληνικὸν πόλεμον* apparently to mean 'the war of the Greeks (against Persia)' at 1.128.3 is not found in 5th-cent. authors; see also *ἐνδύόμενος* (1.130.1). Cf. Westlake (1977), 97–102.

⁴⁷ See below, p. 255.

⁴⁸ *δορὶ ἐλών*, 'having captured them by the spear' (1.128.7); *σε μήτε νύξ μήθ' ἡμέρα ἐπισχέτω ὥστε ἀνεῖναι πράσσειν τι ὧν ἐμοὶ ὑπισχνή*, 'let neither night nor day keep you from doing what you promise me' (1.129.3).

⁴⁹ 1.138.3: *βεβαιοτάτα ... κράτιστος ... ἄριστος*; 1.138.6: *λαμπροτάτους γενομένους τῶν καθ' αὐτοὺς Ἑλλήνων*.

⁵⁰ 1.134.4 (the burial of Pausanias and subsequent Spartan dedications); 132.2–3 (Pausanias' inscribed tripod at Delphi); 138.5–6 (monument to Themistocles in the agora of Magnesia and secret burial in Attica).

Persian Empire, appears only here in Thucydides (1.129.1).⁵¹ Persian *εὐεργεσία*—in the sense of ‘benefactions’ to the king—is a feature of Achaemenid internal policy emphasized by Herodotus.⁵² The expression *ἀνὴρ πιστός* (1.128.7) to denote the king’s faithful, also appears in Herodotus in an Achaemenid context, as does *ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός*, as we have already seen.⁵³ Direct communications between Greek individuals and the king are frequent in Herodotus, but occur only here in Thucydides. The narrative trope of noting that ‘the king rejoiced’ after reading Pausanias’ letter (*Ξέρξης δὲ ἤσθη . . . τῇ ἐπιστολῇ*, 1.129.1) recalls several passages in Herodotus where an eastern monarch is pleased (or not) with his adviser.⁵⁴ It is paralleled by the king’s reaction to the letter of Themistocles (1.138.1, *βασιλεὺς . . . ἐθαύμασε*), whom Thucydides himself praises as *ἄξιος θαυμάσαι* at 1.138.3.⁵⁵ Artaxerxes rewards Themistocles with the gift of three cities in Asia (1.138.5); to Pausanias Xerxes offers unlimited resources in gold, silver, and military forces (1.129.3). Thucydides has a lot to say elsewhere on the subject of Persians and money (especially in book 8), but the insistence on visible symbols of Eastern wealth (gold and silver, *et sim.*), only paralleled by Thucydides’ description of the Odrysian Empire, is another Herodotean trait.⁵⁶

⁵¹ 1.129.1. Hdt. translates *σατραπεία* at 1.192.2 and 3.89.1. The term *σατράπης* does not occur until Xenophon; Herodotus and Thucydides use *ὑπαρχων* (rather loosely) or *ἄρχων* for the Persian governor of a province. Cf. Munson (2005), 56.

⁵² See 1.128.4, *εὐεργεσίαν . . . ἐς βασιλέα*; 1.129.3, *κείσεται σοι εὐεργεσία ἐν τῷ ἡμετέρῳ οἴκῳ ἐς αἰεὶ ἀνάγραπτος*, where *ἀνάγραπτος* refers to the special list on which the king’s benefactors were inscribed (cf. *εὐεργέτης βασιλέος ἀνέγραφη* in Herodotus 8.85.3); 1.137.4, *μοι εὐεργεσία ὀφείλεται*. Herodotus gives the Persian term *orosangai* for the *εὐεργέται* or benefactors of the king of Persia (8.85.3), and throughout his work mentions several individuals who earned this position. Cf. Munson (2005), 57. The term *εὐεργέτης* is of course also used for expectation of Greek-on-Greek reciprocity, an important theme in Herodotus as well as in this Thucydidean passage: see 1.136.1, where Themistocles is called *εὐεργέτης* of the Corcyraeans (1.136.1).

⁵³ Cf. also Xerxes’ injunction to Pausanias *πράσσειν ὡς ἄριστα καὶ πιστότατα* (1.129.2). *πιστότατος* is also used of Argilius at 1.132.5. For *πιστός* in Herodotus in a Medo-Persian context, see e.g. 1.108.3, 113.3, 3.74.1; *ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός* occurs, for example, in the description of Boges, the governor of Eion at 7.107.1 cited above, p. 247.

⁵⁴ Cf. Gomme (1945), 432. See e.g. 8.69.2 (Xerxes vs. Artemisia).

⁵⁵ Herodotus typically expresses ‘wonder’ and attributes it to his characters; see e.g. 7.204 and 208.3.

⁵⁶ For the Odrysian Empire at 2.97, see above, pp. 245–6. Cf. also 2.13 for Athenian gold.

Writing like Herodotus, Thucydides completes and corrects two biographies his predecessor had purposely left unfinished.⁵⁷ He vividly fleshes out Herodotus' references to Pausanias' hubris and his desire to be the ruler of Greece.⁵⁸ He manipulates the pattern of the individual Greek who tries to find favour with the king of Persia, so that Pausanias acquires certain stereotypical features of the Herodotean Themistocles.⁵⁹ Themistocles' letter to Artaxerxes in Thucydides reproduces and internally confirms that Themistocles had sent messages to Xerxes, as reported by Herodotus. Thucydides' account of Themistocles' flight to Persia shows the fulfilment of Herodotus' proleptic reference to the same outcome.⁶⁰ Pausanias' offer to marry Xerxes' daughter (1.128.7) smacks of a tall tale competing with the more restrained tradition in Herodotus that Pausanias, 'if the story is true', became engaged to the daughter of Megabates, a cousin of Darius who was general in west Asia before the Ionian Revolt.⁶¹ The issue of cultural differences, fundamental in Herodotus, but normally ignored by Thucydides, is also conspicuous in this passage. Thucydides' Pausanias, like the Herodotean Scyles (4.78), transgresses his national space and norms in diet, dress, and

⁵⁷ Patterson (1993), 146 is largely on target here, and see also Hornblower (1991), 211. Herodotus' treatment of Pausanias and Themistocles, however, is itself ironical, in the sense that it counts on his audience's awareness of the unfortunate end of both leaders. See Fornara (1971), 62–74.

⁵⁸ Thuc. 1.128. 3 *ἐφίεμενος τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς ἀρχῆς* 'aiming at the rule of Greece' corresponds to Hdt. 5.32 *ἔρωτα σχὼν τῆς Ἑλλάδος τύραννος γενέσθαι*; cf. Thucydides' statement at 1.95.3 that his position seemed to the Greeks an imitation or tyranny more than a generalship. At 1.130.2 Thucydides expands Herodotus' reference to the *ὑβρις* of Pausanias (Hdt. 8.3.2) with a description of his violent ways. He becomes 'difficult to approach' (*δυσπρόσοδόν ... ὁμοίως ὥστε μηδένα δύνασθαι προσιέναι*, 130.2), recalling both the royal inaccessibility of Daeios (Hdt. 1.96) and the tyrannical rages of Cambyses (Hdt. 3.27–36) and Cleomenes (Hdt. 6.75.1).

⁵⁹ See the intermediary Gongylus at 1.128.6 corresponding to Sicynnus in Herodotus 8.75 and 8.110.2. The *ναύκληρος* in Thucydides 1.137.2–3 fulfils a similar function. For the pattern of the Greek exile in Persia, cf. Boedeker (1987), 191–3.

