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A FEMINIST THUCYDIDES?*

Abstract: This paper reconsiders the representation of women in Thucydides and the possibility for a feminist interpretation of the *Peloponnesian War*. It analyses three key passages where the representation of women is highly idealised and subverts the normal values depicted in the text. From there it proceeds to claim that in many places the *Peloponnesian War* offers a gendered and negative portrayal of masculine characters and values as they influence the war. This suggests the possibility of a Thucydides who is thinking about gender in terms very different from his characters and more like contemporaries such as Plato.

Keywords: Thucydides, Gender, Feminism, Women, Scholarly Receptions, Pericles, Delos

> εἰ δέ με δεῖ καὶ γυναικείας τι ἀρετῆς, ὅσαι νῦν ἐν χηρείᾳ ἔσονται, μνησθῆναι, βραχείᾳ παραινέσει ἅπαν σημανῶ. τῆς τε γὰρ ὑπαρχούσης φύσεως μὴ χείροσι γενέσθαι ὑμῖν μεγάλη ἡ δόξα καὶ ἧς ἂν ἐπ' ἐλάχιστον ἀρετῆς πέρι ἢ ψόγου ἐν τοῖς ἄρσεσι κλέος ᾖ.
>
> If I have to mention something about female good character—for those who from now on will be widows—I will convey everything with this brief advice. In not being worse than your existing nature there is great glory—and also for she who is least spoken-about, either in praise or condemnation, among men.
>
> (Thuc. 2.45.2)

I

Many discussions about women in the *Peloponnesian War* begin with this passage from the Periclean Funeral Oration.[1] By some it has been taken as the key to understanding Thucydides' own attitude,

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[1] Thus Harvey (1985); Cartledge (1993) 125 (the passage is mentioned in the title but not the opening paragraphs); Kallet (1993) 133; Crane (1996) 65–110; Shannon-Henderson (2019) 89. The bibliography on this sentence is massive (cf. Harvey (1985) 67: 'The marmoreal words of Perikles … are cited in virtually every discussion of women in fifth-century Athens'). Rusten (1989) 175–8 sums up a twentieth-century consensus that the remark is a sign of pure sexist domination. Subsequent work has variously qualified this by examining the historical context and the identities of the women being addressed (e.g., Kallet (1993); Hardwick (1993); Tyrrell and Bennett (1999); Bosworth (2000) esp. 2–3). Shannon-Henderson (2019) 89–90 is right, however, that although the remark's addressees and intended effect may be specific, its argumentative foundation is general.

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as an author and probably as a living person, towards the women who inhabited his world.[2] Crane calls it 'one of the most disturbing (to contemporary readers) remarks in fifth-century Greek literature'.[3] Every published account of Thucydides' representation of women emphasises some or all of the following: the near total exclusion of women from the *Peloponnesian War*, especially striking compared with Herodotus;[4] the passivity and silence of those women who do appear; and how women's occasional but important entries into the text, particularly amid conflicts within cities, are portrayed to emphasise the shock of these women contradicting their supposedly in-born nature (cf. 2.4.2; 3.74.2).

Interpreters have generally agreed that the reason for the text's treatment of women is an underlying and unyielding misogyny on the author's part, though the precise nature of this misogyny has been disputed. Cartledge's charitable interpretation sees Thucydides applying Periclean values in a 'chivalrous—or chauvinist' way, for the most part refusing to dishonour women by mentioning them in an account of events from the male sphere written exclusively for the consumption and edification of men.[5] Crane develops this point by highlighting the general exclusion of domestic life from Thucydides: especially children and kinship or family ties.[6] Loraux reframes Cartledge's idea with a more political emphasis, describing Greek historiography as a genre that polices the boundary of male dominance—and of politics itself as the sphere in which only men are allowed to act, whereas women are perpetually among those to whom politics happens.[7] Loraux thus

[2] See for example Crane (1996) 75 ('the attitude behind this utterance decisively shapes Thucydides' *History* as a whole'); Cartledge (1993) 10: 'In the advice of his Pericles at 2.45.2 … is contained a program for Thucydides' own *ξυγγραφή*'. Goldhill (1986) 109–11 cautions against this by pointing out how Thucydides distances himself from the specific content of the speeches at 1.22.1. Shannon-Henderson (2019) 100 implies Thucydides' own view was even more misogynistic than that of Pericles.

[3] Crane (1996) 75.

[4] Crane (1996) 80 provides a table of comparisons. For the full account of this see Wiedemann (1983), and Harvey (1985) who includes a list of every reference to singular and plural women in the *Peloponnesian War* (70: 'references to women are on the whole brief … a large majority of Thucydides' references to women deal with past history … many of these [named] women have done something immoral, or at least reprehensible').

[5] Cartledge (1993) 130. See also Crane (1996) 92: 'Thucydides' narrative excludes not only women, but other categories distinct from adult males. Greek misogyny is at work, but it is not the only force, and Thucydides' gaze reflects a broader ideological bias.'

[6] Crane (1996) 75–110. Ethnic and colonial kinship ties are an important theme, however: see Fragoulaki (2013).

[7] Loraux (1995) 248: 'Once feminine nature is allowed to enter the picture, only the constraints of the historical genre can protect the narrative against the growing proliferation

highlights how the politeness or sense of propriety described by Cartledge reinforces the domination of the powerful and important territories of life by men. Loraux claims that, for Thucydides, silent women are virtuous women, behaving in conformity with the best of their nature, whereas active and visible women are excessive and even dangerous.[8]

A recent essay by Shannon-Henderson gives the most thorough close-readings of the substantive mentions of women in the *Peloponnesian War*. Her position is the most emphatic of all and seems to approach claiming a conscious or deliberate exclusion of women on the author's part.[9] Her claim is that Thucydides denies or discredits the historical importance of women in several respects, above all by meeting them with silence. The female characters who do appear he depicts as passive historical tools (e.g., to be married off, to carry lines of family descent); and/or as mute presences whose experiences are more withdrawn from us than their male counterparts; or else—in this she draws on the earlier scholars—where they are active, this expresses either a crisis of need or a collapse of morals; or else—and this is a new observation—they evoke a more antiquated, more barbarian sort of society based on kingship and thus distant from the world of the Greek *polis*. Shannon-Henderson's work is also notable for its spread of examples: besides the incidents in Plataea and Corcyra which are often discussed, Shannon-Henderson discusses Thracian and early Athenian marriage alliances (4.104–5; 1.126–7), and devotes considerable space to the excursus on the fall of the Peisistratid tyranny (see esp. 6.59.3).

The significance and depth of feminist critiques of Thucydides have not been enough appreciated. Thucydides' denial of women's agency and personality in his text is multi-layered, but consistent enough that he may have deliberately fudged his representation of the past to write women out of history.[10] This exclusion disregards the principles of fidelity to the real—however interpreted—on which elsewhere Thucydides stakes his entire authority (1.20–2). It implies an author whose misogyny was extreme even beyond the level of cultural bias or ignorance; someone who sought to expunge women from the world. At the very least, it suggests his cultural bias was strong enough to severely taint his account: he was convinced that the just and natural destinies of men and women were irrevocably distinct, the former naturally

of representations of a femininity that seems capable of anything once it is incarnated in actual women'.

[8] Loraux (1995) 227–48. At 243 she quotes the *Nicomachean Ethics* for comparison (1115b32–33—and see 330 n. 84). See also Wiedemann (1983).

[9] Cf. Shannon-Henderson (2019) 100: 'For Thucydides, it seems, women are not, never have been, and should not be active in the affairs of the polis … from functioning and flourishing societies … they are banished altogether'.

[10] Most obviously the lover of Pericles, Aspasia: see Cartledge (1993) 130–2.

superior.[11] The feminist view of Thucydides is of someone who twists the past into *ti muthōdes* (cf. 1.22.4), a male fiction. At their best (see especially Nicole Loraux) feminist critiques of Thucydides go all the way down—showing how the values which cause this exclusion pervade and spoil the rest of the text. The normal feminist response to Thucydides is to condemn him: his principles of selection and implicit judgement of what counts as history,[12] his chauvinistic ideals of Hellenic superiority (reflected for example in his depiction of non-Greeks),[13] his Olympian manner of writing and self-presentation.[14]

This mode of feminist reading ends in a cul-de-sac. It concentrates on the fact of oppression without sufficiently analysing the structures of gender that determine this oppression or how they are represented in the text. By asserting there is 'nothing to see here' except exclusion, present scholarship forecloses the possibility of more sophisticated feminist work. Feminist readings seem to leave scholars with no choice except either to reject Thucydides entirely or reject feminist interpretation entirely. This may be a reason why, even now, Thucydides' misogyny tends to be passed over in silence by his scholars: it threatens to spoil every other aspect of the text worth reading, to such an extent that many might believe it is better to simply bracket off the issue and treat the text as if its characters were genderless.[15]

Here I must add a parenthesis. *The Peloponnesian War* as it stands cannot be divorced from a modern reception context which has established the range of orthodox interpretations of the text. Among scholars, Thucydides has long been a byword for sheer difficulty and elitism as its own end. Many have been complicit in the text's exclusions partly to assure Thucydides' own complicity in validating the cultural ideal of the great and solitary man who is smarter and wiser than everyone else because he has mastered something difficult.[16] The centrality of a form of masculinity to this elitist impulse has not been

[11] Cf. Loraux's insistence that 'Thucydides is not a colleague' (1980). Rood (1998) 17 qualifies Loraux's claim by saying 'that does not mean we should look down on his method of writing history'.

[12] On these principles, see de Romilly (1956); Loraux (1980), (1986).

[13] See the link between women, barbarians, and the past as made by Shannon-Henderson (2019).

[14] Loraux (1986).

[15] Men may find this easier than women—cf. Loraux (1986) 140–1: 'I have always thought it was easier to be a male reader [of Thucydides] because one would place oneself straightaway in the homogeneity' ('J'ai toujours pensé qu'il était plus facile d'en être lecteur, parce qu'on se situait d'emblée dans l'homogène'). See further discussion below.

[16] Cf. Nietzsche (2005) 226: 'Thucydides as the great summation, the final manifestation of that strong, severe, harsh objectivity that lay in the instincts of the more ancient Hellenes. In the end, what divides natures like Thucydides from natures like Plato is *courage* in the face of reality' (emphasis original).

adequately studied,[17] but Nicole Loraux alludes to it when describing the insecure position into which she often felt placed by the *Peloponnesian War*:

> When it comes to Thucydides, I have always had the sense—whether I was studying or simply speaking about him—of being by definition in a place of weakness: not serious enough, not erudite enough, indeed not enough of a man.[18]

In Thucydidean scholarship Nicole Loraux stands as a great iconoclast in a tradition with few dissenting voices: it was she who observed of members of this tradition that 'their essential task … is to praise the historian'.[19] It was she who defined the alternative task as being 'to forget, if we can, the tradition on Thucydides, [and] to view Thucydides in the light of the traditions that he inherited himself'.[20] Yet often Loraux's own Thucydides is worked out of other scholars ('the tradition on Thucydides') rather than being grounded in a close

[17] The groundwork of such a study would be Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's seminal work on queer theory and nineteenth- and twentieth-century masculinity ((1985), (1990), (2003))—see, e.g., (1990) 141–50, on the paradox of masculine sentimentality, in which the male disavowal of emotion results finally in the privileging of a form of male sadness and self-pity as the noblest and most powerful of all emotions.

