

READING THE RISE OF PISISTRATUS: HERODOTUS 1.56-68¹

Especially Sophocles and Herodotus were passionately interested in the manifold aspects of ‘power’, which they interpreted through myth and history, using these in their full topical potential to analyze questions of great importance to their audiences.²

This paper analyzes Herodotus’ story of Pisistratus’ rise to tyranny over the Athenians in these terms.³ The story is mythic history in the sense that it is largely made up of conventional narrative episodes, sometimes with supernatural elements. Yet the contexts of power in which Herodotus sets it determine its shape,⁴ and the contextual reading of the story reveals allusions to contemporary debates and realities.⁵ This contextual analysis seems more productive than attempts to explain the story in isolation as the product of Athenian propaganda in a narrow sense.⁶

The immediate context for the story of the rise of Pisistratus and of the rise of Sparta that partners it is the comparison of their ancestral power. Herodotus investigates their origins and their power in the time of Croesus, comparing the Athenians under tyranny with the Spartans under Lycurgan *eunomia*. Croesus in his search for the ‘most powerful’ of the Greeks as his ally against Persia found out that Athens and Sparta were from their origins leaders respectively of the Ionians and the Dorians (1.56.1), but that their

¹ I am grateful to the *Histos* team for detailed comments and practical suggestions on presentation.

² Raaflaub (1994) 121, also 144-4.

³ Gray (1995) touches on the question of a standard typology of the tyrant, arguing that the profile of any one tyrant is dictated by the context in which he is presented.

⁴ Buxton (1994), sub-titled *The Contexts of Mythology*, has recently emphasized the impact of context on more obvious kinds of myth.

⁵ Davies (1984) 87-110, Vansina (1985), Raaflaub (1988) and Thomas (1989) and (1992) agree that contemporary interests are a major influence on any developing tradition about the past. Moles (1996) 259 n.6 summarizes the debate about prospective allusion in Herodotus to events post 478 BC, particularly the Athenian empire, and then contributes to it

⁶ Lavelle (1993) 87-106 has argued that the story has been shaped by the Alcmaeonids, who sought to clear Megacles from the charge of collaboration, but he reads the story in isolation from the context; his interpretation of the story conventions as Alcmaeonid invention designed to conceal their complicity with tyrants also sits uneasily with the view of myth as significant in its own right. I comment directly on his interpretation at the end of the paper

eunomia had made the Spartans militarily stronger (1.65.1-2); he chose the Spartans as his allies (1.69.1).

Croesus thus conducts a mirror image of Herodotus' own inquiry as historian. His comparison is a formal digression. Yet a digression implies choice,⁷ and Herodotus chooses to make the comparison his first account of the history of the mainland Greeks. This is because of its resonance. Herodotus' contemporary audiences had seen the two *poleis* compete for supremacy throughout the fifth century and were now living through the early stages of the Second Peloponnesian War.⁸

Herodotus' location of power in Sparta immediately makes the comparison controversial. For the contemporary *epitaphios*, which was one of the standard expressions of Athenian national consciousness,⁹ argued for the military superiority of ancestral Athens over Sparta. The Athenians had allegedly rescued the sons of Heracles, military leaders and founders of the Spartan kingship, from the violent pride of Eurystheus. They had defeated the Amazons when they invaded Attica and had secured the burial of the dead of the expedition of the Seven against Thebes.

Herodotus himself knew the material contained in the *epitaphios* tradition and is challenging it, not only in omitting the earlier achievement of ancestral Athens from his first account of their power and in choosing to include the tyranny and make it the beginning of his Athenian narrative, but also in using this account to show that the Athenians came from barbaric origins, that their military achievement was inferior to the Spartan and that they were not continuously democratic but tyrannized.

The tradition made a strong connexion between the Athenians' military strength and their constitution, which it claimed to have been democratic since the kingship of Theseus. Its claims also included the superior nobility

⁷ Gould (1989) 51-3 suggests that digressions can eventually float free of their context. I shall argue that this digression remains firmly focused on its context. I take it that Herodotus was in a position to choose the beginning of his mainland Greek narrative. He dismisses mythical Athenian achievements and does not even choose to digress into their condition under the laws of Solon. He merely notes these in passing (1.29.1). Moles (1996) 262-270 has argued that there are contemporary resonances in Solon. This may be so, but Herodotus gives no detailed explanation of his political career as he does for Pisistratus, perhaps because this would reveal earlier *eunomia* in Athens.

⁸ The nature of the audience(s) and the date of 'publication' have been much discussed: Moles (1996) n.5, 9. The date seems to be post 426 BC. The implications of my argument in this paper are for a mainly Athenian audience, or audiences aware of Athenian traditions.