⁶⁰ See Thuc. 1.137.4, referring to the messages reported by Herodotus 8.75 (before Salamis) and 8.109 (after Salamis, with the proleptic reference to Themistocles' flight to Persia at 110.5).

⁶¹ Hdt. 5.32.1. This is probably the Megabates of Thuc. 1.129.1, governor of Dascyleion until Xerxes replaced him with Artabazus son of Pharnaces in response to Pausanias' appeal. The name of Pharnaces appears as *Parnaka* of the Persepolis fortification tablets. Another of his sons, Pharnabazus, is the father of Pharnaces II, the destinatee of the Spartan embassy at Thuc. 2.67 and the father of the famous Pharnabazus of book 8. Cf. Lewis (1977), 7–11, 52; Hornblower (1991), 215.

demeanour (1.130.1).⁶² As a fugitive from his land, Themistocles adopts foreign ways, although he remains productive and sane: 'he learned as much as he could of the Persian language and of the customs of the country' (1.138.1).

In the Pausanias–Themistocles excursus, metanarrative references justify the origin of some of the information (*ὡς ὕστερον ἀνηυρέθη*, 1.128.6), or caution the reader that certain parts of the story are the product of hearsay (*ὡς λέγεται*, 1.132.5 and 138.1; *λέγεται*, 1.134.1; *φασί*, 1.138.6); on one occasion, the narrator proposes an alternate version (*λέγουσι δέ τινες*, 1.138.4). All this conforms to Herodotus' practice of *λέγειν τὰ λεγόμενα*, and not to Thucydides' model of processing his research in advance and out of view.

Because the whole Pausanias–Themistocles section is pervaded by 'an aura of Ionian *ἱστορίη*', to use the words of one scholar, many think that Thucydides composed it early in his career.⁶³ What is more important and certain, at any rate, is that it was rather late in his career that Thucydides *chose to include it at this point of his work*. Regardless of its origins, the piece functions in its present context as a ventriloquist display of a type of historiography Thucydides had rejected by the time he settled on his own special method and project.⁶⁴ It is tempting to regard it as Thucydides' farewell to Herodotus, and to the topics, method, and style Herodotus stood for. At a close range, that is, the alienation from Greece of the two most distinguished Persian War heroes (see *λαμπροτάτους* at 1.138.6) signals the irrelevance of that past: in Pausanias, Thucydides sees the corruption of the old Panhellenic ideal and in Themistocles the albeit premature foresight to move away from it. Thucydides' praise of Themistocles (1.138.3)—somewhat closer to his usual style—forms a 'natural bridge' to the entrance of Pericles, who in the 'now' of the main narrative inherits Themistocles' role.⁶⁵

⁶² The language of *nomos* is prominent here: *ἐν τῷ καθεστῶτι τρόπῳ* (1.130.1), *ἐξεδεδήτητο τῶν καθεστῶτων νομίμων* (1.132.2), *(χρώμενοι τῷ τρόπῳ ᾧπερ εἰώθασιν ἐς σφᾶς αὐτοῦς)* (1.132.5).

⁶³ Westlake (1977), 96, arguing for the existence of a written source (Charon of Lampsacus); see also Carawan (1989) (Stesimbrotus of Thasos). These theories are speculative, but they remind us that Herodotus need not have been the only model.

⁶⁴ I suggest as a parallel the beginning of the *Histories* (1.1–5), where Herodotus makes a few important points even while he gives a demonstration of what he does not intend to do in his work.

⁶⁵ Hornblower (1991), 223, who especially notices the parallelism between *κράτιστος ἀποσχεδιάζειν τὰ δέοντα*, of Themistocles at 1.138.3 and *οὐδενὸς ἦσαν . . . γνῶναι τε τὰ δέοντα καὶ ἐρμενεύσαι ταῦτα* of Pericles at 2.60.5.

For the long range, however, the past will be far from irrelevant. In fact, the paradigm of Pausanias and Themistocles was perhaps prophetic, and destined to reappear again, together with Persia, in the figures of the Athenian Alcibiades and Tissaphernes at the end of the work as we have it, and in the figures of the Spartan Lysander and Cyrus in the projected ending Thucydides never wrote. But in that later part of the *History*, from what we are able to see, Thucydides' recognition of Herodotus takes a very different form.

V. PERSIA IN THE ARCHIDAMIAN WAR

The machinations of Pausanias and Themistocles, Megabazus' embassy to Sparta (1.109.2), and Pissuthnes' support of the revolt of Samos (1.115–16) already suggest the circumstances of future Persian interference in Greece. Greek leaders might have their own reasons to cut deals with Persian officials. The latter have abundant resources and might be willing to spend them to promote their interests as they chafe at the Athenians' presence on the Asiatic coast. This pattern will come to the foreground in Thucydides' book 8. Here we will look at earlier phases of this involvement.

Starting from very beginning of the war, according to Thucydides, both Peloponnesians and Athenians planned diplomatic missions to elicit the king's assistance (2.7.1). The Spartans in particular formulate their policy early on, when Archidamus defensively asserts that, faced with the danger of Athens, the Spartans are justified in attempting 'to acquire allies both Greeks and barbarians' (1.82.1).⁶⁶ In the second year of the war, we learn of a Peloponnesian embassy dispatched to Persia in order to ask for funds.⁶⁷ While on their way to Asia the envoys visit the Thracian king Sitalces, where, however, they are betrayed to some Athenian ambassadors present at Sitalces' court. The Spartans are brought to Athens and summarily put to death (2.67.2–4). Thucydides' narrative emphasizes this Athenian violation of international convention, which shows the fragility of

⁶⁶ Meaning Persians as well as Thracians (see 2.67).

⁶⁷ On Spartan contacts with Persia, cf. Lewis (1977), 61–4, and Brunt (1965), 262–4.

human and divine laws under the pressure of war.⁶⁸ But a secondary theme is the pathetic fate of the Peloponnesian envoys, who, in contrast to their heroic ancestors celebrated by Herodotus, neither reach their destination nor return home.⁶⁹

A missed opportunity to exploit Persian interests in Asia occurs three years later, when the Spartans sail across the Aegean with the intent of aiding the Mytilenean revolt. They are late for that mission, but at Erythrae some Ionians and Lesbians urge them to capture a base and foment a revolt of Ionia, suggesting that Pissouthnes (the governor of Sardis who had supported the Samian rebels) might be persuaded to lend his support. But the plan seems too dangerous to the Spartan admiral Alcidas, who decides instead to return home (3.31).

The third and last Archidamian War episode of Persian involvement belongs to the seventh year (winter of 425/4), when an Athenian commander in Thrace intercepts Artaphernes, a Persian envoy on his way to Sparta.⁷⁰ In Athens they translate the message he is carrying: the king, it said, did not understand what the Lacedaemonians wanted; many ambassadors had come, but they all said something different; if they wished to speak clearly, they should send him other envoys with this Persian (4.50.2). What the Spartans wanted, of course, was Persian money, and they must have been aware that the king expected territorial promises in exchange. But they have been calling themselves the 'liberators of Hellas' and cannot unambiguously offer to barter with Persia the freedom of the Asiatic Greek states, hence the enduring communication gap.⁷¹ The irony is palpable, because traditionally it is the Spartans who are likely to exhibit befuddlement at the diplomatic contortions of foreign envoys that come to them.⁷² Here the Persian king complains—in Assyrian—that the plain-speaking Spartans have not been expressing themselves all that plainly to him.