[18] Loraux (1986) 140: 'j'ai toujours, par rapport à Thucydide, éprouvé le sentiment d'être, pour l'étudier ou simplement pour en parler, par definition en position de faiblesse: pas assez sérieuse, pas assez erudite, pas assez homme sans doute'. The irony is not lost on Loraux that the arch figure of French Thucydidean scholarship in the twentieth century was a woman, Jacqueline de Romilly, whose ideas were very firmly orthodox (141: 'sur le mode de la plus forte orthodoxie'), and who nowhere demonstrates an interest in reflecting on how to read Thucydides as a woman. De Romilly is interesting (see Webb (2016) for an informative and balanced intellectual biography). As a twentieth-century woman who reached the heights of the French academy, her career is full of 'firsts'. In later life and death, the tributes she received from all quarters attest to her prestige. Taken as a whole, de Romilly's scholarship is essentially devoted to the political project of conserving and elaborating an ideal of Athens as a rational and democratic polity to inspire people in twentieth century liberal democracies. A survivor of persecution during the Second World War, she reacted with dread to the French student protests of 1968 (cf. Webb (2016) 383). It is a shame Loraux does not say more about de Romilly, who was her early supervisor before she left to work with Pierre Vidal-Naquet (see Papadopoulou-Belmedi (2011)). One can imagine what it may have been like, as a woman with Loraux's political and intellectual instincts, coming up through the French academy during the period of de Romilly's ascendancy. Arguably a uniting thread of Loraux's whole scholarly output is the rejection and critique of specifically Jacqueline de Romilly's Athens and Thucydides. She is palpable even where not mentioned.

[19] Loraux (2009) 262.

[20] Loraux (2009) 263.

and productive analysis of the text.[21] Ironically therefore her work tends to support the twentieth-century misogynistic ideal of Thucydides as the master and emblem of human reason, even as she disavows this image by disputing its ethical foundation.[22] To go beyond this exclusionary Thucydides of tradition, feminism must go back to the text and try to read it differently—to construct an alternative tradition of its own.

My endeavour in this paper is therefore to try and point towards a way of reading Thucydides at least somewhat 'with the grain' from a feminist perspective. This does not mean avoiding criticism of, or obscuring any examples of, the text's misogyny. It does mean thinking about some of the text's gender oppositions and dynamics in a more multifaceted way. It means something like what Winkler describes with his notion of 'double consciousness', as developed in an essay on Sappho's response to the 'political-military' masculinist poetry of Homer.[23] The ideal feminist reader of Thucydides will be sapphic, in the sense of doubly conscious: they can observe what his thought and representation encompasses; and they will shift its emphases, highlight unnoticed aspects, and hear its silences in a way that transcends and incorporates this thought into a broader perspective.[24] A fundamental problem with this approach is that it focusses not on women or their perspectives as much as men's reaction to and use of women. In the end the conversation is 'as always, about men'.[25] My own perspective, a man's, is obviously limited in this regard. What I risk here is ventriloquism: adopting a false female perspective in a conversation that remains about and between men, in which ultimately the text's male characters are the focus of the discussion. Having flagged this here at the outset I intend later to show something of how this

[21] For example, Loraux's criticisms of his authoritative demeanour in Loraux (1980) and (1986) seem somewhat outflanked by later narratological work showing the degrees of variation in narrative style and confidence (e.g., Gribble (1998); Rood (1998), (2006); Bakker (2006); Greenwood (2006); and the essays in Tsakmakis and Tamiolaki (2013)) but also by much earlier work in English such as Wallace (1964); Kitto (1966) 257–354; Hunter (1974); and Connor (1977).

[22] Cf. Henry (1995) 32–40 on how Loraux ends up repeating Plato's exclusionary strategies when interpreting the figure of Aspasia in the *Menexenus*.

[23] Winkler (1990a) 162–87 (176: 'I return to the image of a double circle—Sappho's consciousness is a larger circle enclosing the smaller one of Homer'). See also the discussion at the end of his essay on *Daphnis and Chloe* (126). 'Political-military' is from Shannon-Henderson (2019) 90: 'The political-military historical picture Thucydides creates is one in which women have almost no place at all, and, as the implication of his evidence suggests, probably *should* have no place'.

[24] Cf. also Smith (1994) 26–7: 'Feminism involves self-consciously adopting the viewpoints and interests of women to overcome objectification and subordination of women'. For my own effort to self-position in this regard see Section III.

[25] Henry (1995) 127.

ventriloquism operates, at least in a classical Greek context, and more broadly to raise the possibility of further and deeper discussion rather than to make closed interpretations or assertions of how gender in the text functions. In that regard, this paper tries to read, and hopefully to be read, with a double consciousness: to broaden the discussion around Thucydides' representation of women, without pretending to greater or firmer insight than is suggested by the interrogative form of its title. Present scholarship deals with the following two questions either by conflating them or else by moving from the first into the second:

1. Why did Thucydides so rarely represent women?
2. With regard to the few women who are in the *Peloponnesian War*, why did he represent them the way he did?

Here I will proceeding the other way around, from the second question into the first. My discussion is chiefly based on three passages in which women do appear:

1. The Purification of Delos, where Thucydides interrupts the narrative with a brief excursus giving details of a festival the Ionians celebrated on the island during ancient times (3.104.3–5). He quotes from the Homeric Hymn to Apollo, where the speaker addresses a chorus of women.
2. The excursus in Book 1 on the fates of Pausanias and Themistocles (1.126–38), during which Themistocles supplicates King Admetus of the Molossians through his unnamed wife (1.136.2–4).
3. The excursus in Book 6 on the fall of the Peisistratid tyranny in Athens, at the end of which Thucydides cites the epitaph of the tyrant Hippias' daughter, Archedike (6.59.3).

The passages are significant for what they have in common. They each come at a very important moment of the narrative which Thucydides chooses to interrupt with an excursus to 'effect a complete and almost surreal dislocation of time and mood'.[26] That is: in a moment of high tension or emotion in the

[26] Hornblower (2004) 308 (referring to the excursus on the tyrannicides). The Delian chapter comes between the massacre of the Athenians in Aetolia and that of the Ambraciots in Amphilochia (neglected by scholars, but in both cases Thucydides' representation is very emphatic and contains numerous parallels of language and situation to the conclusion in Sicily (e.g., 3.97.3/7.82.4–5; 3.112.7–8/7.84.2–5; 3.113.6/7.87.5)). The Themistocles episode is part of a series of interlocking historical narratives that follow the Peloponnesian side's vote for war (1.125.1). The tyrannicide excursus, as is often noted, follows a return by Thucydides to the Athenian discovery of and reaction to the mutilation of the city's herms during the Sicilian narrative (6.53, 60–1). On excurses in Thucydides in general see Hornblower (2004) 307–16; Gribble (1998) 66–7 (he calls them 'digressions').

war, Thucydides brings the reader outside the war to demonstrate something of importance. The friction between, on one side, the drama of unfolding events, and on the other an attentive contemplation of distant things, makes a thematic spark. All three excurses evoke the past, as well as places and scenes of peacetime: the civic and religious festival,[27] the inner room of the hearth. The passages are important therefore each because of their position within the text and because of the dramatic change of environment and perspective that they enact (I say more about this at the end of the second section). And in each case the introduction of a feminine perspective affords the possibility of better understanding and critiquing the text's masculine ones.

Although the representations of women in these passages are not always Thucydides' most direct, they are among his most substantial. In these passages Thucydides' women are passive, self-effacing, with an enhanced role in the social world that correlates with a change of scene from war to one of peace or domesticity, and/or with a change of time from the present to an idealised past. This is stereotypical, but in practice these stereotypes build up a contrast between the women and the men of the *Peloponnesian War* in which the women seem superior. If war in this text is masculine, peace by contrast has a feminine side.[28] The women are a negation of the men's failings: they stand for a mode of life and of sociality that compared with men's is less proud and vindictive, gentler towards the weak, and of joyous affect. Critics, ancient and modern, have suggested Thucydides seeks to locate the reader *inside* the war in all its vividness.[29] These few portraits of women are *beyond* the war: they are vague, but for that they are not less vivid. I claim that in these instances we should not speak of *representations* or *depictions* of women, but *evocations* of women. That is—women are like holes in the text, and their thematic force comes from the imaginative and emotive charge that gathers around these perforations instead of a clear image.

Are these evocations of women an implicit subversion of the values and behaviours of the men in the *Peloponnesian War*, or a misogynistic reinforcement of the Athenian distinction between men and women? Both. On the one hand these women are not real: they are products of male thinking in a man's world that do not make room for the discovery and expressions of real women. But still, these misogynistically feminine-coded values and behaviours are politicised, they are imagined as collective and political virtues, which is to say

[27] Cf. Hardwick (1993) 155: 'It has been well shown that where not derived from the kinship of males, a woman's status was defined in terms of ritual functions'.

[28] On the possibility of an imagined association among Athenians between women and peace in general in this period see Hardwick (1993) 153–4, who makes a balanced assessment. To some extent such an idea may have followed naturally from the association between women and public displays of mourning.

[29] See Connor (1984); Rood (1998) 3.

as possible male virtues. The contrast of virtues opens a view of the war's participants, not merely as individuals, but *as men*: that is, as people shaped by their masculinity, with gender as a historical agent. Feminist reading can thus go beyond the initial question of how women are characterised in the text, to the more fundamental issue of '[arriving] at a more fully developed definition of the [text's] sex/gender system'.[30] That is the path this paper seeks to establish as the way forward.

The sections below are divided as follows: (II) A discussion of the passages, (III) A conclusion section discussing both the broader representation of men and women in Thucydides and the issues raised above.

II

I make the same argument three times in this section: although Shannon-Henderson is right that these three representations figure women as passive and associate them with the (distant) past, the connotations of these are positive rather than negative. Their passivity makes these women vague enough to sometimes carry an erotic charge, and in each case to be placed in contrast with the surrounding men who are often very brutal towards one another. Their association with the past allows these women to be idealised and placed at a distance from the reader and the rest of the narrative.

First—between two of the *Peloponnesian War's* most awful massacres (in Aetolia and Amphilochia), not long after the description of *stasis* at Corcyra, Thucydides narrates the purification of Delos by the Athenians.[31] The Athenians revive an old festival which had more or less died out (3.104.2, 6), leading Thucydides into an excursus (3.104.3–5) that is both very important and under-appreciated, so I shall quote it here at length:[32]

> [3] ἦν δέ ποτε καὶ τὸ πάλαι μεγάλη ξύνοδος ἐς τὴν Δῆλον τῶν Ἰώνων τε καὶ περικτιόνων νησιωτῶν· ξύν τε γὰρ γυναιξὶ καὶ παισὶν ἐθεώρουν, ὥσπερ νῦν ἐς τὰ Ἐφέσια Ἴωνες, καὶ ἀγὼν ἐποιεῖτο αὐτόθι καὶ γυμνικὸς καὶ μουσικός, χορούς τε ἀνῆγον αἱ πόλεις. [4] δηλοῖ δὲ μάλιστα Ὅμηρος ὅτι τοιαῦτα ἦν ἐν τοῖς ἔπεσι τοῖσδε, ἃ ἐστιν ἐκ προοιμίου Ἀπόλλωνος·

[30] Adapted from Rubin (1975) 159.