⁹ Loraux (1986) has written the definitive work: 132-220 are particularly relevant. The *epitaphios* may have been created out of the *agon* between Athens and Sparta in the period after the Persian Wars. See also Thomas (1989) 196-237.

and Greekness of autochthony, the colonization of Asia, and superior Attic culture and wisdom. It was largely silent about the rise and duration of the tyranny because the latter was a lapse from the myth of continuous democracy and an admission of early weakness and blurred the abrupt and effective transition from myth to Marathon, which was the beginning of 'historical' greatness.¹⁰

Herodotus elsewhere also diminishes the earlier achievement of Athens.¹¹ It might appear at first sight that he is challenging such expressions of ancestral superiority in order to humiliate contemporary Athenians, but this paper will demonstrate that his purpose is to show that they rose to their greatness according to the pattern of history he announced in his introduction (1.5). His stories of Athens and Sparta also equate tyranny with community weakness and freedom with community power, and this equation is confirmed in his later diagnosis of the rise of Athens after the liberation from tyranny (e.g. 5.78). The contemporary audience might also perhaps apply the equation of tyranny and weakness to what followed, when the rise of Athens culminated in the development of the Athenian empire, which Pericles in Thucydides 2.63 would bluntly describe as a tyranny.

Herodotus first emphasizes ancestral Athenian weakness in the story of their origins.¹² He takes their claim that they were autochthonous, but uses it to prove that they were barbaric rather than Hellenic and weak rather than strong.¹³ For Croesus discovered that the Doric race was originally Hellenic and the Attic Pelasgic, and that while the former was 'much-wandering', the Attic had 'never yet moved out of its territory in any direction' (1.56.2). The Dorian migrations are described, then Herodotus turns to the language that the Pelasgians spoke (1.57). In an ethnographic tour de force he establishes that modern Pelasgi do not speak Greek, but a common barbaric language. His conclusion follows: that if the Pelasgi, who were the aboriginal people of Greece, were of a common race and spoke a common barbaric language, then if the Attic race was also aboriginal and Pelasgic (as it claimed), it must have originally spoken the Pelasgic language and learned Greek only when it joined the Hellenic race, which had meanwhile wandered into the Pel-

¹⁰ Loraux (1986) 192-3, 207-9, 215-6. Isocrates mentions Pisistratus only as the single break in the long tradition of popular government, the exception that proved the boast: *Panath.*148.

¹¹ Other signs of Herodotus' awareness of and challenge to the *epitaphios* are noted in the text. Moles (1996) 268-9 argues that Herodotus also challenged Pericles' boast of Athenian self-sufficiency in his *epitaphios* as reported in Thucydides.

¹² Loraux (1986) does not mention this challenge to the tradition and Asheri (1988) on 1.56-8 sees Herodotus' image of Athens as partly positive.

¹³ Cp. Loraux (1986) 148-50.

ponnese. The Hellenic race on the other hand always spoke Greek. It began weak, but grew in strength as more of the aboriginal people joined their language group; whereas the Pelasgians never became strong (1.58).

Herodotus regularly uses ethnography to make images of the nations who possess them.¹⁴ Here he constructs an analysis that makes language the distinctive feature of Greekness at the expense of Athens. He also addresses the ethnic division between Dorian/Ionian which was of contemporary interest in the period leading up to and into the Peloponnesian War.¹⁵ The Athenians are diminished for having learned Greek from the Spartans, and did not become strong until that time. Herodotus appears to be a special exponent of the theory of pan-Pelasgian autochthony which underpins his argument.¹⁶ He certainly seems to want to impress his research and the cogency of his argumentation on his audience: 'I cannot *exactly* say what language the Pelasgians spoke. But *if* one must infer from (the characteristics of modern Pelasgians) I say *if* one must infer from these ... then the Pelasgians spoke barbarian. And *if* all the Pelasgians were like them, the Attic race, being Pelasgic, learned the Greek language when they made the change to being Greek'.

We come next to the detail of the story of Pisistratus, which explains the weakness of the Athenians under their tyranny. Herodotus writes a coherent account of Pisistratus' rise, using a series of conventional episodes. I summarize them for convenience; they will be treated in detail below.

Pisistratus' father Hippocrates receives the conventional warning of the birth of the tyrant in the strange activity of his sacrificial stew at the sanctuary of Olympia. Chilon the Spartan interprets, issuing a triple warning that he should not marry, or should divorce his wife, or should disown his son. Hippocrates does not obey and fathers Pisistratus. The warning contains the first of a series of triple units that structure the story. Pisistratus then grows up to form a third political party to match Lycurgus and Megacles and rises from this situation of stasis to become tyrant.