This passage wraps up Thucydides' view of the role of Persia in the Archidamian War and explains the meaning of his selective

⁶⁸ This episode, which must have shocked contemporaries, also appears in Hdt. 7.137.2–3; see Munson (2001a), 191–3.

⁶⁹ On the 480 BCE mission to Persia of Sperthias and Boulis, the fathers of the two Spartan envoys of 430, see Hdt. 7.133–7.

⁷⁰ Possibly an Achaemenid, perhaps a relation of the two Artaphernes, father and son, in Hdt. 5.25.1, 6.42.2, 7.74.2. Cf. Lewis (1977), 2.

⁷¹ 2.8.4. Cf. Gomme (1956), 499.

⁷² See Hdt. 3.46; cf. 1.152 and Thuc. 1.86.1.

treatment of Persia's negotiation with the Greeks. A scene in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* suggests that the Athenians had had dealings of their own with Persia and that by these negotiations—ineffective enough to become comic material—Athens, like Sparta, hoped to obtain financial support.⁷³ Thucydides records no specific cases of Athenian embassies, except for the Athenian envoys in charge of escorting Artaphernes back to Asia at 4.50.2. These men intend to seek an audience with the king, presumably to counter Spartan diplomacy, but return home after learning of Artaxerxes' death (spring 424).⁷⁴ There is some evidence that the Athenians sent another mission in the following year.⁷⁵ Thus, while probably under-reporting Athenian contacts with Persia in the Archidamian War, Thucydides chooses to single out for attention three incidents involving the Spartans, all ending in failure and pointing to Spartan inadequacy abroad. The Spartans have no coherent international policy likely to motivate the king, they lack the drive to campaign overseas, and they are utterly unable to persuade, communicate, negotiate—or even competently move—on the borders of the Greek world. Persia, as a result, remains on the sidelines of the action until a weakened Athens and a Sparta that lets go of her scruples will turn her into a major player in the Greek war.

VI. ENTER PERSIA

The Artaphernes narrative at 4.50 marks the point at which Thucydides almost entirely stops looking in the direction of Persia as he reports the last years of the Archidamian War and the Peace of Nicias. With his description of the Sicilian Expedition, he is making a different movie, one more than ever informed by the memory of the Persian Wars but oblivious of contemporary Persia.⁷⁶ The Persian gap lasts from 4.50 to 8.5.4 and covers a span of ten years, aside from

⁷³ The *Acharnians* (425 BCE) was produced about one year before Artaphernes of Thuc. 4.50 was brought to Athens. Cf. *Knights* 478, where the Paphlagonian/Cleon accuses his enemies of intrigues with Persia. Cf. Gomme (1956), 499.

⁷⁴ For problems of the chronology, see Lewis (1977), 69–76, and Hornblower (1996), 207–8.

⁷⁵ See Andocides 3.29 and ML 70. Cf. Andrewes (1961), 2–4; Kagan (1974), 306; Lewis (1977), 76–7.

⁷⁶ See above, pp. 243–4.

a brief report at 5.1 that the Delians, whom the Athenians, citing religious concerns, had expelled from Delos, were allowed to settle in Atramyttion by Pharnaces, the governor of Dascyleion.⁷⁷ This notice serves as a 'seed' for a later episode that illustrates one of the themes in book 8, the victimization by both Persians and Greeks of the Greeks living on the Asiatic coast.⁷⁸

In book 8, after her defeat in Sicily, Athens engineers her own recovery and mounts a new force, while in the Eastern Aegean two new parties become ready to take advantage of her weakness with Peloponnesian help: while the Ionians see the opportunity to acquire freedom from Athens, the Persians are eager to resubject the Ionians to their rule. These complementary goals bring together the two Persian strands that emerged separately in the earlier part of Thucydides' work, namely the representation of the real Persia 'now' and the memory of the Persian War past, beginning from the Ionian Revolt of 499.

Thucydides stages the appearance of Persia in his narrative for maximum impact. In contrast with previous (unsuccessful) Spartan missions to Persia (see above, §V), he now reports consecutively two different Persian initiatives to contact the Greeks. First, Chians and Erythraeans arrive in Sparta, taking with them an ambassador from Tissaphernes who invites the Peloponnesians to Asia and promises financial support (*τροφήν*, 8.5.4–5). At about the same time, Pharnabazus, the son of Pharnaces, Tissaphernes' colleague to the north, sends to Sparta certain Greek exiles living at his court, with the request to bring Peloponnesian ships to the Hellespont. Both satraps hope to obtain a Spartan alliance for the king, in order to induce the cities in their respective provinces to revolt from the Athenians, and thereby regain their tribute (8.6.1).

While Pharnabazus is from a lineage of satraps of Dascyleion familiar to Thucydides' readers,⁷⁹ Tissaphernes, introduced with no patronymic, comes out of the blue.⁸⁰ The appearance of the Persian factor in book 8 is indeed all the more sudden because of

⁷⁷ On the gap, see Andrewes (1961).

⁷⁸ The fate of the Delians of Atramyttion is reported 8.108.4; see below p. 274.

⁷⁹ Above, n. 61.

⁸⁰ He appears here for the first time with no patronymic or introduction. Cf. Westlake (1985), 43. For the possibility that Tissaphernes draws his lineage from one of Herodotus' Hydarnes, see Lewis (1977), 83–4; Hornblower (2008), 765.

Thucydides' choice not to update us on relevant Persian developments that have taken place since the death of Artaxerxes (which he mentioned at 4.50.2), including the revolt of Pissouthnes, the anti-Athenian satrap of Thucydides' earlier accounts.⁸¹ Pissouthnes was defeated and replaced by Tissaphernes, who in fact appears now at 8.5.4 as Darius' 'general of the districts on the coast' (*στρατηγὸς . . . τῶν κάτω*).⁸² Thucydides has also given us no advance notice of a probably connected situation, the still ongoing rebellion in Caria of the son of Pissouthnes, Amorges, whom we find fighting on the Athenian side later on.⁸³ We first hear of the revolt of Amorges in the narrative of the Chian embassy to Sparta, and only indirectly, through Thucydides' report of Tissaphernes' thought. This is not a trivial event, because in addition to his eagerness to recover the tribute from the Greek cities in his province Tissaphernes' desire to capture or kill Amorges is apparently one of the causes for his desire to join the Peloponnesian side in the war (8.5.5).

The paraphrase of the address of Tissaphernes' ambassador to the Spartan assembly (*ἐπήγετο . . . ὑπισχνεῖτο*) and of his intentions (*ἐνόμιζε*), which in turn includes references to the king as a constant but distant point of reference (*ὑπὸ βασιλέως . . . βασιλεῖ . . . ὥσπερ αὐτῷ προσέταξε βασιλεύς*), recalls the calculations Herodotus attributes to Aristagoras on the eve of the Ionian Revolt (Hdt. 5.35.1). Persian focalization has been rare since Thucydides' report of Megabazus' mission, the royal letters in the Pausanias–Themistocles piece, and the letter confiscated from Artaphernes.⁸⁴ The paraphrase is novel because of Thucydides' representation of a Persian agent whose strategy and motives will become the object of scrutiny in an unprecedented way.

But the 'Persia' that plays such an important role in Thucydides' narrative of the Greek War from this point on is not the grand empire Herodotus describes, the multicultural home of distant

⁸¹ See 1.115 and 3.32.1. On the revolt of Pissouthnes, see Ctesias (F 15.53 Lenfant).

⁸² For a discussion about whether Tissaphernes was the territorial satrap of Sardis or held a special western command, see Hornblower (2008), 767–8. Cf. Hyland (2007), 3 and n. 9.