[31] The purification itself is, as Connor notes (1984) 107 n. 71: 'a link in a chain of increasing bleakness and horror' as later the Athenians drive the Delians off the island (Thuc. 5.1.1). In one of the last moments of Book 8, after the Delians have resettled in Asia Minor, many of their best soldiers are betrayed and killed over their lunch by the Persian Arsakes (8.108.4).

[32] See O'Sullivan (2024) on the importance of the reader's pleasure in this scene and generally throughout the *Peloponnesian War*.

ἀλλ᾽ ὅτε Δήλῳ, Φοῖβε, μάλιστά γε θυμὸν ἐτέρφθης,
ἔνθα τοι ἑλκεχίτωνες Ἰάονες ἠγερέθονται
σὺν σφοῖσιν τεκέεσσι γυναιξί τε σὴν ἐς ἀγυιάν·
ἔνθα σε πυγμαχίῃ τε καὶ ὀρχηστυῖ καὶ ἀοιδῇ
μνησάμενοι τέρπουσιν, ὅταν καθέσωσιν ἀγῶνα.

[5] ὅτι δὲ καὶ μουσικῆς ἀγὼν ἦν καὶ ἀγωνιούμενοι ἐφοίτων ἐν τοῖσδε αὖ δηλοῖ, ἃ ἐστιν ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ προοιμίου· τὸν γὰρ Δηλιακὸν χορὸν τῶν γυναικῶν ὑμνήσας ἐτελεύτα τοῦ ἐπαίνου ἐς τάδε τὰ ἔπη, ἐν οἷς καὶ ἑαυτοῦ ἐπεμνήσθη·

ἀλλ᾽ ἄγεθ᾽, ἱλήκοι μὲν Ἀπόλλων Ἀρτέμιδι ξύν,
χαίρετε δ᾽ ὑμεῖς πᾶσαι. ἐμεῖο δὲ καὶ μετόπισθε
μνήσασθ᾽, ὁππότε κέν τις ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων
ἐνθάδ᾽ ἀνείρηται ταλαπείριος ἄλλος ἐπελθών·
‘ὦ κοῦραι, τίς δ᾽ ὔμμιν ἀνὴρ ἥδιστος ἀοιδῶν
ἐνθάδε πωλεῖται, καὶ τέῳ τέρπεσθε μάλιστα;’
ὑμεῖς δ᾽ εὖ μάλα πᾶσαι ὑποκρίνασθαι ἀφήμως·
‘τυφλὸς ἀνήρ, οἰκεῖ δὲ Χίῳ ἔνι παιπαλοέσσῃ’.

Previously and in ancient times there was a large gathering of people from Ionia and the surrounding islands: they celebrated together with women and children, just like the Ionians today at the Ephesia, and they held contests in athletics and music, and the cities brought choruses. [4] Above all Homer makes clear what it was like with the following lines from the hymn to Apollo:

But, Phoebus, when you were happiest, in Delos:
there the long-robed Ionians gather
with their children and women in the street,
there they remember you with boxing
and dance and singing—and make you glad
with every contest they hold.

[5] That there used to be a musical contest and that people came to compete is made clear in these lines from the same poem: because he praises the Delian women's chorus and finishes the praise-poem with these words, in which he mentions himself:

But come, let Apollo and Artemis be gracious,
farewell to you all. After this, remember me:

> and if some other long-suffering person
> among mortal men should come here and ask:
> 'Girls, which man is the sweetest singer
> that comes here, whom do you enjoy most?'
> All of you should answer simply:
> 'A blind man, he lives in rugged Chios'.

The Delos passage's representation of women conforms to the rules laid out by Shannon-Henderson. Women are attendees of the festival and addressees of the Homeric speaker (the latter are members of a Delian women's chorus). They are silent and appear only as images or entities which arrive and share in an experience focalised through the men. Thus, although women appear in this passage, they are far away from the text's narrative hub of men speaking and fighting within and between fifth-century *polis*-states.

But here the significance of these representative features is quite different just as the textual surroundings are unique. The space given to a Homeric speaker compounds the effect of a technique which is characteristically Homeric: the interruption of the war narrative with a scene that vividly evokes peacetime and safety.[33] The revival of the festival leads the narrator back to depict a scene from those times in a form which echoes its surviving literature.[34] The passage's quoted verses reinforce the sense that this festival belongs more truly to the world of the Homeric corpus than the Greek *polis*. In a certain sense the narrative goes back in time. Connor has observed that the latter part of Book 3, the sixth year of the war, is broadly characterised by thematic time-travel: for example, the Athenians are massacred in Aetolia by tribes who eat raw food and live in unwalled villages (3.94.4–5).[35] The passage

[33] Especially the *Iliad*: for example, the shield of Achilles (*Il.* 18.478–617); Andromache at home before learning of Hector's death (22.437–59); and more generally a number of the similes (e.g., 3.10–1; 8.554–9; 15.679–84), as well as Patroclus' funeral in Book 23. On literary techniques of retardation in the *Iliad* see Reichel (1990). Auerbach (2003) 4 claimed: 'the element of suspense is very slight in the Homeric poems; nothing in their entire style is calculated to keep the reader or hearer breathless' (cf. Reichel 143–4). More generally on Homer's influence on Thucydides, the bibliography is very large, but starting points that deal with overarching concepts and narrative structure include Strasburger (1982) 963–1016 and 1057–97; Macleod (1983); Rengakos (2006); Joho (2017a) (for more see esp. Joho's bibliography).

[34] Festivals like this are not simply confined to the Homeric past, since as Thucydides himself says the Ionians celebrate in a similar way in the *Ephesia* (3.104.3). But perhaps, like the Homeric poems themselves in Thucydides's Athens, they are partly a survival from the past in the present and a way for present people to engage with the past. On temporality and performance with regard to the *Hymn to Apollo* see Passmore (2018).

[35] Connor (1984) 105–7: he stresses the contrast between Delos and the *stasis* at Corcyra where a contemporary *polis*-community implodes in violence.

is also by far the most vivid description of peace in the entire text. It conveys not merely the cessation of conflict but the joy of peaceful shared activity.[36] The surrounding episodes—*stasis* at Corcyra, massacres in Aetolia and Amphilochia—raise the possibility that the development of political and economic institutions (i.e., what is mapped out by the Archaeology) may correspond simply to an enhanced scale of suffering and death.[37] In particular, the Delos passage 'subverts and refutes all facile notions of progress, not least the assurance that in Greek history there was a dynamic at work that led gradually to growing material greatness and thereby to higher levels of civilization'.[38] The large temporal distance and inverted priorities of the festival at Delos compared with the rest of the narrative thus serve not to diminish, but to elevate and idealise its contents. Instead of moral progress, the *polis* way of life as depicted through the war by comparison is a moral catastrophe. This is in contrast with the harmony of the festival where the emphasis is on unity—of all Ionians; of men, women, and children—and enjoyment: by Apollo, spectators, and participants. If we are in fact meant to consider the Delian festival to be early in the arc of civilisational progress, with the broader narrative on the later end, then the passage appears to convey a profound longing for the pre-progress world. This is like how Socrates in the *Republic* represents the fifth-century-style *polis* as a disease in contrast with the earlier societies of those who lived simply and devoutly. The *polis* is phlegmatic and overflowing, consumed by luxuries, starved of the good (*Rep.* 372–3c). In an unjust and violent present, the past becomes a screen for projection where the author casts an image of something lost. At the Delian festival the involvement of women contributes to this image and stands in implicit contrast to the surrounding episodes of conflict between men.

The chorus of women addressed by the Homeric speaker at the end of the passage are mute recipients of his words, and even mouthpieces as he tries to determine what they will say in future. Asking the women to remember and

[36] Strauss Clay (1989) 47 goes further in her discussion of this part of the *Hymn to Apollo*: 'The festive occasion lends a divine radiance and an aura of transcendence that makes the mortal participants momentarily resemble the gods'.

[37] The developments narrated in the Archaeology are largely material: walls (1.2.1, 7.1), ships (1.4; 1.13.2–4, 15.1), and money (1.11.1, 13.1). This corresponds with social and civilisational changes including the restriction of piracy (1.4–5), the establishment of tyrannies (1.13.1), and large-scale battles and wars of conquest between communities (1.9; 1.13.1, 4). Altogether the value of these changes is at best ambiguous: Thucydides is openly negative about the tyrannies (1.17), and more profoundly if implicitly ambivalent in Book 3 and elsewhere. The huge scale of this present war leads to an equivalent degree of suffering (1.23.1–3). On the Archaeology as a narrative of progressive development see de Romilly (1966); Hunter (1982) 119–75; Reynolds (2009). Joho (2022) 79–84 stresses the priority of impersonal forces in the narrative.

[38] Connor (1984) 107.

name him as the sweetest singer they have heard, the speaker is obviously competing against other men, other poets, not less perhaps than the boxers and other gymnasts at the festival in Delos. The poet, like a soldier, competes to outdo the other men in excellence and to be remembered for his accomplishments. But there is a gendered contrast between these modes of competitiveness. For example, when Nicias tells the Athenians in Syracuse not to let their ancestors' fame die out, calling them by their patronymics (7.69.2), he evokes an exclusively male sphere of competition where the excellent act, its audience, and the people and the symbols which remember and recall the doer are exclusively men.[39] The contest in this sphere is one for male approval. Not only is the Homeric speaker (by contrast) competing for the approval of women, but his thanks and blessings indicate that the kind of approval he wants is different (he wants to be enjoyed), and so is his method of achieving success (he flatters). He wants the chorus to regard him as 'sweetest' (ἥδιστος), as an object of pleasure (τέρπεσθε); his words are affectionate and salutary (χαίρετε). The implicit contrast between the blind man and his long-suffering or wizened counterpart (ταλαπείριος) on the one hand, and the chorus of women who accept and bestow favours on the other, emphasises the comparative beauty of the latter. Indeed, the women themselves may be silent, but in the interaction represented they have power—a power of pleasure—and this is portrayed in the context of a beautiful and joyous occasion, and in contrast to the wars of men. Thus, although these women remain passive, the ethical and tonal shift in this passage hinges on its representation of women as elusive entities who give and receive pleasure.

In Book 1, Admetus' wife appears during a much longer excursus that begins with the 'temporal remoteness' of Cylon's attempted coup in Athens, then covers the comparatively recent downfall of Pausanias the Spartan, and finally the pursuit of Themistocles and his escape to Persia.[40] The three narratives run and are held together by the loose thread of communications between Spartan and Athenian envoys seeking to discredit each other as the war begins. The style and the subject of all three is in general un-Thucydidean and rather Herodotean, which has led some scholars to think they are written in direct response to Herodotus' *Histories*.[41] The first section about Cylon led one scholiast to quote an unattributed comment on the passage: 'here the lion

[39] Cf. the importance of *andreia* in the exchange between Cleon and Nicias over Pylos (4.27.3–28.5), and the *stasis* at Corcyra (3.82.4): τόλμα μὲν γὰρ ἀλόγιστος ἀνδρεία φιλέταιρος ἐνομίσθη ('Irrational recklessness was considered partner-loving manliness'). See further discussion below (esp. n. 113). On Thucydides' ironic use of the concepts and vocabulary of competition throughout the Sicilian narrative see Hornblower (2004) 336–53.