His rise is a variation on the conventional motif of the three brothers, the youngest (and weakest) of whom rises to be tyrant; Pisistratus is weaker than his rivals because he claims the men beyond the hills as his supporters, whereas they have the plain and coast. His rise includes three bids for tyr-

¹⁴ Hartog (1988) emphasises the role of Scythian customs in the creation of their image. See also Said and Rossellini (1978).

¹⁵ Alty (1982).

¹⁶ Asheri (1988) 299. Herodotus' version of Athenian origins is repeated elsewhere: 6.138, 8.44. Gomme (1945) 94-6 sees his inconsistencies (6.53, 7.94-5, 5.57-61, 2.52) as the result of original but incoherent research. The story of Lemnos gives due weight to the linguistic difference between later Athenians and Pelasgians: 6.137-40.

anny and a series of conventional deceptions. He takes advantage of the stasis to perpetrate his first conventional deception and achieve his first tyranny - pretending that his enemies have wounded him, asking for bodyguards, and then seizing the acropolis with them. He is driven out by the coalition of Lycurgus and Megacles, but returns from exile with a second conventional deception to secure his second tyranny - dressing a woman as Athena and claiming that the goddess was leading him back in person into her own acropolis, with the assistance of Megacles, on condition that he marry Megacles' daughter. He is driven out a second time when he fails to keep his agreement and Megacles returns to his partnership with Lycurgus. Pisistratus comes back to impose his third and final tyranny through sheer military force and an army of foreign troops, but ably assisted by the conventional encouragement of a seer and another conventional deception on the battlefield.

The coherent structure of Herodotus' account gives the impression that he is deliberately selecting his detail. He knows indeed that Callias was alleged to have purchased the confiscated property of Pisistratus when he went into exile (6.121), but he omits it in the account of the rise. He also omits Pisistratus' later success in taking Sigeum (5.94.1). These episodes might have ruined the coherence of the story. Equally they might not have served his theme, which is community weakness under tyranny.

It is immediately significant that the impression of weakness in the ethnographic introduction is carried into the story of Pisistratus and the continuing comparison with Sparta. Herodotus says that the Hellenic race is marked off from the barbarians by virtue of its 'greater cleverness' (*δεξιότερον*) and that the Athenians had a 'supreme reputation' among them for 'wisdom' (*σοφίαν*—presumably after they learned Greek), but that they completely belied this reputation when they were deceived by the 'very silly trick' of the false Athena into giving Pisistratus his second tyranny (1.60.3). Their stupidity suggests incomplete emergence from Pelasgic and barbarian roots. The tradition of the *epitaphios* made a feature of Athenian cleverness, which is here abruptly dispelled.¹⁷ The Spartan story confirms the superior wisdom of Hellenic Sparta; Lichas secures the Peloponnese for the Spartans by interpreting an oracle through luck and *sophia* (1.68.1). The other Spartans remain cautious, wanting to see the bones before accepting that he has really discovered them (1.69.5). Yet their very caution contrasts with the credulity of the Athenians.

Herodotus' introductory description of the Attic race as 'held in check and torn apart' under the tyrant Pisistratus (*κατεχόμενον τε καὶ διεσπασμένον*

¹⁷ Pericles in his *epitaphios* claims that the Athenians are a community of lovers of *sophia*: Thuc. 2.40.1. Isocrates, *Panegyricus* 47-50, using the *topoi* of the *epitaphios*, follows suit.

1.59.1) also points to Athenian weakness.¹⁸ He uses this language again when he describes in the fifth book how, in the course of one memorable day, the Athenians counter-invaded and defeated their neighbours Chalcis and Boeotia, who had attacked Attica in concert with the Spartans. He there attributes their strength to their release from tyranny, alleging their previous lack of military enterprise and explaining it as the result of tyranny: ‘while they were under tyrants the Athenians were no better in war than their neighbours, because they were held in check (*κατεχόμενοι*) and played the coward (*ἐθελοκάκειον*) like men working for a master (*δεσπότη ἔργαζόμενοι*), whereas each man after the liberation worked enthusiastically on behalf of himself’ (5.78).

The equation of tyranny and military weakness recurs after the defeat of Chalcis and Boeotia, which makes the Spartan king Cleomenes want to re-impose Hippias (son of Pisistratus) because ‘if free, Athens would be of equal weight with his own power, but if it were held in check (*κατεχόμενον*) by tyranny, it would be weak and ready to obey him’; he warns that freedom will threaten more than Chalcis and Boeotia if it is allowed to continue (5.91); and Hippias predicts in response the harm that the Athenians will do the Corinthians if he is not restored (5.93: a prophecy that was fulfilled in the First Peloponnesian War). Finally, when Hippias led the Persians to Marathon to assist him in defeating the Athenians and reimposing his tyranny, Miltiades, himself a previous tyrant of the Chersonese, again associated tyranny with weakness and freedom with power; he appealed to Callistratus with the argument that the Athenians knew what they would suffer if they were handed over to Hippias, but stood a chance of becoming the first *polis* in Greece if they remained free (6.109).