⁸³ 8.5.5; at 8.19.2 both Athenian and Amorges' forces threaten the Peloponnesians at the same time, but only from 8.28.2 and 8.54.3 do we learn that the Athenians are backing him. Cf. Andocides 3.29. The chronology is uncertain; see Andrewes (1961), 4–6; Rood (1998), 153–4; Hornblower (2008), 765 and 769–70, with recent bibliography.

⁸⁴ Cf. 1.109.2; 4.50.2.

capitals, possessing a global policy masterminded by the king. It is rather the peripheral space of its most western provinces, where the king is present only as a removed authority (or potential constraint) in documents and diplomatic discourse.⁸⁵ Similarly, in an earlier passage that testifies to Thucydides' awareness of Persia's role in Athens' ultimate defeat, he speaks neither of Persia, nor of the king as its central executive, but in a more limited way of 'the king's son Cyrus, who provided funds to the Peloponnesian fleet' (2.65.12).

The two satraps of book 8, Tissaphernes and Pharnabazus, have no special cultural trait or perspective. They rather resemble the many scheming Greek individuals with sectarian interests and limited control who proliferate in this part of the narrative. Money—hard cash—becomes a crucial issue. Thucydides does not mention Persian dinners or piles of silver and gold, like Herodotus, or like Thucydides himself in the Pausanias–Themistocles episode and in his description of Odrysian wealth.⁸⁶ The colourful utterance that Alcibiades will attribute to Tissaphernes—that he will not leave the Athenians without pay, 'not even if he had to turn his own bed into silver coin' (8.81.3)—is a deliberately phoney piece of verbal *perserie* by a most unreliable speaker.⁸⁷ For the narrator Thucydides, the Persian satraps are simply pragmatic executives, careful with their investments (the *τροφή* they are ready to pay to the Peloponnesian fleet) and eager to recuperate the revenues (*φόροι*) from the cities in their provinces.

VII. WHAT THE SPARTANS WANT

The narrative that follows the account of the embassies at 8.5–6 raises the problem of the position of the Spartans, who have begun the war as liberators of Greece from Athens (2.8.4), but now become the instruments of the resubjection of Ionia to Persia. The Spartans accept the invitation of the Chians and Tissaphernes (8.6.2),

⁸⁵ See 8.17.4, 8.28.3, 8.37.2 and 4; 8.43.3, 8.46.1, 8.52, 8.56.4, 8.58.2, 8.84.5, 8.87.5. In Thucydides, the only direct contacts between Greeks and the Persian king occur in the Pausanias–Themistocles excursus of book 1: see above, p. 253.

⁸⁶ For Persian symbolic wealth in the Pausanias–Themistocles excursus, see 1.129.3 and above, p. 253; Odrysian wealth: 2.97.3 and p. 245.

⁸⁷ I am borrowing the term *perserie* from Miller (1997). Alcibiades is talking to Athenians who have their own preconceived ideas of how a Persian satrap would talk.

although the prospect of cooperation with Pharnabazus in the Hellespont remains on the table and will be revived periodically.⁸⁸ The evocation of Herodotus' Ionian Revolt—by means of implicit analogies and inversions, and with different individuals sharing this or that role—becomes compelling when the Peloponnesians, led by Chalcideus and Alcibiades (who is the new Aristagoras at this point), bring about the revolt of Miletus while the Athenian fleet takes its station at Lade (8.17.3). Lade is the site of the notorious Ionian defeat in 499,⁸⁹ and to make sure we do not miss the coincidence, Thucydides follows it up with an abrupt prospective announcement of the 'first alliance' between the Spartans and the Persian king (8.17.4).

The way in which Thucydides marks this treaty recalls the sentence with which, after the battle of Lade and the destruction of Miletus, Herodotus underlines the third subjection of Ionia (Hdt. 6.32). This third subjection follows a first and a second subjection by Lydians and Persians, respectively, and just as Herodotus implicitly looks forward to a fourth enslavement of Ionia (the one by Athens, after the Persian Wars), so Thucydides anticipates the second and third treaties between Sparta and Persia (8.36 and 8.57.2), all of which bring about the equivalent of a fifth enslavement, by delivering the Ionians once again into Persian hands.⁹⁰ These agreements confirm the history of Ionian vulnerability, which begins with Herodotus' account of the Mermnad aggressions (Hdt.1.14–26) and culminates at the end of Herodotus' work with the debate between the Spartans and Athenians about what to do with the Ionians after the Persian Wars, at which time the Spartans propose to move them to Greece or else let them fend for themselves (Hdt. 9.106.2–4). In Thucydides, that history continues with the Ionians' subjection by Athens and with the ambiguous policy of the Spartans in the Archidamian War, by which the 'liberators of Hellas' send embassies

⁸⁸ 8.6.2–5, 8.8.2, 8.39.1, 8.61.1 and 62.1, 8.80.1, 8.99.1.

⁸⁹ For echoes of the Ionian Revolt see Kallet (2001), 95–7 and Hornblower (2008), 800–1.

⁹⁰ The term 'enslavement' borrows from Herodotus' language at 6.32, and is echoed by Thucydides in the indirect speech of Lichas at 8.43.3 (see below, p. 263). See Hornblower (2008), 801. For Herodotus on the conquests of Ionia, see Munson (2007), 146–9. Thucydides also echoes Herodotus' narrative of the defeat at Lade in his sombre reflection on the reversal of fortune of Chios (8.24), which corresponds to Herodotus' lament on Chian sufferings after Lade (Hdt. 6.26–7); see also below, p. 274.

to the Persian king, who therefore (of course) is confused about what they could possibly want (above, §V). Now, during the Ionian phase of the war, the Spartans appear ready to acknowledge in writing that they want to win the war, whatever the cost.

The material support Tissaphernes has promised to the Spartans will consist of payment for the Peloponnesian crews (8.5.5), although the first treaty says nothing on this topic (8.18). The two allies cooperate in the war and the Peloponnesians capture Iasus and Amorges (8.28.3), thus fulfilling one of Tissaphernes' major goals (8.5.5) and a clause of the treaty.⁹¹ But the Peloponnesians are unhappy with the amount of *τροφή* Tissaphernes agrees to pay, and this leads to a second treaty,⁹² which specifies that 'the king shall pay the expenses (*τὴν δαπάνην*) for whatever army is in the territory of the king, if the king has sent for it' (8.37.4). In the midst of the controversy about pay, no voice in the history has yet drawn attention to the amazing clause in the first two treaties, negotiated by commanders in the field, recognizing Persian claims to 'all the territory and cities that belong to the king or once belonged to his ancestors'.⁹³ Only officials who come from Sparta to oversee the conduct of the war raise objections. In a meeting with Tissaphernes at Cnidus their leader, Lichas, complains that

it is terrible if the king claims to hold power even now over all the territories that he and his ancestors ruled in the past: for that entails that all the islands would be back in a state of slavery as well as Thessaly, Locris, and as far as Boeotia, and that instead of giving the Greeks freedom the Lacedaemonians would be imposing on them Median rule. (8.43.3)

Refusing the *τροφή* that comes on these terms, Lichas rejects both of the previous treaties and demands a new one. Tissaphernes storms out in a rage and negotiations break off. The Spartans sail for

⁹¹ See 8.18.3; cf. 8.28.3. On the whole Thucydides suggests that the capture of Amorges was a coup for Tissaphernes and that even from the spoils of Iasus the Peloponnesians did not benefit as much as they could have; cf. Kallet (2001), 252, following Lewis (1977), 91.