[40] 'Temporal remoteness' (Rood (2013) 129).

[41] For style see Westlake (1977). See also Patterson (1993); Rood (2013).

laughed'.[42] Westlake wrote of the subsequent Pausanias and Themistocles sections (he treats the two narratives as one entity) '[it] is remarkable for its simple, rapid-flowing style, its storytelling tone, its wealth of personal anecdote, its marked deviation from his normally strict criteria of relevance'.[43] Here, then, the normal Thucydidean rules are in suspension as the reader is taken briefly into a different world.[44] The foreignness of the past he conveys with formal differences in his mode of writing.[45]

In this antiquated stylistic and thematic context, Themistocles supplicates Admetus' wife. The background is as follows. While investigating Pausanias, the Spartans find reason to accuse Themistocles of aiding Persia. Already ostracised by the Athenians at this point, Themistocles spends his time in Argos and other parts of the Peloponnese, where the Athenians and Spartans try to apprehend him—he escapes to Corcyra. There he hopes to be protected, since he was a previous benefactor of the city, but the Corcyraeans are afraid of the Athenians and Spartans: they refuse and leave him on the mainland opposite their island. Left with nowhere else to go, he turns to the Molossians, a barbarian people who inhabit a section of Epirus in Western Greece.[46] To an Athenian, the Molossians evoke foreignness and the past: they are ruled by a King, Admetus, with whom Themistocles had some past enmity (for what precise reason we are not told).[47] 'The wanderings of Themistocles', as Hammond calls them, like the wanderings of Odysseus, are a journey through time as well as space.[48] He arrives at the royal household (1.136.3–137.1):

[42] Scholiast *ad loc.* (= Kleinlogel (2019) 455). For more on the reception of the passage see Rood (2013) 119 n. 2. The remark is also quoted by the lawyer in Robert Browning's *The Ring and the Book.*

[43] Westlake (1977) 95. Consequently, in the twentieth century some scholars became very anxious about the reliability of these narratives as a historical source. Meiggs (1972) 465 wrote: 'Had Thucydides' account been written by any other Greek historian it would not have been taken seriously'. Westlake argues Thucydides may have based his account on another source.

[44] Although the war does not begin properly until Book 2, the Archaeology, and especially story of the war's outbreak in Book 1, are sufficient for the reader to perceive the excursus as an interruption.

[45] Rood argues that the rise of Alcibiades in Athens in Books 5–8 parallels the story of Cylon and therefore comes to seem anachronistic, like an invasion by the past of the present (2013) esp. 136–8.

[46] See Fragoulaki (2013) 270–6.

[47] As for Thucydides himself, Parker (1998) 164 claims he is the first author to make a hard distinction between kings and tyrants. For Thucydides, the distinction is that a tyrant is the autocratic ruler of a *polis*, and a King is the autocratic ruler of a non-Greek or pre-*polis* Greek society (with anachronistic exceptions such as Sparta).

[48] Hammond (1967) 492.

[3] καὶ ὁ μὲν οὐκ ἔτυχεν ἐπιδημῶν, ὁ δὲ τῆς γυναικὸς ἱκέτης γενόμενος διδάσκεται ὑπ᾽ αὐτῆς τὸν παῖδα σφῶν λαβὼν καθέζεσθαι ἐπὶ τὴν ἑστίαν. [4] καὶ ἐλθόντος οὐ πολὺ ὕστερον τοῦ Ἀδμήτου δηλοῖ τε ὅς ἐστι καὶ οὐκ ἀξιοῖ, εἴ τι ἄρα αὐτὸς ἀντεῖπεν αὐτῷ Ἀθηναίων δεομένῳ, φεύγοντα τιμωρεῖσθαι· καὶ γὰρ ἂν ὑπ᾽ ἐκείνου πολλῷ ἀσθενεστέρου ἐν τῷ παρόντι κακῶς πάσχειν, γενναῖον δὲ εἶναι τοὺς ὁμοίους ἀπὸ τοῦ ἴσου τιμωρεῖσθαι. καὶ ἅμα αὐτὸς μὲν ἐκείνῳ χρείας τινὸς καὶ οὐκ ἐς τὸ σῶμα σῴζεσθαι ἐναντιωθῆναι, ἐκεῖνον δ᾽ ἄν, εἰ ἐκδοίη αὐτόν (εἰπὼν ὑφ᾽ ὧν καὶ ἐφ᾽ ᾧ διώκεται), σωτηρίας ἂν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀποστερῆσαι. [137.1] ὁ δὲ ἀκούσας ἀνίστησί τε αὐτὸν μετὰ τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ υἱέος (ὥσπερ καὶ ἔχων αὐτὸν ἐκαθέζετο, καὶ μέγιστον ἦν ἱκέτευμα τοῦτο) καὶ ὕστερον οὐ πολλῷ τοῖς τε Λακεδαιμονίοις καὶ Ἀθηναίοις ἐλθοῦσι καὶ πολλὰ εἰποῦσιν οὐκ ἐκδίδωσιν, ἀλλ᾽ ἀποστέλλει βουλόμενον ὡς βασιλέα πορευθῆναι ἐπὶ τὴν ἑτέραν θάλασσαν πεζῇ ἐς Πύδναν τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου.

[3] [Admetus] was not actually home: Themistocles supplicated his wife and was instructed by her to take their child and sit himself down at the hearth. [4] When Admetus returned not long later Themistocles revealed himself and said that it would not be right, just because he had once spoken against him in a request from the Athenians, to take revenge against him now in exile, and for he who was now so much weaker to have to suffer more in the present: since what is right is for equals to take revenge on each other from an equal standing. And anyway, he had opposed Admetus in a financial matter and not something to do with his bodily safety, whereas if Admetus gave him up now (he explained why and by whom he was being pursued), he would lose his life. [137.1] When he had finished, Admetus made him stand up with his son (because Themistocles was seated holding him: indeed, this supplication was of the very greatest kind), and a little later when the Spartans and Athenians came and made all sorts of threats Admetus refused to give him up. Instead, because Themistocles wanted to go to the King of Persia, Admetus sent him towards the other sea[49] by land via Pydna, which was ruled by Alexander of Macedon.

Nearly the entire emphasis of the passage is on Themistocles, Admetus, and their relation—Admetus' wife is not much else than a doorway. She is arguably even less important than the child. Yet the scene is obviously reminiscent of Odysseus' supplication of Alcinous, King of the Phaeacians,

[49] Gomme identifies this as the Thermaic gulf (*HCT* I.439).

through his wife Arete in Book 7 of the *Odyssey* (see especially *Od.* 7.146–52).[50] Odysseus, taking their daughter Nausicaa's advice, addresses his words to Arete and grips her knees. But Arete does not speak, and after he has finished it is her husband Alcinous who accepts the supplication by raising Odysseus to stand and then seating him down in a brightly decorated chair (*Od.* 7.167–74).

One has the sense here, as so often in Thucydides, that the truly important thing is underneath the text, and that the essential part is not what is written but what is evoked. Admetus' wife takes a more active role than Arete in this supplication where she hands her child to Themistocles and instructs him to sit by the hearth. But this detail evokes an entire supplication scene (Themistocles to Admetus' wife) to which the reader does not have access: likewise, it evokes the woman, this unnamed wife,[51] whose approval like Arete's is somehow significant although its meaning is barely visible on the prescribed surface of the text. The woman's task in each case is to receive and accept the man's appeal which is vulnerable and not violent. The woman's role is beneficent and mysterious. She is like the chorus of Delian women who bestow favour to this or that poet—and a kind of counterpart to the text's other barbarian queen, the infamous Brauro, who receives a passing mention for murdering her husband the king Pittacus (4.107.3).[52] Above I wrote Admetus' wife is a doorway; what stands behind the door is the domestic world: the hearth, the infant child. The momentary intrusion of these into the text brings something weak and vulnerable and tender. Themistocles' speech to Admetus in what follows subverts the kind of statements about power that are ubiquitous among Athenian speakers. His language closely parallels that of the Athenians in the Melian dialogue (5.89). But Themistocles emphasises his own weakness as a source of entitlement: it would be wrong, he says, for Admetus to take revenge on him precisely because he is weak, and good to help him since he is in a vulnerable position. Altogether Thucydides describes this as the very greatest kind of supplication.[53] It affords Themistocles, who has been abandoned by his friends, the Corcyraeans (precisely because they are being threatened by more powerful entities), the protection of a man who was previously an effective enemy. It saves his life.

[50] The Themistocles scene may also have some connection with a supplication scene in Euripides' lost play *Telephus*. Hammond (1967) 49 thinks the *Telephus* scene is based on this episode; Gomme seems to believe the inverse (*HCT* I.438).

[51] Fragoulaki (2023) 167 suggests that 'The queen's cultural closeness to the Greek world, and indeed Athens, might be one reason why she remains "respectfully" unnamed'. On links between Athens and Molossia see Fragoulaki (2013) 270–6.

[52] Her children are co-conspirators. On the contrast see Fragoulaki (2013) 271.

[53] Naiden (2006) 39 refers to the 'ensemble of elements: the hearth, the king, and access to the king's family'.

Admetus' wife thus forms part of an assemblage of elements that subvert the ordinary logic of power in the text—to which Themistocles himself is subject even when he is refused by the Corcyraeans, indeed right up to the point where he initiates a supplication—by framing the relation of the weaker and the stronger in terms of the rights of the former and obligations of the latter. The language of Themistocles's indirect speech parallels the part of the Melian Dialogue where the Athenians make an opposite claim that questions of right are only pertinent between equals, and otherwise it is the place of the strong to act and the weak to follow (1.136.4/5.89: *ἀσθενεστέρου/οἱ ἀσθενεῖς, ἀπὸ τοῦ ἴσου/ἀπὸ τῆς ἴσης ἀνάγκης*). The logic of Themistocles's supplication inverts that of the Athenians of the dialogue. A reflection of the *Odyssey's* Arete, this woman's passivity and anonymity opens a space that men can occupy in their relations with each other in which the character of those relations becomes gentler. As the narrative places this scene in the past, it perhaps does so with a similar nostalgia to the one evident in the previous passage from Book 3. In any case, this opens a divide between the possibility of supplication and the brutality of the war to follow. Thus, like the women of the Delian chorus, Admetus' wife stands for exactly the kind of misogynistic ideal of femininity that Shannon-Henderson describes, but without contempt as such: her role is a beneficent one which, by its association with the protection of the weak, is ethically opposed to the other parts of the text.

An even more emphatic example of such ethical opposition comes at the end of the tyrannicide excursus in Book 6, which Hornblower describes as 'truly astonishing' for the amount of space it gives to mentioning a woman.[54] The excursus narrates the assassination of Hipparchus by the tyrannicides Harmodius and Aristogeiton, following an attempted seduction of Harmodius by Hipparchus and a defamatory insult by the tyrants against Harmodius' sister.[55] After Hipparchus' death, Hippias the tyrant, now fearful and turned brutal against the people of his own city, makes alliances elsewhere, and, in particular, marries his daughter Archedike to the son of the tyrant of Lampsacus (on the Hellespont) because of that city's great influence with King Darius of Persia (foreshadowing Hippias' attempted return to Athens as part of the Persian force defeated at Marathon). One aspect of the representation

[54] Hornblower (1991–2008) III.438. The excursus is one of the most frequently discussed passages in the text. See Hornblower III.433–40 for a more thorough list of references. Not cited by Hornblower are the various discussions of the excursus and related issues throughout Wohl (2002) (he cites Wohl (1999)), as well as work which has appeared since his commentary was published, including Petrovic (2007) 251–9; Quinn (2007) (on the herms); Kosmin (2015) 146–8; Azoulay (2017) esp. 15–21.