Herodotus does not directly explain how tyranny held the Athenians back from military conquest. There is no obvious way in which they play the military coward during Pisistratus’ rise; their working for a master describes their condition once the tyranny had taken proper root, which he leaves unreported. But Thucydides 1.17 illuminates Herodotus’ thought in his own typology of tyranny when he goes beyond the conquest of neighbour states (such as Chalcis and Euboea) and uses ‘held in check’ of the larger repression of imperial military enterprise, which he attributes directly to the tyrant’s pre-occupation with his own interests: ‘those many tyrants in the Greek *poleis* took thought only for themselves, for their person and the in-

¹⁸ Certain translations explain ‘torn apart’ as a reference to the stasis in which Pisistratus made his original bid for power, but it should explain the situation which Croesus found when he made his inquiry after the imposition of tyranny, when the stasis in Athens had been quelled by force. Lavelle (1993) 93 n.20, with bibliography, agrees that ‘torn apart’ refers to the *dysnomia* of tyranny in its own right and not the preceding stasis.

crease of their own household, to maintain their security with all the power they could command'. 'Nothing great was achieved by them, except individually perhaps against their own neighbours and so Greece was for a long time held back (*κατείχετο*, cp. 5.78) from achieving any conspicuous common enterprise'.

Herodotus seems to subscribe to this non-imperialist typology of the tyrant, at least in this story. Pisistratus reflects the pre-occupation with the security of the tyrannical person and household. He is paradoxically prepared to wound his own person in order to obtain the bodyguard that will ensure his security in his first bid for tyranny (1.59.4). Hippocrates' refusal to destroy the issue of his household, in spite of the threat to his community (1.59.1), prefigures Pisistratus' refusal to have children by Megacles' daughter because of the threat to the sons of his already-existing household (1.59.2-3).¹⁹ The presence of his sons at the deciding battle again reminds the reader of the primacy of his household (1.61.3). Tyrannical self-interest also explains Herodotus' remark that the Athenians 'worked in their own interests' after their liberation from tyranny; they had previously been obliged to serve the tyrant's. Military 'slacking' was one manifestation of the consequences.²⁰ Indeed, Herodotus' indication that the Athenians failed to conquer any neighbours *at all* until released from tyranny makes its debilitating non-imperial effects even worse than in Thucydides.²¹

The expressive term 'torn apart' (*δισεσπασμένον*) is also used of the weakening effects of tyranny, which makes people serve tyranny's own narrow interest.²² Thus Plato *Laws* 875a directly associates 'torn apart' with this assertion of the private interests of a master over the community: 'common interest (*κοινόν*) binds, but private interest (*ἴδιον*) tears cities apart (*δισσπᾶ*)', and he adds that the autocrat will always put private interests first. Xenophon offers a model for the career of Pisistratus when he partners military invasion of one's own country with subsequent 'tearing apart' of the laws by a ruler who serves his own interests (*Cyr.* 8.5.25).²³ These interests are his own

¹⁹ The pre-occupation with the tyrannical household is shown in an interesting light in the story of Periander's relations with his sons and daughter (3.48-53): Gray (1995) 368-372.

²⁰ Cp. Hdt. 8.69.2 on the behaviour of the subjects of the Persian Kings.

²¹ The *natural* instinct for power and domination in the Athenians, momentarily repressed under tyranny, is confirmed in Herodotus' story of the conquest of Lemnos, where the children of the captive Athenian mothers learn Greek, then attempt to 'rule' those of Pelasgian mothers: 6.137-40.

²² This is Aristotle's definition of tyranny too: *Pol.* 1295a20-25; 1279b4-10.

²³ Herodotus makes 'Athens' the focus of 'tearing apart' and this is in line with the 'city' in Plato's usage or the 'laws' in Xenophon's. 'Torn apart' could also refer to Pisistratus' alleged exile of the Alcmaeonids and others, which reduced community strength

security (*Hiero* 2.7-18): ‘Private men even when they campaign against a foreign land, after they come home, think that they have security, but tyrants, when they come back to their own city, then they know that they are in the midst of enemies most numerous’ (cp. Plato *Rep.* 571-9);²⁴ (4.9-11): ‘The tyrant’s greatest and most vital expenditures are for ways to guard his own life’; these include bodyguards of paid foreigners (5.3-4). Plato *Republic* 575 c-e offers another model when he says that the tyrant will subject his community with friends from inside and out if his people are not ‘silly’ enough to give him the control he seeks.