⁹² 8.29.1. Thucydides implicitly links the dissatisfaction of some of the Peloponnesian allies at this payment plan (8.29.2) with the revision of their treaty with Persia (8.36.1–2).

⁹³ The two formulae at 8.18.1 and 8.37.2. For other differences in the two treaties' formulation of what rights the king claims over these possessions, see Hornblower (2008), 800–2 and 854–7.

Rhodes, determined to renounce Persian help and collect other funds (8.43.4–44.4).

After waiting so long to have the Spartans introduce the ideological issue of Greek freedom (but after implicitly sounding the alert since the time of the first treaty: see above on 8.17.4), Thucydides' narrative conveys the impossibility that the Spartans can take a principled position and obtain a Persian alliance at the same time. Lichas' protest in fact conflates two overlapping points, one concerning the extent of the country the Spartans give up to the king, and the other about allowing him to enslave again (*πάλιν δουλεύειν*) any Greeks at all. When the Spartans and Tissaphernes patch up their quarrel, they stipulate yet a different treaty, which limits the king's possession to territories in Asia. Lichas' second complaint is thus overruled by the same clause that addresses the first:

All the territory of the king in Asia is the king's: and about his own territory let the king decide as he wishes. (8.58.2)

These terms agree with the position of the Persians in Herodotus, who repeatedly assert that Asia and its inhabitants belong to them.⁹⁴ Thucydides represents the Spartans as conflicted and in denial, but also makes clear what their policy must be as the allies of Persia. At one point the same Lichas who had reaffirmed the liberation principle at Cnidus reminds the Milesians and others in the country of the king that at least until the end of the war they are bound to accept a 'moderate degree of enslavement' (*χρηῆναι . . . δουλεύειν . . . τὰ μέτρια*, 8.84.5).

VIII. WHAT TISSAPHERNES WANTS

Tissaphernes' indignant reaction to Lichas (*ἀγανακτῶν*, 8.43.4) is the obverse of Xerxes' rejoicing after reading Pausanias' letter (*Ξέρξης δὲ ἤσθη*, 1.129.1). From this point in the narrative until Tissaphernes' fears (*δεδιῶς . . . ἐφοβεῖτο*, 8.57.1) induce him to backtrack and stipulate his third treaty with the Peloponnesians,

⁹⁴ See 1.4.4: *τὴν γὰρ Ἀσίην καὶ τὰ ἐνοικέοντα ἔθνηα βάρβαρα οἰκηιοῦνται οἱ Πέρσαι, τὴν δὲ Εὐρώπην καὶ τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ἡγῆνται κεχωρισθαι* ('the Persians consider Asia and the foreign people who inhabit it as their own, and they think that Europe and the Greek world is separate'). Cf. 9.116.3.

Thucydides devotes himself to an exploration of the motives of the Persian satrap and of the choices by which he tries to achieve his goal of re-establishing Persian dominion over the Ionian Greeks. We learn at 8.45 that by the time he had walked out of the Spartan meeting (8.43.4), he had already received the visit of Alcibiades, now a fugitive from Sparta and intent on promoting his own interests. Alcibiades becomes Tissaphernes' 'instructor in everything', the designer of his policy and apparently also his agent.⁹⁵ He advises Tissaphernes not to be too much in a hurry to end the war by helping the Peloponnesians, but rather to let the Greeks wear each other out (*αὐτοὺς περὶ ἑαυτοὺς τοὺς Ἕλληνας κατατρίψαι*, 8.46.2). The Athenians, he says, would make better 'partners of empire', since unlike the Spartans they have no commitment to the freedom of the Greeks. Tissaphernes should therefore wear out both sides (*τρίβειν . . . ἀμφοτέρους*, 8.46.4) and after acquiring as much Athenian territory as possible, expel the Peloponnesians (8.46.1–4).

Like Pausanias and Themistocles in Thucydides and numerous characters in Herodotus, Alcibiades is the typical Greek at an Eastern court making trouble for his fellow Greeks.⁹⁶ It is interesting therefore to find that in treating a Herodotean theme in this passage, Thucydides also borrows again from the style of Ionian *ιστορίη*, or at least one aspect of it: the reliance on opinion. His purposes here are the historiographic purposes of separating Tissaphernes from Alcibiades, deliberation from advocacy, and what is visible and documented from what is not. The work of the historian appears especially arduous in book 8, which is full of characters who lie. Alcibiades is one of them, hovering over the figure of Tissaphernes, who risks being confused with him. Thucydides reports Alcibiades' advice and actions at great length, but in his attempt to determine the 'real' motivations of a Persian grandee in an unfamiliar setting, he appears to find himself with no reliable source and signals his insecurity by resorting to the Herodotean method of explicit conjecture (8.46.5): Tissaphernes, says Thucydides, 'reasoned for the most part in the same way as Alcibiades (*διενοεῖτο τὸ πλεόν οὕτως*), at least if one were to guess from what he did (*ὅσα γε ἀπὸ τῶν*

⁹⁵ 8.45.1; for the analepsis, see Hornblower (2008), 883–86; Rood (1998), 262–65. His mixed role as adviser and executive is represented by the combination at 8.45. 4–6 of verbs indicating what he said or did vis-à-vis others and verbs indicating what he said to Tissaphernes.

⁹⁶ See above, p. 254 and n. 59.

ποιουμένων ἦν εἰκάσαι).⁹⁷ Tissaphernes heeds Alcibiades' advice first of all by paying the Peloponnesian sailors badly and irregularly. He had followed this practice on his own in the past (8.29), but his purpose this time—suggested by his *didaskalos* Alcibiades—is 'to ruin their mission, causing their ships to lose their fitness'. Also in other respects, Thucydides adds, one could not possibly miss the lack of energy he put into the common war (τά τε ἄλλα καταφανέστερον ἢ ὥστε λανθάνειν οὐ προθύμως, 8.47.5). The end of this sentence underlines again the historian's endeavour to distinguish between the seen (καταφανέστερον) and the unseen (λανθάνειν), an endeavour that pervades the Persian sections of book 8.

Thucydides indicates Tissaphernes' independence from his Greek adviser by mentioning nothing in this chapter about his reaction to Alcibiades' suggestion to find an accommodation with the Athenians. Things change somewhat only after the quarrel with the Peloponnesians at Cnidos (8.52; cf. 8.43), when Tissaphernes realizes (ἤσθετο) the Spartans' conflicted attitude with regard to the treaty. Lichas' complaint in fact verifies Alcibiades' argument that the Spartans were unlikely to set out to liberate the Greeks from Athens only to enslave them to the Persians. It also perhaps implicitly gives some credit to the other side of Alcibiades' argument, namely that the Athenians, accustomed as they are to holding the Greeks under their rule, would be more willing 'to share their enslavement (ξυγκαταδουλοῦν), keeping the sea for themselves and leaving to Tissaphernes the Greeks who inhabit the king's country'.⁹⁸ After Cnidos, therefore, although Tissaphernes is afraid of the Peloponnesians' presence in Asia (δεδιότα with the indicative, παρήσαν, indicates that the fear is not unjustified), he starts considering Alcibiades' plan, but without great conviction: 'he . . . wanted to be persuaded if he possibly could' (βουλόμενον δὲ . . . εἰ δύναιτό πως, πεισθῆναι). This is the closest Tissaphernes comes to agreeing with the idea of an Athenian alliance. Alcibiades' elaborate argumentations are designed to manipulate his internal audiences—

⁹⁷ 8.46.5. The verb εἰκάζω in the sense of 'guess' or 'infer' (in contrast to οἶδα, 'know': see 6.92.5 and 8.87.2–3) appears again to signal Thucydides' uncertainty about Persian intentions at 8.87.3. See below, p. 270. Of three other occurrences of the verb in metanarrative, two are found in the Archaeology for guesses about the distant past (1.9.4 and 1.10.2) and the third, at 6.60.2, in reference to the mystery of the mutilations of the Herms. For εἰκάζω in the sense of compare at 4.36.3, see above, p. 243.