[55] Lavelle (1986a) claims the slight against Hipparchus' sister would have involved an allegation of sexual impropriety. If so, then this detail is suppressed by Thucydides—perhaps lending credence to Cartledge's characterisation of the author as 'chivalrous—or chauvinist' ((1993) 130).

of women in Book 6 is that they are depicted as cargo shipped between men who use marriage to make alliances with each other. Unspecified disputes over marriages are one of the cited causes of conflict in Sicily between the Selineans and the Egestaeans (6.6.2). Following his description, Thucydides quotes the epitaph on Hippias' daughter's tomb in Lampsacus (6.59.3):[56]

> *καὶ αὐτῆς σῆμα ἐν Λαμψάκῳ ἐστὶν ἐπίγραμμα ἔχον τόδε·*
>
> *ἀνδρὸς ἀριστεύσαντος ἐν Ἑλλάδι τῶν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ*
> *Ἱππίου Ἀρχεδίκην ἥδε κέκευθε κόνις,*
> *ἣ πατρός τε καὶ ἀνδρὸς ἀδελφῶν τ' οὖσα τυράννων*
> *παίδων τ' οὐκ ἤρθη νοῦν ἐς ἀτασθαλίην.*

> And her tomb is in Lampsacus with this epitaph:
>
> Daughter of a man who had been the best of all in Greece
> during his time, Hippias, Archedike lies under this ground
> whose father, husband and brothers were all tyrants—and
> her children—she never raised her own mind to despotism.

Shannon-Henderson observes that Archedike is passive, her experience closed to the reader; she is a political pawn between tyrants, and her importance is tied to her status in a ruling family and thus from a bygone era.[57] The initial framing with which Thucydides introduces the epitaph, and its first lines, each place most of the attention on Hippias.[58] Overall the inscription gives more space to Archedike's male relatives than herself, and defines her character exclusively in terms of a 'not': she does not suffer from *atasthalia*, the hubristic and despotic attitude to which tyrants may be prone.[59] Shannon-Henderson compares this to the words of Pericles I quoted at the start. Clearly it draws on a similar contrast. Men, ideal men, loom as large as possible in society and memory to a degree that causes competition and destruction in the political realm; whereas women, ideal women, are self-effacing and content to disappear—they are defined by exactly the opposite virtues, and for these

[56] In the *Rhetoric* Aristotle attributes this epitaph to Simonides (1367b).

[57] Shannon-Henderson (2019) 94: 'The importance attached to marriage and dynastic concerns reveals a world very different from the later period in which Thucydides was writing … Yet even these prominent pre-democratic women are still treated as less important than the male members of their family'. Shannon-Henderson lumps Archedike in with the much briefer mention of Hippias' mother, Myrrhine (6.55.1).

[58] Cf. Lavelle (1986b) 240: 'It is Hippias, not Archedike, who is first and most prominently featured in the epigram'.

[59] Cf. Shannon-Henderson (2019) 95. And see Petrovic (2007) 253–4.

virtues Archedike is praised and (ironically) commemorated after death. The emphasis on Archedike's male relatives builds a strong enough sense of her prestige to make it seem unlikely, and thus admirable, that she should retain such humility: the very end of the epitaph works as a sort of punchline.[60]

But the epitaph is not quoted in isolation: the *Peloponnesian War's* context shapes its emphases and inverts what a crudely misogynistic outlook might perceive.[61] Thus, for example, Petrovic downplays the importance of the word *atasthalia*, claiming the epitaph makes no strong association between it and tyranny.[62] Early in the excursus Thucydides makes some very positive remarks on the Peisistratid tyranny (6.54.5, 7). These however must be set against the very negative one in the Archaeology (1.17), and the climate of fear that pervades both before and after the attack (6.55.3, 59.2)—as well as the characterisation of Athens by various speakers in the text as a tyrant over other cities (cf. 1.122.3; 2.63.2–3; 3.37.2).[63] Here the word's negative association is particularly pronounced as Hippias's tyranny has just descended into violent paranoia (6.59.2), and more broadly in the context of Book 6's reckless tyrannical behaviour by both Alcibiades and the Athenian *dēmos*.[64] The epitaph's place at the end of an excursion into the past beyond the past (the narrative 'plupast') creates a distance from which the glory of this tyrant family appears small.[65] Perceiving that distance, Lavelle has made the following interpretation of the passage:

[60] Even without the Thucydides context, this seems to be Aristotle's (*Rhet.* 1367b) interpretation of the effect of listing Archedike's relatives as a rhetorical device.

[61] Thus, for example, Petrovic (2007) 253–4 downplays the importance of the word *atasthalia* (translated above as 'depotism'), claiming the epitaph makes no strong association between this and tyranny. The emotional force of the word is different, however, in the context of Book 6's reckless tyrannical behaviour by both Alcibiades and the Athenian *dêmos* (see Wohl (1999), (2002); Meyer (2008)), and the excursus proper, as I show here.

[62] Petrovic (2007) 253–4. The word is very emphatic (cf. Lavelle (1986b) 242: 'There can be no mistake about the *apparent* contradictoriness of the word in relation to the earlier lines of the epigram').

[63] The good and bad can be reconciled, I think, by recognising how Thucydides sometimes uses positive remarks as a way of enriching his account of a person or regime without contradicting the view of the historical whole that emerges from his narrative (cf. 2.65 with Foster (2010) 210–18 and Connor (1984) 74–5: 'The force of the apparent defense of Pericles … [is] not to develop a theory about the war but to prevent premature and facile judgements about it'). On Thucydides and tyranny in general see Hunter (1974); Scanlon (1987); Barceló (1990); Dreher (2016). I go into this in much more detail in O'Sullivan (forthcoming).

[64] On the thematic connection between the excursus and its surroundings see Vickers (1995); Wohl (1999), (2002); Meyer (2008).

[65] For 'plupast' see Grethlein and Krebs (2012). Lavelle (1986b) 241 reads a similar emphasis into the choice to use an aorist participle (*aristeusantos*) in the first line.

> The contrast [between Archidike and her male relatives] … is a lesson in the mutability of power, a recognition of the transience of earthly glory, the capriciousness of which only the uninvolved can escape … [It] depicts Hippias' (and tyranny's) glory as inherently ephemeral, Archedike's purity as lasting.[66]

For Lavelle, the archaic foreignness of Archedike's role in a tyrant family introduces a sense of mutability (this is after all a gravestone), emphasising not only that the named characters are dead but that the worlds and institutions in which they lived have vanished by the time of the textual present. Treated as something dead, the power and tyranny of Hippias and these other men will seem vainglorious—they become shadows—whereas the self-effacing refusal of Archedike to behave like a tyrant seems good: she inhabits and is congruous with her own absence. Although most of the epitaph's words are about men, Archedike functions as a negation of these men and of the glory and power through which they attempt to realise themselves.

The overarching context of Book 6 makes the force of this negation both broader and more explicitly gendered. In both the tyrannicide excursus and the overarching Sicilian narrative of Book 6, the pursuit and mix of power and desire—the expression of the Athenian man's virility—is shown paradoxically to be a drive towards both democracy and tyranny, which explains the troubling aura of Alcibiades (who embodies both sides of this contradictory impulse), and also explains the two reckless acts of the invasion in Book 6 and the murder of Hipparchus.[67] Both acts unite the figures of the conquering man and the free citizen respectively in the imperialist and the tyrannicide. This is not the place for a proper interpretation of the excursus, which I hope to outline elsewhere.[68] Here I would like briefly to offer a suggestion as to why it is placed in this specific part of Book 6. The question has been controversial and given rise to a multitude of answers: mostly, although for various reasons, the thematic significance of the excursus has been thought to have something to do with the connection between Hipparchus and Alcibiades.[69] I want to shift the emphasis towards examining the connection between the tyrannicides and

[66] Lavelle (1986b) 243–4.

[67] Wohl (2002) 155–8, 210–14. See also Meyer (2008).

[68] O'Sullivan (forthcoming).

[69] See Dover's note in *HCT* IV.325–9. On the excursus and Alcibiades, see Wohl (2002) 153, for a summary and list of references—her full discussion (152–8) draws out some of the pertinent paradoxes of Athenian democratic psychology. Vickers (1995) draws a link between Hipparchus (killed) and Alcibiades (sentenced to death: 6.61.7)—some of the bases for his analogy are tenuous. Meyer ((2008), esp. 31–3) claims the meaning of this excursus is both historical and didactic: Athenian misremembrance caused the *dēmos* to take the wrong lesson from the past and give into its paranoia, resulting in tyrannical behaviour.

the herms. Both the tyrannicides and the herms were centrally important symbols of Athenian democratic ideology and citizen identity.[70] In the case of the herms, the force of this identification was strong enough that the mutilation of the herms was treated as an attack on the city, and the removal of their phalluses a castration of the *polis*.[71] The force of this association may have been all the more significant for the fact that it was not fully explicit, nor perhaps completely understood, as Wohl has claimed.[72] In any case people regarded the mutilation, Thucydides says (without quite explaining why), as a bad omen for the invasion of Sicily (6.27.3). And Wohl argues that the mutilation of the herms in the *Peloponnesian War* serves implicitly to transcribe the Athenian loss in Sicily as an emasculation.[73] In Book 6 it is people's foreboding sense of impotence that activates the collective memory of the tyrannicides' failings (6.53.3):

> ἐπιστάμενος γὰρ ὁ δῆμος ἀκοῇ τὴν Πεισιστράτου καὶ τῶν παίδων τυραννίδα χαλεπὴν τελευτῶσαν γενομένην καὶ προσέτι οὐδ' ὑφ' ἑαυτῶν καὶ Ἁρμοδίου καταλυθεῖσαν, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων, ἐφοβεῖτο αἰεὶ καὶ πάντα ὑπόπτως ἐλάμβανεν.
>
> Since the *demos* knew from what it had heard that the tyranny of Peisistratus became harsh at the end and moreover that it was not overthrown by themselves and Harmodius, but by the Spartans, they were constantly afraid and regarded everything with suspicion.

From the above analysis two points must be made. First: the herms embody the way in which the exclusion of women was not (as it is popularly regarded today) a bug or defect in the Athenian democratic system, but rather an essential feature, because the touchstones of Athenian democratic ideology and identity were masculine.[74] For the city to lose its manhood was to be

[70] On the symbol of the tyrannicides see Dover's survey in *HCT* IV.321–3, and the information assembled by Raaflaub (2003) 64–7: the tyrannicides received cult honours at their tombs and their descendants were given free meals at the Prytaneum. For a more precise analysis of the tyrannicides' ideological importance see Wohl (2002) 3–10. On the herms see Osborne (1985); Winkler (1990b); Quinn (2007). The pairing is ironic since there was an ancient tradition which associated the herms and their establishment with Hipparchus (Pl. [*Hipparch.*] 228b–9d).