As the discussion of the language of weakness and strength at 1.59.1 and 5.78 shows, the rise of Athens is a second context for the rise of Pisistratus. Herodotus looks forward to his account of the rise of Athens from tyrannized weakness to the strength that liberation gave her from the very beginning of his story. He offers a dynamic view of her development, arguing for early ancestral weakness under tyranny in order to evaluate the strength that the Athenians showed after gaining their freedom. He draws attention to the dynamics of power when he says in his introduction that he needed to deal with towns both great and small, since the small have in the course of time become great and the great have become small (1.5).

This pattern applies to the future as well as to the past; when Herodotus refers to the cities that ‘were’ (rather than ‘are’) great ‘in my time’, he is inviting a future reader to consider that in his time, they may no longer be so.²⁵ He illustrates this belief in reference to his own past time in the history of the Athenians from their origins to Marathon, and he has the Athenians of the Persian Wars give voice to the same belief when they claim superiority in competing with the Tegeans for the right wing at Plataea. They rehearse the *topoi* of the *epitaphios* about their ancestral greatness, but then dismiss them as a ‘contest of words’ about the early past and emphasize instead their achievement at Marathon, on the very grounds that those who were ancestrally strong might have in the meantime become weak, and vice-versa (9.27.2-5).²⁶ Herodotus here confirms his reputation as an historian of

by tearing away a large part of its manpower, or to his ruse to ‘separate’ the Athenians after the battle of Pallene so that they no longer form a united army; Thuc. 6.9.8, Xen. *Anab.* 1.5.9 use the expression of scattered armies; yet these meanings will be secondary.

²⁴ Xen. *Hell.* 3.3 projects the same image of the Spartans in the midst of their inferior populations, but in striking contrast Herodotus 1.65-9 does not mention helots or perioikoi in the story of Sparta.

²⁵ Moles (1996) 278-9.

²⁶ They speak of the rescue of the Heraclids, the Seven against Thebes, the defeat of the Amazons and (briefly) the Trojan Wars. The account the Tegeans give of their own defeat of the Heraclids when they first attempted to return to the Peloponnese suggests

change. The investigation of dynamic process was in the nature of a work of history even as the static and timeless image of Athens was in the nature of the *epitaphios*.

Herodotus shares his voice with these Athenians not only on the question of the dynamics of power, but also in their dismissal of their early greatness. He omits the standard achievements of the *epitaphios* from his account of early Athenian history, as has been explained; and he elsewhere appears to challenge them, often with prospective allusion to the fifth century *agon* with Sparta. The single reference he makes to Theseus is one example (9.73). Thucydides and Euripides represented Theseus as one who unified Attica and became its first successful democratic general.²⁷ Isocrates took up the theme with a vengeance in *Helen* and *Panathenaicus* 168-174. Yet Herodotus refers only to his rape of Helen (which even Isocrates found hard to turn to his credit, *Helen* 18-38), and shows him to be not the great champion of the Athenians but their worst enemy; his injustice caused the Tyndaridae to invade and ravage Decelea in search of their sister and threaten the other demes of Attica. Theseus is selfishly unconcerned about the damage, but the hero Decelus of Decelea (some said the Deceleans themselves), annoyed by Theseus' *hybris* and fearing for the land, saves Attica by directing the Tyndaridae to Aphidna, where they recover Helen, but only after the autochthonous hero Titacus has 'betrayed' the village to them (9.73.2).

The invasion of the Tyndarids (who accompanied the Spartan kings into battle) must contain a prospective allusion to the invasions of Archidamus and his Spartans in the first years of the Peloponnesian War. Herodotus makes the connexion clear when he notes that, in recognition of their services to the Tyndarids, the Spartans gave the Decelean demesmen privileges at Sparta, and that these saved Decelea from pillaging in the invasions of 431-430 BC. 'The Athenians themselves say' that the deed of the ancestral Deceleans was a good one (1.73.1). Yet the comparison between the ancestral past and the contemporary reality conveys an impression of ancestral weakness. The Athenians engaged the invading Spartans more directly in the Peloponnesian War than did their ancestors at Decelea or Aphidna.

There are other signs of suppression of past Athenian glory. Herodotus credits the Spartans with *eunomia*, but passes over Solon's claim to have established *eunomia* for the Athenians (fr.4 West), perhaps because this would have destroyed the early contrast with the Spartans; he only briefly refers to

the same theme in reverse, of early greatness come to less, and also the futility of boasting about ancient times when everyone has the same claim to make.

²⁷ Ruschenbusch (1958) believes that Solon and Theseus were not fully recognized as founders of democracy until the fourth century, but Theseus certainly had a military reputation.