⁹⁸ Cf. 8.52, with a back reference to Alcibiades' words at 8.46.3.

Tissaphernes, the Athenians, and the Spartans (8.83.2, 87.1; cf. 80.1)—as well as his external ones—Thucydides' readers and perhaps Thucydides himself. But Thucydides' narrative makes clear that from Tissaphernes' perspective a deal between Persia and Athens remains unlikely.⁹⁹

Both Tissaphernes' treaties with the Peloponnesians and Alcibiades' negotiations with the Athenians in Tissaphernes' name bargain away the freedom of the Greeks of Asia and cause internal dissent. In Athens the mere prospect of Persian support has disproportionate consequences, persuading the *demos* to give up its rights (8.53, 65–9). The Athenians continue to hope against all hope (8.76) and Alcibiades encourages them by reporting the satrap's alleged assurances in exaggerated orientalizing terms (8.81.3, and see above, p. 261).

Alcibiades' discourse, however, has very little to do with what Tissaphernes really *wants*.¹⁰⁰ The supposed royal *conditio sine qua non* for a Persian alliance, namely a change of government in Athens (8.48.1), is not something Tissaphernes seems to know or care about. When the oligarchs arrive at Sardis to confer on this deal, Alcibiades invents extravagant demands designed to abort the negotiations because he is himself uncertain about Tissaphernes' position. The latter 'feared (*φοβουμένον*) the Peloponnesians more than the Athenians and, moreover, wanted to wear out both sides (*τρίβειν ἀμφοτέρους*), as Alcibiades had instructed him to do' (8.56.2), while Alcibiades wanted to appear (*δοκεῖν*) to the Athenians able to persuade Tissaphernes even if he was not able to do so (56.3). In the midst of this obfuscation, Thucydides once again cannot be sure, but offers his opinion: 'It seems to me (*δοκεῖ δέ μοι*) that Tissaphernes also wanted this result out of fear (*διὰ τὸ δέος*, 8.56.3). He feared (*δεδιώς, ἐφοβεῖτο*) that without his support the Peloponnesians would be defeated by the Athenians, or that they would defeat the Athenians on their own, or that they would ravage his country in search of sustenance' (8.57.1).

Phrynichus had earlier described Tissaphernes' predicament in similar terms (8.48.2). Thucydides himself elsewhere theorizes that fear is in general a compelling and perfectly rational motive for

⁹⁹ So also Hyland (2007), 8.

¹⁰⁰ The verb *βούλομαι* occurs four times in 8.56.2–3 and another five times in book 8 in reference to Tissaphernes' hidden intentions.

historical action (1.23.6; cf. 1.76.2). In Thucydides' judgement therefore, Tissaphernes' decision to reconcile with the Peloponnesians and stipulate a third treaty was made 'with calculation and foresight of all these factors, according to his intention to equalize the Greek forces on each side' (πάντων οὖν τούτων λογισμῶ καὶ προνοίᾳ, ὥσπερ ἐβούλετο ἐπανισοῦν τοὺς Ἕλληνας πρὸς ἀλλήλους, 8.57.1). λογισμός denotes the careful reasoning that allows for prudent action, advocated by leaders such as Archidamus and Hermocrates (2.11.7 and 6.34.4, 6); πρόνοια, 'foresight', is the primary virtue of a skilful statesman, which Thucydides attributes to Themistocles and Pericles.¹⁰¹ Thucydides' evaluation of Tissaphernes' policy—based on his opinion of the most rational motives for the satrap's uneven behaviour—is somewhat circular, but it represents a remarkable exercise in fairness.¹⁰²

IX. THE PHANTOM FLEET

An index of the historian's difficulties in negotiating Persian appearances and reality is the Phoenician fleet, of whose existence we learn for the first time from the advice of Alcibiades to Tissaphernes to diminish the Peloponnesians' pay and not to bring out the Phoenician fleet he was preparing' (8.46.1). Tissaphernes follows both suggestions, all the time promising to the Peloponnesians 'that the Phoenician fleet will arrive' (8.46.5). The third mention of this fleet occurs again in reported 'speech', this time an official written document. A clause of the Peloponnesians' third treaty with Persia stipulates that Tissaphernes will maintain the Peloponnesian fleet 'until the ships of the king arrive'; after that the Peloponnesians are to provide for their own support and the two fleets will carry on the

¹⁰¹ See 1.138.3 (προεώρα) of Themistocles and 2.65.6 and 5 of Pericles (πρόνοια, προγνοῦς).

¹⁰² Westlake (1985), 54 seems surprised that Thucydides, influenced by Alcibiades, 'mistook the *oriental wiliness* of Tissaphernes of which he can have had little experience, for the statesmanlike qualities which he so much admired' (emphasis mine). It is true that Thucydides cannot have had direct experience with Tissaphernes, but he makes an honest attempt to evaluate him according to the same standards he applies to Greek politicians, being especially careful to distance himself from the representations of Alcibiades. For the principle that one's opponents will deliberate on the basis of calculations not radically different from one's own, see the words of Archidamus at 1.84.3–4.

war jointly (8.58.5–7).¹⁰³ The clause shows that the Phoenician ships we have only heard about so far, through Alcibiades (8.46.2) and Tissaphernes (8.47.5), are part of the Persian forces under direct command of the king, although they are evidently available to Tissaphernes for his operations in western Asia. Their role as specified in the clause is ambiguous, because they will apparently not (or not only) serve to support the Peloponnesians, but might even replace them, taking over the war. The consequences are potentially disquieting, but remain theoretical because in Thucydides' narrative as we have it the Persian ships will never become part of the action.¹⁰⁴ For the moment they are a pretence:

Tissaphernes prepared to bring the Phoenician ships, as it had been agreed, and to fulfil all the other things which he had promised and which at least (γοῦν) he wanted to appear to be preparing. (8.59.1)

The metanarrative intervention γοῦν underlines Thucydides' reformulation of the distinction between appearance and reality: here the historical agent 'wanted to appear' (ἐβούλετο . . . δηλὸς εἶναι), while at 8.47.5 his behaviour was 'too apparent' to hide his true intentions (καταφανέστερον ἢ ὥστε λανθάνειν).

According to the usual pattern of book 8, the mirage of Persian support not only aggravates the conflict between Peloponnesians and Athenians, but also causes *stasis* within each camp. The Peloponnesian crews are in full protest mode against both Tissaphernes and their own admiral, Astyochus, on the ground that both are 'ruining their mission' by not permitting them to engage the Athenians, leaving them without pay, and making them wait for the Phoenician fleet, 'which in any case was a fleet in name and not in fact' (ἄλλως ὄνομα καὶ οὐκ ἔργον, 8.78).¹⁰⁵ The language of this piece, focalized through the Peloponnesian crews, is close to that of Thucydides' account of Tissaphernes' policy (see 8.46.5), except that the Peloponnesians also falsely suspect that Tissaphernes is favouring the Athenians (8.83.2). Alcibiades, as a matter of fact, is assuring the Athenians that Tissaphernes will bring the Phoenician ships, which

¹⁰³ For this treaty, see above, p. 264.