[71] Osborne (1985) 66: 'the mutilators chose as their target objects whose destruction was most certain to unman the Athenians and render them impotent'.

[72] Wohl (2002) 22–3.

[73] Wohl (2002) 205–14.

[74] Compare Billows' recent (2023) study which examines the Greek city-state as a male warrior-citizen collective.

destroyed, and vice versa. Second: this masculine democratic self-image was imbued by the figures of the tyrannicides with notions of activity and violence,[75] so that each was cast in the powerful position of one who attacks (this is the basis of the unity between aristocrats and the masses represented by the romance between Harmodius and Aristogeiton).[76] From the Periclean funeral oration to the invasion of Sicily, these elements are combined to support the drive to conquer which defines Athens in the *Peloponnesian War* (cf. 1.70).[77] Already we have seen how the Funeral Oration invokes the exclusion of women. From that point of view here is its ideological and thematic nutshell (2.41.1):

> ξυνελών τε λέγω τήν τε πᾶσαν πόλιν τῆς Ἑλλάδος παίδευσιν εἶναι καὶ καθ' ἕκαστον δοκεῖν ἄν μοι τὸν αὐτὸν ἄνδρα παρ' ἡμῶν ἐπὶ πλεῖστ' ἂν εἴδη καὶ μετὰ χαρίτων μάλιστ' ἂν εὐτραπέλως τὸ σῶμα αὔταρκες παρέχεσθαι.
>
> In summing up let me say that the entire city is an education to Greece, and that each man among us, it would seem to me, is capable in himself of adapting deftly and with grace to the greatest number of forms his own self-sufficient body.[78]

This is a very famous passage, but for my purpose what is most interesting is its emphasis on the masculine body. Wohl observes that it sets out a vision of freedom as mastery.[79] The ideal Athenian is in complete control of a body that responds perfectly to every need. It is significant that Thucydides uses this same language to describe the effect on people's bodies of the plague, for which there is no cure and treatments work at random (2.51.2–3), and 'the self-

[75] Kosmin (2015) 147 gives a list of those who have drawn attention to the lack of prominence of the tyrant in Athenian civic memory of the tyrannicides. What is commemorated and identified with is less the assault on a tyrant as such than the act of self-liberation represented as the act of killing.

[76] Harmodius was an aristocrat, Aristogeiton was not (Thuc. 6.54.2). Wohl (1999) 351: 'Harmodius and Aristogeiton were lovers as well as tyrant-slayers, and their love … provided the model for a democratic eros that defined the Athenian citizen as socially autonomous and sexually dominant'.

[77] See Wohl (2002) 200–3 on how the themes and language of the Funeral Oration are reworked in Nicias' speech before the battle in the Great Harbour of Syracuse (7.69.2).

[78] See the notes of Rusten (1989) 158–9 and Hornblower (1991–2008) I.308: the passage is echoed in other writers, earlier by Pericles himself in the Funeral Oration when speaking about the entire city (Thuc. 2.36.3), and later by Thucydides himself during the plague (2.51.3). On the analogy between city and individual in Thucydides see Morrison (1994) (this is also a fundamental and debated aspect of Plato's *Republic*: see for example Williams (1997); Evrigenis (2002); Blair (2012) 69–93).

[79] Wohl (2002) 52–4.

sufficient condition of someone's body seemed to confer nothing, neither strength nor weakness against the disease—instead, it destroyed all, even those cared for with every prescription' (2.51.3: *σῶμά τε αὔταρκες ὂν οὐδὲν διεφάνη πρὸς αὐτὸ ἰσχύος πέρι ἢ ἀσθενείας, ἀλλὰ πάντα ξυνῄρει καὶ τὰ πάσῃ διαίτῃ θεραπευόμενα*). He goes on to say that 'the most terrible thing' (2.51.4: *δεινότατον*) was both the 'hopelessness' (2.51.4: *ἀθυμία*) of those who caught the disease, which in turn made them yield to it more easily, and the way that people who cared for the sick caught the disease and died 'like cattle' (2.51.4: *ὥσπερ τὰ πρόβατα*).[80] Orwin has claimed that the plague, in contrast with the Funeral Oration, marks an intrusion of the body—of the kind of thing he labels 'subpolitical'—into the world of the political.[81] More precisely it could be said that the plague marks a change in the significance of the body from an expression of individual power and character to a site for the action of impersonal forces, a change from a notion of the body as sculpture to one of the body as territory.[82] The plague, by imposing this second sense of the body, attacks the first, so that people engage in all kinds of reckless and pleasure-seeking behaviours since 'they regard their bodies and money alike as temporary' (2.53.2: *ἐφήμερα τά τε σώματα καὶ τὰ χρήματα ὁμοίως ἡγούμενοι*). With the mutilation of the herms, the plague's notion of the body re-emerges, but instead of religious and biological dynamics it is individual and social impulses that pervade.[83]

These same impulses clearly figure in the combination of *erōs* and paranoia that governs the tyrannicide excursus. After emphasising the destruction of the herms for a second time (6.53.2), Thucydides himself proceeds to attack another of the most important symbols of Athenian democratic masculine ideology by claiming that the tyrannicides killed the tyrant's brother instead of the tyrant (and only by chance: 6.57.3), and not for any lofty political motives,

[80] On *athumia* generally in Thucydides see Huart (1968) 151–2.

[81] Orwin (2016) 114 ('subpolitical'). He cites other passages (2.42.2–3, 43.1) where Pericles dissociates the war dead from their individual bodies, emphasising an abstract citizen body in terms similar to those of the above passage and of the ideological force of the herms as described by scholars.

[82] On the emergence of this notion of the body in the Hippocratic corpus see Holmes (2010) (and cf. Derrida (1981) 101 on the characterisation of illness in Plato's *Timaeus* 89b: 'The natural illness of the living is defined in its essence as an *allergy*, a reaction to the aggression of an alien element. And it is necessary that the most general concept of disease should be allergy, from the moment the natural life of the body ought only to follow its own endogenous motions' (emphasis original)). On military language in the plague description see Joho (2022) 67–73.

[83] However, a distinction between culture and biology should not be stressed here. Joho ((2017b) and (2022)) has shown how Thucydides avoids distinguishing between these types of forces by conceiving them both in terms of more general concepts such as movement and rest, and by substantivising them both as neuter nouns and historical agents.

but rather because Hipparchus came on to Harmodius and was rebuffed, then insulted Harmodius' sister (6.54.1–3, 56.1).[84] The narrative's polemic rebuffs the traditional emphasis on the character and virtue of the tyrannicides—partly with its praise of the tyranny—instead highlighting the interplay of forces and chance events.[85] After this double mutilation and deconstruction of masculine symbols in the text, and amid the depiction of a disaster wrought by Athenian masculine eroticism, violence, and obsession with prestige, Thucydides closes the excursus with the epitaph of Archedike. The contrast between Archedike and her male tyrant relatives thus comes to symbolise a broader contrast between Athenian femininity and masculinity. Masculinity appears as an illusion and a source of all the violent and terrible things in the surrounding pages, whereas femininity appears distantly as a negation of masculinity, and therefore as a shadow of something fleeting and desirable.

Thus, although, like Pericles in the passage I quoted above from the Funeral Oration, Thucydides makes a misogynistic contrast between male and female virtues—indeed, male and female natures—at key moments he inverts the superiority so that female virtues become a standpoint from which to view and criticise male ones.

Let me conclude this section with a note on the workings of Thucydidean narrative. The key passages I have discussed are not only each presented in an excursus from the main war narrative, all are spoken by a voice which is not the narrator's. The indirect speech of Themistocles addresses Admetus' wife, and verse quotations describe the Delian chorus and Archedike. In the main narrative of the *Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides adopts a narrative persona which is distant, rational, understated, and self-consciously a performance.[86] He does not use this persona, for example, in the Archaeology.[87] But where he does adopt it in the main narrative, the result is that every slip and breakage gains an unprecedented energy.[88] This breakage may involve an explicit intervention by the narrative voice itself (usually a 'summing-up' statement). Or it may involve a sudden intensification of the prose or of the image

[84] See Stahl (2003) 1–11, reading Thucydides' portrayal of the tyrannicide as a succession of misunderstandings and mistakes which lead to unforeseen and unwanted outcomes (this he argues is representative of how all historical events happen according to Thucydides).

[85] On Thucydides' praise of the tyranny and its interpretive significance see n. 63 above.

[86] This has received considerable scholarly attention: see n. 21.

[87] Rood (2006) 240–2 draws attention to the cluster of uses of the first person in that part of the text.

[88] See Gribble (1998) on Thucydides' interventions, though he tends to over-emphasise their historical purpose at the expense of their dramatic one—see Hornblower (1987) 35 on tragic *akribeia*; Stahl (2003) 129–38 on the importance for Thucydides of the innate tragic quality of terrible events. *Pace* Rood (2006) 248–9, who cautions against overstating the reach of the tragic mode in the text.

contemplated.[89] Alternatively—as here—it can mean the introduction of a different voice to convey something without compromising the narrative performance. For the reader, what is essential when grappling with Thucydides is to avoid surrendering the text to its master-narrative. The *Peloponnesian War* is polyvocal, and each voice is a different entry into the text. Some of these voices are loud, some are dampened—and some of the most important are just echoes.

III

Twice women join the fighting within cities: in Plataea during the outbreak of war when together with the slaves they attack the Thebans from the roof throwing stones and bits of pottery (2.4.2),[90] and in Corcyra when the women of the *demos* join in the fight against the oligarchic faction by throwing pottery from their houses 'with great daring … holding their ground in a fashion contrary to their nature' (3.74.1: *τολμηρῶς … παρὰ φύσιν ὑπομένουσαι τὸν θόρυβον*). The second of these is part of an extreme episode whose culmination has the remark that by destroying people's daily welfare war makes them brutal: it is a 'violent teacher' (3.82.2: *βίαιος διδάσκαλος*). Thucydides emphasises how the women of Corcyra, buoyed by the situation into acts of violence, in a certain sense divest themselves of femininity and become masculine.

In both scenes, Plataea and Corycra, women stand on houses using makeshift projectiles as weapons.[91] Loraux has argued that this indicates how the deconstruction of gender roles on which these moments are based is limited, how there is always a line they do not cross that distinguishes the 'real' place of men and women in this world.[92] 'Real' is a helpful label in this context because it clarifies that the text has a non-real or symbolic level: with the boundaries of the 'real' distinction between men and women secure, the text can engage in a play of ideas. At this other level, the masculine interpretation of the women's behaviour is obvious; conversely, there is no reason to interpret the aspects of supposedly female nature and characteristically feminine

[89] Examples of intense prose include the *stasis* description (3.82–5), and battles (e.g., 7.43–4). Such passages might have been performance pieces, speculates Hornblower (1991–2008) I.478—but they do not necessarily need to have been. For an intense image see the description of water, earth, and Athenian blood mixing together on the Assinarus River (7.84.4; on water and destruction in Thucydides see Vivian (2021)). On Thucydides' stylistic alternation see Joho (2022).

[90] Another woman gives some of the Thebans an axe with which to open the gates and escape (Thuc. 2.4.5).

[91] Loraux (1995) 235: 'Women cannot be given the weapons of the *andres*'.