Solon's laws (1.29); and he appears to deny his democratic credentials in referring to his eulogy of the tyrant of Cyprus (5.113). He has the Athenians refer to the defeat of the Amazons when they invaded Attica from the River Thermodon, but describes in his own voice only how 'the Greeks' defeated them (4.110). And while he accepts the pure Ionian blood of those colonists who officially sailed from the *prytaneum* of Athens to Asia, he claims that others had no links at all with the race of Ion, and that those who did sometimes diluted the bloodstock by taking Carian wives and slaughtering their parents, as happened at Miletus (1.146). This diminishes the Ionians as much as the Athenians, who claimed to be the mothers of the Ionians.

There is a more particular way in which the Pisistratus story bears on the rise of Athens to international power at the battle of Marathon in 490 BC. Pisistratus' final invasion seems to have been written to remind the reader of this battle and to suggest some interesting parallels and contrasts with it. Even as Herodotus reveals the final subjection of the Athenians to the tyranny of Pisistratus at the battle of Pallene, he looks forward to the successful resistance to the tyranny of his son Hippias at the battle of Marathon, the one a beginning of their ancestral subjection, the other of their contemporary power.

There are many connexions. Herodotus locates Pallene near Marathon (the name recurs four times in a cluster: 1.62.1-3). Hippias embodies the continuing threat of tyranny from Pallene to Marathon. He has a prominent role in his father's final invasion, as the cause of the break with Megacles (1.61.2), as the one who decided to recover the tyranny (1.61.3) and as his father's messenger in the battle of Pallene (1.63.2). The father and the son in their separate campaigns both return from exile via Eretria to invade Attica and reimpose their tyranny on Athens, the father with the help of foreign Greek troops, the son with the help of the Persians. The similarities accentuate the difference between the two battles: the freedom and power the Athenians attained after their release from tyranny: where they failed to resist the tyranny of the father at Pallene, they preserved their freedom at Marathon against the son. 'Those who preferred tyranny to freedom' joined the tyrant at Pallene (1.62.1), whereas none join Hippias at Marathon (not even the Alcmaeonids). The earlier Athenians made no preparations until the invader began his march, but the later Athenians march out immediately (6.103, 105). Pisistratus' oracle predicts that he will catch the tunny, whereas Hippias' tooth on the beach will be the only part of him to sleep with his mother(land) (6.107). The rout of the earlier Athenians while they are dicing and sleeping after lunch contrasts with their notoriously enthusiastic charge at the later battle. The story of Marathon also reminds the reader of the father's tyranny when it mentions the murder of Miltiades' father at the hands of Hippias and Hipparchus, in spite of his generous service

to Pisistratus, which had secured his recall from exile (6.103), and the risk Callias took in purchasing the tyrants' confiscated property (6.121). Miltiades could refer to the enslavement of Eretria when he said that it had been revealed already 'what the Athenians will suffer if they are handed over to Hippias'; but Pisistratus in the account of his rise offered more still pointed illustration.

Herodotus thus places the story of Pisistratus inside larger contexts of power: the comparison of ancestral Athens and Sparta and the subsequent rise of Athens. There is also a dynamic analysis of power within the stories which serves these contexts and explains military power in terms of the political constitution. The rise of *tyrannis* in Athens and the rise of *eunomia* in Sparta illustrate historical process: while Athens succumbs to *tyrannis*, Sparta rises to *eunomia* (1.65.2, 1.66.1). They also illustrate contemporary political thought about the sources of power. Herodotus finds the sources in the constitutional debate about *tyrannis/eunomia*, which went back as far as Solon (fr. 3 West), who contrasted *dysnomia/eunomia*, and Tyrtaeus, whose poem was known as *Eunomia* (fr.2-3 Campbell). Herodotus' famous debate on the merits of democracy, oligarchy and monarchy, which takes place in Persia but is generally agreed to reflect the interests of the fifth century (3.80-82), confirms this interest.²⁸

The heart of the distinction between the two concepts is the question of whether the community serves the interests of the tyrant or its own. Thus even kingship can be 'eunomic'. Herodotus offers an example of this in the conversion from *eunomia* to a form of *tyrannis* and back to *eunomia* in Egypt, where the 'tyrant' king makes the people work on the construction of pyramids, which symbolize his own selfish interest (as in Thucydides' paradigm), but the 'eunomic' king is more just and releases them back to worship and agriculture, which is their own business (2.124, 129): 'they said that Egypt enjoyed complete *eunomia* under the kingship of Rhampsinitus and flourished greatly (εὐθηνέειν) but then Cheops who was king over them drove them into complete wretchedness, for he shut their temples and first of all prevented their sacrifices, then ordered all Egyptians to work (ἐργάζεσθαι) for him (rather than themselves)'; 2.129: 'after him they said that Mycerinus the son of Cheops gave up the constructions of his father, opened the temples, and released the folk, who were worn down to the very depths of ill, to their works (ἔργα) and sacrifices, and that he gave the most just judgements of all the kings'.