¹⁰⁴ In the Pentecontaetia the Phoenician fleet plays a decisive role against the Athenians in Egypt (1.110.4), but fails to materialize at the time of the revolt of Samos (1.116.3).

¹⁰⁵ The sailors suspect Astyochus of taking bribes from Tissaphernes (8.83.3; cf. 8.45). For internal *stasis* among the Peloponnesians, see 8.78, 80, 83–5.

are already at Aspendus, to them, rather than to the Peloponnesians (8.81.3)—or at least, if not to them, not to the Peloponnesians either (8.88.1). Once again, the reader first learns a crucial fact about these ships—that they are deployed in Aspendus—from a reported speech.

The next passage is unique in Thucydides for the way in which the narrative nucleus (essentially: ‘Tissaphernes went to Aspendus with Lichas, leaving his lieutenant behind, but he did not bring back the ships that were there’) is embedded in metanarrative that reveals speculations, hearsay, and opinion:¹⁰⁶

In the same summer, Tissaphernes at precisely the time when the Peloponnesians were most angry at him for many reasons, but especially on account of the return of Alcibiades, thinking that evidently (*φανερῶς*) he was now on the side of the Athenians, since he wished, as indeed it seemed (*βουλόμενος, ὡς ἐδόκει δῆ*), to clear himself of these charges, prepared to travel to the Phoenician ships at Aspendus and invited Lichas to go with him (8.87.1). He said that he would leave his lieutenant Tamos with the army to give them their pay while he was gone. Accounts differ and it is not easy to know (*λέγεται δὲ οὐ κατὰ ταῦτό οὐδὲ ῥάδιον εἰδέναι*) with what intention (*τίνι γνώμῃ*) he went to Aspendus and, after going, he did not bring back the ships (8.87.2). For it is certain (*σαφές ἐστι*) that the Phoenician ships, one hundred and forty-seven in number, arrived as far as Aspendus, but why they did not come is the object of many inferences (*πολλαχῆ εἰκάζεται*). Some say that he went in order to wear down (*διατρίβῃ*) the Peloponnesian mission just as he had planned (*ὥσπερ καὶ διενοθήθη*)—in fact Tamos, who had been put in charge, was not, to be sure (*γούν*), a better paymaster, but rather a worse one; others [say] that he had brought in the Phoenicians in order to exact money from them for their discharge, since he did not intend (*οὐδὲν ἔμελλε*) to use them anyway; others again [say] that he went on account of the accusation against him at Sparta, so that it would be said that he was not doing anything wrong¹⁰⁷ and that he had certainly gone (*σαφῶς οἴχεται*) and the ships were really (*ἀληθῶς*) ready (8.87.3). It seems to me most certain, however (*ἐμοὶ μέντοι δοκεῖ σαφέστατον εἶναι*), that he did not bring back the ships with the aim of wearing down and delaying (*τριβῆς ἔνεκα καὶ ἀνοκωχῆς*) the Greeks, on the one hand by wasting [their resources] (*φθορᾶς μὲν*) while he remained lingering over there, and on the other hand by equalizing [their forces] (*ἀνισώσεως δέ*) in order not to make

¹⁰⁶ For a narratological and historical analysis of this passage, see Lateiner (1976).

¹⁰⁷ *ὡς οὐκ ἀδικεῖ* (87.3) answering the Peloponnesian complaints that ‘they were being wronged in every way’ (*πάντα τε ἀδικοῦντο* 99.1).

either side strongest by his support. For, if he had wanted to, he could have finished the war with no ambiguous results really coming out in the open in an unambiguous way (ἐπιφανείς δήπου οὐκ ἐνδοιαστῶς). For if he had brought his fleet out he would in all likelihood (κατὰ τὸ εἰκός) have given the victory to the Spartans, who even at the present moment were facing the Athenians with a fleet that was more equal than inferior (8.87.4). What convicts him most of all is the ostensible reason (πρόφασιν) he gave for not bringing the ships: he said that they were fewer in number than the king had ordered him to collect. But in this case he would rather have received more gratitude, if he had not spent many of the king's resources while achieving the same results (8.87.5). But whatever his intention (ἤτινιδὴ γνώμη), Tissaphernes arrived at Aspendus and joined up with the Phoenicians. (8.87.6)

This fleet that never enters the scene of the action, and in this sense never becomes a tangible reality—a fleet that is only a name (ὄνομα καὶ οὐκ ἔργον, 8.78) from the point of view of the beleaguered Greeks—embodies the imperfectly known resources of Persia as well as the power and strategy of the distant king, whose orders are again represented (or misrepresented) indirectly through Tissaphernes' speech (8.87.5). Thucydides himself is at a loss, and enumerates only the few positive facts he can count on as certain (σαφ-). There were certainly (8.87.3: σαφές, ἀληθῶς) 147 Phoenician ships at Aspendus—the precise number suggests the reliability of the information. It is also certain that Tissaphernes went to Aspendus (8.87.1; 2; 3, σαφῶς οἴχεται; 6), but (and this is a negative fact, contradicting expectations) he failed to bring back the ships. What is less easy to know for sure (8.87.2 οὐδὲ ῥάδιον εἰδέναι) is Tissaphernes' motive for going to Aspendus, and his overall plan with regard to the Greek war (8.87.1, βουλόμενος; 87.2, τίνι γνώμη; 8.87.3, διανοήθη, ἔμελλε; 87.6, ἤτινιδὴ γνώμη). Tissaphernes' behaviour creates, or means to create, certain appearances (87.1, φανερώς ἤδη ἀττικίζοντι; 87.2; 87.3, γοῦν), and is explained by him with a pretext (87.5, πρόφασιν). His real intentions are at any rate a matter for various speculations (87.3, πολλαχῆ εἰκάζεται),¹⁰⁸ opinions (87.1, ὡς ἐδόκει δῆ), and reports (87.2, λέγεται δὲ οὐ κατὰ ταῦτό; 87.3, οἱ μὲν . . . οἱ δὲ . . . ἄλλοι δ'). All of them are plausible, but the greatest possible certainly resides in the opinion of

¹⁰⁸ The verb εἰκάζεται is the same Thucydides had used to infer Tissaphernes' motivations from his actions at 8.46.5: ὅσα γε ἀπὸ τῶν ποιουμένων ἦν εἰκάσαι. See above, pp. 265–6 and n. 97.

the *histor* Thucydides (87.4, ἐμοὶ μέντοι δοκεῖ σαφέστατον εἶναι) to the effect that Tissaphernes wanted to wear down both sides in the Greek War, and not simply ruin the Peloponnesian cause,¹⁰⁹ according to Alcibiades' original advice and in agreement with Thucydides' assessment of Tissaphernes' policy earlier on.¹¹⁰

This passage represents Thucydides' most dramatic divergence from the method he had announced in what Hornblower calls the 'haughty' chapter 1.22.¹¹¹ It is Herodotean, although in a very different way than the Pausanias–Themistocles performance of oral tradition and exotic detail.¹¹² It is a cautious piece of analytical reasoning that combines features of Thucydides' style¹¹³ with the method, more typical of Herodotus, of presenting several interpretations of an event, including one preferred by the narrator.¹¹⁴ Thucydides here embraces Herodotus' narratorial stance and makes it his own without irony or mock-competition—in fact with apparent resignation to his coming across as somewhat pedestrian and redundant in a way his predecessor never does.