[92] Loraux (1995) 233–5.

behaviour represented in the *Peloponnesian War* as exclusively feminine. In Corcyra the more brutal aspects of masculine nature and behaviours are shown to be possible feminine behaviours.[93] The limit that Loraux identifies permits a representation that is not strictly bound by it. Indeed, to the extent that these scenes may have provoked horror or anxiety for an ancient audience to contemplate, it is precisely because they raise the prospect of a female masculinity with no limits of reimposed femininity. Although this is not an explicit possibility contemplated by Thucydides (as it is by Socrates in the *Republic*, for example, where he includes women among the guardians and warriors in his city-state), it is an implicit force within the scene.

In a chapter called, 'Why was Diotima a Woman?' David Halperin rejects interpretations that characterise the *Symposium*'s wise teacher (and mouthpiece for Plato's doctrine) purely as a non-masculine or anti-masculine subject.[94] He claims that Plato is highlighting the distance between his own philosophical claims and contemporary Athenian masculine identity and ethics, as well as the specific ways in which his philosophy aligns with aspects of feminine identity and ethics. Diotima's femininity is a very striking intrusion into the highly masculine sphere of the sympotic dialogue.[95] The erotic vision she outlines is 'not hierarchical but reciprocal … not acquisitive but creative'.[96] None of this diminishes the extent to which the figure of Diotima is, in the last analysis, male—created by and for men amid internal conversations between males. But it does put the text's the politics of gender in a more interesting and complex light. In the examples discussed, the representation of women by Thucydides is comparable to that of Diotima in the *Symposium*.[97] From a patriarchal position, in which women are inscribed as Other, both Plato and Thucydides represent this Other in a way that allows us readers to challenge aspects of the prevailing masculine ideology. It is true that, unlike Socrates, Thucydides does not sit down and take lessons from Diotima. But all the same, contrary to Loraux's claim, the virtues of several of Thucydides' women are represented as possible male virtues. Men like Themistocles and the Homeric speaker do not lose their masculinity as they enter female society to win the approval of a woman—nor perhaps do they even lose their dominance—but

[93] An analogy may be possible with the Bakhtinian concept of the 'Carnivalesque', in which a sort of contained subversion or abolition of normal hierarchies (contained by place and/or time—such as during a festival—or genre) serves to reinforce those hierarchies in normal life. See Bakhtin (1984a), (1984b).

[94] Halperin (1990) 113–52.

[95] Halperin (1990) 129: 'the maximum possible contrast'.

[96] Halperin (1990) 130.

[97] Cf. duBois (1988) 171 on 'Plato's desire to appropriate maternity to the male philosopher, to incorporate into the portrait of the philosopher the very metaphors traditionally used to represent the female in classical culture'.

something changes as they move from the ordinary male world of valour, force, and self-inflation to an attitude of self-effacement, suggestiveness and vulnerability.

This brings us back to the questions of how feminist readers can enter this text, and indeed whether they should. By framing the issue as one of 'Women in Thucydides' and moreover one of 'Exclusion', feminist scholarship makes the *Peloponnesian War* a text with no entry-point. They cede the ground as if somehow, unlike Plato or Herodotus (both from the same patriarchal Athenian milieu), Thucydides cannot be for feminists. It is worth noting that Thucydides' biographer in late antiquity, Marcellinus, records (only to dismiss on misogynistic grounds) that some believed the eighth book of the *Peloponnesian War* was written by his daughter (Marc. *Thuc.* 43). Nothing else is known about this rumour or its origin. Like some of the women in the text, Thucydides' unnamed daughter evokes realities and possibilities that may be imagined but not accessed.[98] But perhaps, like those women, she should be treated as an entry-point through which to examine the text from another perspective, as a store of possibilities.[99] This may include a perspective from which the standing of the male reader inside the text, which Loraux attacks and by which she feels attacked, is not as comfortable as it may first seem. It is one from which they are revealed to inhabit a masculine world where gender is a shaping force.

From that perspective, and against Loraux's claim of a hard fantasy/reality distinction in the text's portrayal of masculinised women, it must be emphasised how much the *Peloponnesian War* underlines the role of fantasy in constituting the 'real' male-dominated environment it depicts. The idealised and erotic image of the male soldier-citizen and the city for which he fights, in Pericles' Funeral Oration, is subjected to the harsh contrast of the plague and Pericles' last speech; the distortion of Cleon's rhetoric and policies; the parodic refrain of Nicias' speeches at the end of the Sicilian campaign in Book 7.[100] In these cases scholars have directly linked mistakes on the Athenian side and aspects of the Funeral Oration's ideology. The indiscriminate and random aspect of warfare is contrasted with the masculinity of hoplites in the aftermath of Sphacteria (4.40). Thucydides narrates an incident long afterwards in which someone from the Athenian side taunts a Spartan who had fought and surrendered on the island, asking if only the Spartans who had been killed

[98] Hornblower (2004) 102 imagines Thucydides writing his daughter a *partheneion*.

[99] See Henry (1995) 128 on Aspasia: 'I believe we must resist the impulse, however understandable, to fill in the many blanks at the same time as we remain open to the possibilities for her life'.

[100] See Connor (1984) 52–78 (on Book 2); Wohl (2002) 73–123, 198–204 (on Cleon and Nicias); Joho (2017b) (on Sicily as a kind of return of the plague).

were *kalos kagathos*.[101] And 'in response he said it would be an amazing *atraktos*, by which he meant "arrow", that could pick out the good people, which was his way of saying those killed were just the ones who happened to be struck by the stones and ranged weapons' (4.40.2: *ἀπεκρίνατο αὐτῷ πολλοῦ ἂν ἄξιον εἶναι τὸν ἄτρακτον, λέγων τὸν οἰστόν, εἰ τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς διεγίγνωσκε, δήλωσιν ποιούμενος ὅτι ὁ ἐντυγχάνων τοῖς τε λίθοις καὶ τοξεύμασι διεφθείρετο*). Hornblower notes that *atraktos*, 'spindle', has feminine connotations and is probably intended to be derogatory.[102] Yet, like Pericles, in this case it is the chauvinistic Spartan whose hoplite mode of warfare has turned out to be inadequate and unrealistic, even fatal, as it does continually throughout the text.[103] Thucydides narrates the shock among Greeks generally, and collapse of Spartan confidence, as their reputation for extraordinary strength, discipline, and military effectiveness turns out to be something of a bluff (4.40.1, 4.55).[104]

But just as Thucydides does not limit his portrayal of Athenian power at Athens and places it in the context of the entire development of Greek cities, so his text's criticisms of Periclean and Spartan hoplite masculinity are linked to a suggestive disillusionment towards male excellence and striving.[105] This can be shown with reference to two examples of the narrative treatment of the language and concepts of masculinity.

First—the concept of *kalokagathia*, which was fundamental to the beauty and ethical standards of hoplite masculinity of this period; the term is evoked by Pericles in the Funeral Oration to praise the war dead (2.42.4, 43.1), and stated in an indirect speech by Phrynichus to refer to the Athenian oligarchs (8.48.6).[106] Throughout the text evocations of this word and its derivatives have

[101] An ethical and beauty standard for hoplite men—see below.

[102] Hornblower (1991–2008) II.196.

[103] Cf. Rood (1998) 9: as the war progresses, 'the shove of hoplite against hoplite, and reliance on mere strength of numbers, begin to seem strangely outmoded'.

[104] Greenwood (2021) 5–6 notes that this happens even during the battle of Sphacteria itself as the Athenians gradually become more emboldened (cf. Thuc. 4.34).

[105] Another dimension of Pericles' masculinity is his disavowal of the (feminine) earth in favour of the city and the sea: see duBois (1988) 84–5; and Vivian (2021) on the ambivalent use of imagery related to earth's opposite, water.

[106] A very common term in this period with various implications, often used with a self-consciousness of cliché. See Bourriot (1995). Besides this it also seems to have been a political label or slogan for the oligarchic factions in Greek cities. Thucydides uses it this way in the indirect speech by Phrynichus and clearly flags its sense (8.48.6—see Bourriot (1995) I.114–15, 178–88). Often, as in the examples discussed below, he activates the sense of the term by using one of the words (often as a superlative) or by using both words a short distance from each other.

connotations of inadequacy, pointlessness, and even impotence and illusion.[107] A blunder by Demosthenes in Aetolia causes the Athenians to be picked off by the long-ranged weapons of the Aetolians until they break ranks, run away, and are massacred—with tragic irony Thucydides says that 'truly, they were the best men out of all the Athenians who were killed in this war' (3.98.4: *οὗτοι βέλτιστοι δὴ ἄνδρες ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ τῷδε ἐκ τῆς Ἀθηναίων πόλεως διεφθάρησαν*).[108] When a Peloponnesian force gathers to fight the Argives, and the Argive commanders make a treaty with Agis so that the battle does not take place, Thucydides writes that the allies held Agis responsible 'because truly this [Peloponnesian force] was the most beautiful Greek army ever assembled up to that time' (5.60.3: *στρατόπεδον γὰρ δὴ τοῦτο κάλλιστον Ἑλληνικὸν τῶν μέχρι τοῦδε ξυνῆλθεν*).[109] The Argives, angered for their part because 'they believed that from a situation never so beautiful they had allowed the Spartans to escape: since the battle would have been in front of their own city and with many good allies' (5.60.5: *νομίζοντες κἀκεῖνοι μὴ ἂν σφίσι ποτὲ κάλλιον παρασχὸν Λακεδαιμονίους διαπεφευγέναι· πρός τε γὰρ τῇ σφετέρᾳ πόλει καὶ μετὰ πολλῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν ξυμμάχων τὸν ἀγῶνα ἂν γίγνεσθαι*), are furious and stone their general Thrasyllus until he seeks refuge at an altar, then they impose a fine (5.60.6). There is something comic about how the most beautiful Greek army was dispersed without fighting; but more substantively the episode demonstrates the force and danger of appearance, since on both sides, beauty creates a lust for battle that turns resentful and violent when it is thwarted.[110]

[107] Compare de Bakker (2015), who claims that by Herodotus *agathia* is represented as an insufficient and sometimes harmful personal quality unless tempered and supplemented by other virtues.

[108] This passage has troubled commentators who have looked for in vain a reason why this group of Athenian hoplites should be objectively the best. The word *ἄνδρες*—'men'—points towards a more ethical and emotive reading of the adjective based probably on a sense of *kalokagathia*. On the use of δή emphatically with the superlative in this passage and the next, cf. Denniston (1953) 207 ('a favourite of Thucydides').

[109] See Dover's note in *HCT* IV.85: he downplays the force of appearance but admits the term is striking. In fact the point that their appearance has force *per se* is conveyed to the reader in the succeeding sentence by a list of peoples in the army introduced with a verb of sight (5.60.3: *ὤφθη*). On the aesthetics of such lists see Kirk (2021).