²⁸ See Lateiner (1989) 163-186 on the constitutional debate and its relation to the typology of the tyrant. But see Gray (1995) for a more contextual typology.

This *eunomia* is not simple obedience to law.²⁹ Its essential features are the availability of justice and the freedom of the people to pursue their own interests rather than those of a master, even under a king. This is also the essential point of Athenian freedom at 5.78. Herodotus calls this *isēgoria* rather than *eunomia*;³⁰ the former term seems to imply more individual liberation than does *eunomia*; but both involve the same free pursuit of common and individual interest.

The abstract analysis of the Anonymus Iamblichi refines the definition and reveals more of the political thought that informs Herodotus' stories.³¹ This unknown writer addresses the man of reputation who might aspire to tyranny and warns him about the proper and improper use of his skills (3.1). He wishes to prove that though a man may use his skills to achieve power in lawless ways, not even one made of adamant can keep it secure except through the rule of law, and to that end he contrasts *eunomia* with *anomia*, but identifies *tyrannis* as the condition which inevitably emerges from *anomia*, and shows that it cannot endure.

He lists features characteristic of the two conditions (6-7). On the side of *eunomia* he places the rule of law and justice, but also the blending of community and the sharing of resources through trust (*πίστις*) and social intercourse (*ἐπιμειξία*), the release of the people to engage in their own business (*ἔργα*) rather than troubles (*πράγματα*) (the theme which is so prominent in Herodotus) and the slighter prospect of war (7.1-6). On the side of *anomia* he arrays the opposites: no law or justice, no trust, no sharing, no business, just trouble and *stasis* and war, and the tyrant who will surely arise from such a situation (7.7-12).³² People are wrong to think that the tyrant imposes himself by force: it is they who are responsible, and their *anomia* (7.12-14). Yet the man who would be tyrant will have to be adamant to survive his usurpation of what belongs to the community; the man made of mere flesh will fail (7.15-16).

The Anonymus here raises the important theme of popular delusion and tyrannical deception. Solon had already emphasized in his own analysis of *dysnomia/eunomia* (fr.3 West) that the *demos* brought tyranny on itself through their inability to appreciate the tyrannical intentions of men to whom they gave power (fr.11 West, cp. fr.9): the individual Athenian could track a fox to its lair, but as a collective they had a silly and empty mind; they listened to

²⁹ Cp. Andrewes (1938), Ostwald (1969) 64-79.

³⁰ Ostwald (1969) 109 n.2, 146-7, 157 n.2.

³¹ Diels/Kranz (1966) Vol.2, 89 [82]: the author is a fifth century writer, perhaps from the time of the Peloponnesian War.

³² Aristotle attributes *apistia* and *ameixia* in the tyrannized society to the tyrant's desire to maintain security: *Politics* 1313a-1315b.

the words of a swindler and did not look at his deeds: they gave the big man his ‘defences’ and brought enslavement on themselves. Understandably enough, Aristotle took Solon to be referring to the bodyguard the Athenians gave to Pisistratus.³³ Aristophanes continued to see the rise of tyranny in these terms: ‘The old chap *demos* is the cleverest of men at home (*δεξιώτατος* cp. Herodotus 1.60.2), but when he sits on this rock (Pnyx), he gapes (*κέχληνεν* cp. Solon’s *χαῦνος*)’ (*Knights* 752-5).³⁴

The detailed investigation of the story of Pisistratus shows how Herodotus expresses this political thought about the rise of tyranny out of *anomia* in terms of its opposition to *eunomia* through conventional episodes. The story of Deioces, who rose to become tyrant of the Medes,³⁵ uses the same conventions and reveals the same political thought. The comparison of the two stories clarifies the role of their conventional episodes. Their thought patterns are confirmed by contrast in the story of the rise of Sparta.

Deioces comes without the conventional warning of his rise. Yet Deioces falls ‘in love with tyranny’ (*ἔρασθεις τυραννίδος*) just as Pisistratus has ‘thoughts of tyranny’ (*καταφρονήσας τὴν τυραννίδα*). Deioces also rises from *anomia* (unredressed looting through the ‘autonomous’ villages of Media 1.96.2),³⁶ just as Pisistratus rises from *stasis* (political division throughout Attica);³⁷ yet he has secured the same reputation as champion of *eunomia*: Deioces is ‘previously renowned’ (1.96.2) for his just settlement of the looting, Pisistratus is ‘previously renowned’ (1.59.4) for ‘great deeds’ as *στρατηγός* in the community war against Megara. Both tyrants thus arise from *anomia* as apparent champions of *eunomia*; but appearances prove grievously deceptive.