Thucydides' efforts to be an objective observer become particularly strenuous throughout book 8, where special interests and fragmented actions multiply. The praise of the extreme oligarch Antiphon (8.68), the indictment of the exaggerations of the democrat Chaereas (8.74), the exposure of Alcibiades' lies, coupled with the recognition of his service (8.86.4), the positive judgement on the government of the 5,000 (8.97.2), all these interventions are part of the same balancing act and effort not to be seduced by one

¹⁰⁹ As Lateiner observes (1976), 271, this observation now differentiates Thucydides' opinion from the first report, at 8.87.3. So also Hyland (2007), 11.

¹¹⁰ See 8.56.2 (βουλομένου . . . τρίβειν ἀμφοτέρους), where Tissaphernes is heeding the advice Alcibiades expressed at 8.46.2 (αὐτοὺς περὶ ἑαυτοὺς τοὺς Ἑλλήνας κατατρίψαι) and 8.46.4 (τρίβειν . . . ἀμφοτέρους). Alcibiades, according to Thucydides, is among the characters of the history the best informed about what Tissaphernes plans to do, at least in the short range, 'knowing in all likelihood Tissaphernes' intentions, that he was not going to bring the ships' (εἰδώς, ὡς εἰκός, ἐκ πλέονος τὴν Τισσαφέρνους γνώμην, ὅτι οὐκ ἄξειν ἔμελλε, 8.88.1).

¹¹¹ Hornblower (2008), 1005.

¹¹² On Pausanias–Themistocles, see above, §IV.

¹¹³ So the antithesis with *variatio* in the sequence τριβῆς ἔνεκα καὶ ἀνοκωχῆς . . . φθορᾶς μὲν . . . ἀνισώσεως δέ at 8.87.4 is typically Thucydidean; cf. for example 1.84.4.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Herodotus 6.75.3 and 6.84 (speculation about causes) and 1.86.2 (speculation about motives). For other variant versions in Herodotus, cf. Lateiner (1976), 267–9.

view or the other, as is also the narrator's evaluation of Tissaphernes' rationality in pursuit of his interests (8.57.1; see above, p. 268). Thucydides can report and judge homegrown phenomena with his accustomed authority, just as he can deliver a stunning reconstruction of the *stasis* in Athens or vividly describe the atmosphere of the Athenian fleet at Samos. He is able to give his Greek characters extended speeches, albeit in indirect discourse. But in the case of an unknown power whose actions are visible only on the margins and whose policies are filtered through individuals with personal agendas, the result is a blurry portrayal. Thucydides' objective stance requires a display of subjectivity ('some say . . . others say . . . but from what one can infer . . .') amounting to an admission that he does not really know.

This partial return to Herodotus' historiographic method also happens to coincide with flashing evocations of specific Herodotean passages and scenes. At 8.87.3, the hypothetical gloss 'if he had wanted to . . . he could have finished the war with no ambiguous results . . . if he had brought his fleet out he would in all likelihood have given the victory to the Spartans' corresponds to Herodotus' more passionate extended opinion (*γνώμη*, Hdt. 7.139.1) concerning the Athenians' decisive choice to fight at Salamis: 'If the Athenians had not resisted Xerxes on the sea . . . Hellas would have been conquered' (7.139.2–4).¹¹⁵

It does not bode well for the future that now it is not a Greek city that can determine the success of a war against the Persian king, but a Persian satrap who has the power to decide the outcome of a war between Greeks. When Thucydides records the headquartering of the Athenians at Sestos, 'the town in the Chersonese held by the Medes at an earlier period in this history as the centre for the defence of the Hellespont' (Thuc. 8.62.3), he brings us back to his own *and* to Herodotus' account of the end of the Persian War (Thuc. 1.89.1; Hdt. 9.115–16). The four Athenian ships overtaken by the Peloponnesians off Elaeus, one of which is captured opposite the temple of Protesilaus (8.102.4), reshuffle the terms of Herodotus' Hellespontine chapters, where Protesilaus and his temple establish a

¹¹⁵ There are other hypothetical glosses of interpretation in Thucydides; see e.g. 8.96.4. But 8.87.3 is exceptional for its length and because it is combined with the other metanarrative features we have seen.

connection with the remote past.¹¹⁶ At the end of Thucydides' work, the Greeks living in Asia appear again unprotected from the abuses of all sides. Already the Chians have suffered in an unprecedented way 'since the Persian Wars', this time at the hands of the Athenians.¹¹⁷ Tissaphernes' lieutenant Arsaces oppresses the Antandrians, who chase his garrison from the city (8.108.4). This man, says Thucydides with an analeptic move in the Herodotean manner, had treacherously massacred the Delians who had settled at Atramyttion after the Athenians had expelled them from Delos.¹¹⁸ The episode recalls and inverts the harsh treatment of the Persian Artayktes with which Herodotus ends his narrative of the Persian War (9.121–2).¹¹⁹

X. CONCLUSION

Thucydides' treatment of the Persians is uneven and difficult to summarize in a schematic or global way. We can safely say that he never shows particular interest in, or familiarity with, their culture or the political organization and history of the Persian Empire per se; by the same token, he does not play up Persian stereotypes, either, and ('Pausanias–Themistocles' aside) he avoids emphasizing the alterity of the East. He makes us aware of the formative importance of the Persian Wars for the ideology of the Greeks as they embark on their internal conflict, although for most of his history he tends to dismiss Persia as a secondary concern. Separately from the rhetorical exploitation of the Persian War by his historical agents, Thucydides does not fully convey his own appreciation for the moral dimension of that event until his narrative of the Sicilian Expedition. After that, the reappearance on the Greek horizon of the Persian threat (or lifeline, depending on one's viewpoint) brings back images of the contest between Greece and Persia, and particularly of the discouraging struggle for the 'liberation' of the Asiatic Greeks. Here

¹¹⁶ Hdt. 9.116. For Protesilaus in Herodotus, see Boedeker (1988). That Thucydides' mention of the temple of Protesilaus at 8.102.4 represents an allusion to Herodotus is accepted by Hornblower (2008), 1047 following Pelling (2000), 269.

¹¹⁷ 8.24.3, with reference to Hdt. 6.26–7; cf. above, p. 262 and note 90.

¹¹⁸ Thucydides records the expulsion of the Delians at 5.1 See above, pp. 258–9.

¹¹⁹ Hornblower (2008), 1052.

Thucydides is also faced with the task of representing a close-up of contemporary Persians, because Persia is now a protagonist, not merely an object of memory or a sideline player. Does the end of his history amount to an acknowledgement of inadequacy on Thucydides' part?

I have deliberately avoided the various issues concerning the unfinished state of book 8, but I am reminded that many years ago Donald Lateiner (it happens co-editor of this volume, but at the time my teacher at the University of Pennsylvania) gave me a fictional piece he had written ('a *nuga* from 1974, in my romantic phase', according to the dedication),¹²⁰ which represents a tired but still dogged Thucydides in 405, as an exile in Thrace, mulling over the course of the war that he knows Athens can no longer win, and even more depressed about his 'unfinished and unfinishable work', which has fallen so far behind current events. The new role of Persia as arbiter of the Greeks must have been hard for such a man to integrate into his already complex picture. Better to leave the challenge to someone younger and more fit for eastern travels, even if it must be the one whom Lateiner's Thucydides calls 'that idiot Xenophon'.

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¹²⁰ 'The Lion Smiles', unpublished.

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