[110] Of the Spartan army at 5.60.3, Thucydides writes that 'they seemed worthy to fight not only against the Argive alliance but whomever else they might meet' (*ἀξιόμαχοι δοκοῦντες εἶναι οὐ τῇ Ἀργείων μόνον ξυμμαχίᾳ ἀλλὰ κἂν ἄλλῃ ἔτι προσγενομένῃ*). Hornblower (1991–2008) III.157 compares this passage with the departure of the Athenian fleet for Sicily (6.30–1), which Thucydides calls 'the most expensive and beautiful (*euprepēs*) of all those up to that time' (6.31.1: *παρασκευὴ … πολυτελεστάτη δὴ καὶ εὐπρεπεστάτη τῶν ἐς ἐκεῖνον τὸν χρόνον ἐγένετο*). The avoidance of *kalokagathia* words may have to do with how this is a naval force rather than a collection of hoplites: cf. Hunt (1998) 83–101; Strauss (2000); Arrington (2015) esp. 104–5 (inc. notes).

Kalokagathia in Thucydides has an ironic twist that shows the inadequacy and, in some cases, even the danger of the virtue it signifies.

Second—in the massacre of the Athenians quoted above Thucydides calls the massacred Athenians in Aetolia the 'best *men*' (*βέλτιστοι δὴ ἄνδρες*), so now I will discuss the second part of this phrase by examining briefly the virtue of *andreia* in Thucydides's narrative, which is sometimes translated as courage or bravery.[111] *Andreia* is an important quality for hoplites in battle, and helps the Spartans to triumph at Mantinea despite their lack of experience (5.72.2).[112] Even still, the *Peloponnesian War*'s characterisation of *andreia* is more ambivalent than has been recognised. In military matters it is a necessary but insufficient virtue for success and is regularly opposed to thinking and knowledge or experience (6.69.1: *ἐπιστήμη*; 5.72.2; 6.72.2: *ἐμπειρία*). The opposition is most pronounced in the antilogy of speeches by Brasidas and Phormio, respectively emphasising *andreia* and experience, before the battle of Naupactus (2.87–9).[113] Although both sides put up trophies after the battle (2.92.4–5), morally and strategically it is a clear Athenian victory (2.92).[114] In the Funeral Oration, Pericles praises the *andreia* of the Athenians (2.39.4) but soon follows by insisting also on the quality of their insights and calculations (2.40.3). One of the arcs of Books 6–7 is how the Syracusans, who begin only with *andreia*, must gain *epistēmē* to defeat the Athenians—their courage alone is not enough.[115] Hermocrates, the most talented of all the leaders of Syracuse according to Thucydides, has both sufficient *empeiria* and outstanding *andreia* (6.72.2). The final battle in the Great Harbour of Syracuse (7.70–1), is decided partly by

[111] See also n. 113 below.

[112] The ability of the Spartans here to get by on *andreia* alone is an exception that proves the rule: it is of fundamental interpretive importance that the Battle of Mantinea is a completely traditional hoplite battle and therefore takes place on terms highly skewed towards the Spartans. Even the choice to fight the battle is an Athenian blunder (cf. 1.141.6).

[113] Cf. Brasidas: 'Knowledge … if it has *andreia* will also have the recall in a dire situation to put into practice what it has learned, but without courage no learning can stand up to danger' (2.87.4: *ἡ ἐπιστήμη … ἀνδρείαν μὲν ἔχουσα καὶ μνήμην ἕξει ἐν τῷ δεινῷ ἐπιτελεῖν ἃ ἔμαθεν, ἄνευ δὲ εὐψυχίας οὐδεμία τέχνη πρὸς τοὺς κινδύνους ἰσχύει*). Phormio: 'Many armies have been defeated by lesser ones because of a lack of experience, and sometimes because of a lack of courage' (2.89.7: *πολλὰ δὲ καὶ στρατόπεδα ἤδη ἔπεσεν ὑπ' ἐλασσόνων τῇ ἀπειρίᾳ, ἔστι δὲ ἃ καὶ τῇ ἀτολμίᾳ*). He goes on to insist the Athenians have both experience and courage.

[114] See the two discussions of the sequence culminating in the battle of Naupactus by de Romilly (1956) 138–50 and Stahl (2003) 83–95, which provide a very good point of comparison between their respective interpretations as a whole. On Brasidas's speech see also Debnar (2001) 174–5.

[115] In a key moment during the first battle (6.70.1), thunder and lightning and rain fall down from the sky, striking terror in the less experienced soldiers. Thus even courage is depleted by a lack of experience.

Syracusan improvements to their ships and how the narrowness of the space prevents the Athenians from their normal manoeuvres, a fact very much highlighted in the preceding narrative (cf. 7.35.1–5, 49.2, 62.1, 67.2–3, 70.4).[116] *Andreia* is thus not only insufficient without experience and knowledge, but is very probably the inferior of the two, and *andreia* even poses a risk if unchecked by these. Thus the speech of Archidamus in Book 1, where he insists that it should not be regarded as *anandria*—a lack of *andreia*—to delay fighting (1.83.1), implies that striving towards *andreia* may have the negative result of causing people to make rash or risky choices without thinking things through. This possibility leads into self-destructive catastrophe during the *stasis* at Corcyra: 'Irrational recklessness was considered partner-loving manliness' (3.82.4: *τόλμα μὲν γὰρ ἀλόγιστος ἀνδρεία φιλέταιρος ἐνομίσθη*).[117] This passage presents us with the spectacle of *andreia* without reason, which is to say of harmful or destructive *andreia*, performed without an underpinning sense of the right thing to do. Thus, the narrative treatment of *andreia* in the *Peloponnesian War* suggests it is a virtue with admirable components, but deficient and possibly destructive on its own or in misplaced contexts. It should finally be noted that *andreia* is a virtue with somewhat local application: it applies in situations of war. There is nothing in the examples above to suggest that war is a good thing of itself, or that there is need of *andreia* in peacetime except as an insurance in case of war.

War is a sphere of exclusively male performance. Thucydides tells us in a long eulogy after Pericles' death that, while he lived, Athens was 'a democracy only in name, actually ruled by its foremost man' (2.65.9: *λόγῳ μὲν δημοκρατία, ἔργῳ δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ πρώτου ἀνδρὸς ἀρχή*). But when he died (2.65.10):

> *οἱ δὲ ὕστερον ἴσοι μᾶλλον αὐτοὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους ὄντες καὶ ὀρεγόμενοι τοῦ πρῶτος ἕκαστος γίγνεσθαι ἐτράποντο καθ' ἡδονὰς τῷ δήμῳ καὶ τὰ πράγματα ἐνδιδόναι.*

[116] See also Liotsakis (2017) 75–8.

[117] Scholars have attempted to rehabilitate the word *andreia* in this passage by drawing overly schematic distinctions (Loraux (2009); Bassi (2003) 31–7). Bassi claims (31 n. 18) that each pair in the opposition consists of an initial good thing which is degraded by a second bad thing. But as I have shown above, a key point about *andreia* in Thucydides is that it has further need of *logos* and *logismos* to be effective and which it does not itself supply. The problem is to some extent immanent in the concept. To draw a line between 'good' or 'true' *andreia* and 'bad' or 'false' *andreia* is to miss their natural unity. On this passage in general see Allison (1997) 168–72; Price (2001) 39–59. On *andreia* in general see Rosen and Sluiter (2003). Balot (2014) studies the concept in Thucydides without addressing the issue of gender.

> Those [men] who came afterwards were more equal to each other: each [man] sought to be foremost, so they arranged things according to whatever pleased the *demos* and gave up control of things.

The masculine gender of the subjects, all too easily elided in English, carries an important part of the sense of this passage.[118] The period after Pericles' death leads to a crisis of masculinity, where the impulse to be 'the foremost man' causes Athenian men to compete for the affection of the *demos* and lose control of the management of civic affairs. Against this destructive masculinity, to which so many of the text's named and unnamed characters fall victim, Thucydides' portrayals of women hold something desirable: an alternative vision of social relations, including a different understanding of the relation between the weaker and the stronger.

The phrasing of my title recalls Connor's classic article, 'A Post Modernist Thucydides?'[119] In that piece Connor was not trying to ask if the ancient Athenian was a post-modernist. His point was that post-modernist readers were starting to find a way into the text: people were realising that, to some extent, Thucydides would always be a creation of the readers who interpret him, and this creation was in the process of being transformed.[120] At Connor's time of writing the old notions were breaking down and a post-modernist Thucydides was gradually emerging, alongside new methodologies to understand him (study of narrative threads and techniques, study of individual words and concepts).[121] The same cannot be said for a feminist Thucydides. Although discussions on women and gender in the text have gradually proliferated, they have not substantially altered the text's interpretation. Sometimes they have even served to reinforce the old Thucydides whom Connor pronounced terminal—'the self-effacing scientific historian, whose principal characteristic was cool detachment and whose goal was "objectivity"'.[122] But my endeavour here has been to show the possibility of a way of reading that would seek to reconcile aspects of this text's consciousness with a feminist one. It is very difficult to know in advance what methodologies or

[118] Cf. Billows (2023) 102: 'the state was always perceived by ancient Greeks themselves as a male collective—*hoi Athenaioi*, *hoi Korinthioi*, *hoi Milesioi*: the hoplites were in origin the State, and the developing city-state thus came to be closely identified with the hoplite class who formed its backbone'. Billows revives and defends the idea that a 'hoplite revolution' in warfare was the basis of the political forms that emerged in Greek *polis*-society (see esp. 82–102). Note the tendency of speakers to refer to their audience as *andres* (e.g., Thuc. 1.53.2: *ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι*).

[119] Connor (1977).

[120] Connor (1977) esp. 289–94.

[121] Connor (1977) 295–6.

[122] Connor (1977) 289.

results this might produce. Unlike Connor's, this present essay does not sketch out a way of reading the entire text; its analysis is partial rather than holistic. But for Thucydidean scholarship, as I have tried to show, a feminist approach raises the possibility of richer interpretations of the text. And for feminist scholarship it may lead—to repeat something I quoted earlier—to 'a more fully developed definition of the [text's] sex/gender system'.[123]

At the end of an essay I quoted earlier, David Halperin steps back and observes that he has 'reproduced, in effect, the traditional male strategy of speaking *about* women by speaking *for* women'.[124] I could say the same about this paper: as a man, claiming a feminist stance, I have proceeded to refute various female and feminist interpreters while arguing for a position which is my own; beginning from the women at the text's margins, this paper has gradually become yet one more discussion of the men who are at its centre. Halperin continues: 'I have done so in an effort … to suggest that whenever there is a question of understanding women, it is usually *men*, not women, who … are themselves the problem—who constitute, that is, the very enigma they think they are trying to penetrate'.[125] I hope to have done something of this as well, by showing that Thucydides establishes a gender boundary in similar terms to Plato, where the female outside glimpses a way of examining and critiquing the male inside—but the 'outside' as depicted here is also male, the female subject is not present in the text, she is an absence evoked. Can she be recovered? I am not sure. But beyond Halperin's claims I have tried to show there is a sophistication and even a sense of urgency to how the *Peloponnesian War* deals with issues of gender which has not been recognised. Of the genre of historiography as a whole, Loraux writes that 'there is no one more faithful than the historian to the orthodoxy of representing the polis as a men's club'.[126] There can be no doubt of this. But the fact that Thucydides writes mostly about men does not exclude feminist approaches; rather, it is an aspect of the point: they are *men*. The *Peloponnesian War* is partly about gender as a medium and a problem.

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[123] Adapted from Rubin (1975) 159.

[124] Halperin (1990) 149.

[125] Halperin (1990).

[126] Loraux (1995) 228.

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