Their respective peoples give them their first power, Deioces when he is elected as judge, Pisistratus when he deceives the *demos* into giving him the bodyguard and thereby seizes his first tyranny.³⁸ Yet even when they have

³³ *Ath. Pol.* 14.2; also later sources quoted in West fr. 9 and 11.

³⁴ These traditions of thought about tyranny continued into the fourth century: Isocrates *Peace* 13 on the public gullibility and private cunning of the Athenians, and *Arch.* 64-7 on the application of the opposition *eunomia/anomia* to the condition of the *poleis* of the Peloponnese during Spartan rule and after her fall. Isocrates replaces *eunomia* with *autonomia* in opposition to *anomia*, and supplies *homonoia* in opposition to the *ameixia* and *apistia* that sooner trusts in foreign forces than fellow citizens and produces masses of exiles.

³⁵ Flory (1987) 121-8 sees Deioces as an ideal sort of philosopher king. I disagree.

³⁶ Presumably ‘autonomy’ is not a mark of *eunomia* in this context. Isocrates’ equation of *autonomia* and *eunomia* belongs to the fourth century when autonomy was a good thing: n.33

³⁷ Words connected with *stasis* occur six times: 1.59.3 x 3, 1.60.1 x 3.

³⁸ I explore the theme of deceit further below.

gained their first power, Deioeces and Pisistratus conceal their desire for *tyrannis* behind the appearance of *eunomia*.³⁹ Deioeces gives just decisions ‘because he courts rulership’. Pisistratus is also prepared to observe the laws, ‘not disturbing the existing offices nor changing the ordinances’, presumably for the sake of holding on to power, which does indeed prove precarious (1.60.2). Their first period of constitutional rule therefore appears to be part of their conventional path to power: yet appearances are again deceptive. Deioeces soon renounces his power as judge, alleging neglect of ‘his own business’ in settling the business of others (he thus appears himself to suffer from the special difficulty imposed on people by a lack of *eunomia*); but his real intention is to make the people recognize how badly they need him in order to secure a greater power as tyrant king (1.97). *Anomia* returns and the Medes do as Deioeces expected and ‘persuade themselves’ (1.97.3-98.1) that a ‘king’ would ‘turn the land to *eunomia* and they could pursue their own work (*erga*) and not be uprooted by *anomia*’ (the classic statement of *eunomia*, which reveals their true business to be agriculture and commerce). Pisistratus does not willingly withdraw after his first period of rule, but is driven out by his opponents. The Athenian *demos* even so ‘believes/ persuades itself’ (*πειθόμενοι* 1.60.5) that a true Athena is bringing him back as a champion of the community. His previous military service and constitutional rule gave them cause to hope for the same *eunomia* as the Medes had had.

Deioeces meanwhile asks his people to serve as royal spear-bearers and build dwellings fit for a king (1.114), a request which they grant, still believing in his *eunomia*. He then compels them contrary to their expectations to leave their villages and form a city and cease to pursue their own interests in contradiction of *eunomia*. They work for him as for a master, building the vast palace at Ecbatana, which recalls how the Egyptians worked on the pyramids of their tyrant kings.⁴⁰ He withdraws into this fortified complex and becomes obsessed with his own security; in a perfect contradiction of the *eunomia* of the Anonymus, he exhibits *ἀμειξία* and *ἀπιστία*, no longer mixing with or trusting the people, but setting himself apart for fear of plots against his life.⁴¹ His justice, which once served *eunomia*, now becomes a tyrannical

³⁹ Aristotle’s two ways of securing tyranny a) by oppression b) by favour, are incorporated here into the one pattern: *Pol.* 1313a-1315b.

⁴⁰ Herodotus compares the fortification walls with the fifth century Athenian walls (1.98.5). This may suggest Athens as the tyrant city: Moles (1996) 261 n.12.

⁴¹ The comparison makes it tempting to read the Athenian acropolis, which is the focus of Pisistratus’ first two coups, as an intended royal dwelling, the equivalent of Deioeces’ palace. Xenophon *Hiero* 4.7 indicates that the tyrant seeks fortified *acropoleis* where the private man seeks an ordinary house.

tool of control, harshly dispensed (*τὸ δίκαιον φυλάσσων χαλεπῶς*).⁴² His spies are throughout the land looking for the *hybris* that may threaten him (1.100.2). He creates the otherness (*ἔτεροῖος*) that the Anonymus thought the tyrant required. He subjects only his own nation (1.101).

On his return from his second exile, Pisistratus perverts his military and political skills in the same way that Deioeces perverts his justice, no longer serving the community as *στρατηγός* or *προστάτης*, but gathering the forces and winning the battle that subjects them.⁴³ Previously he captured Nisaea from Megara and thus helped his community conquer their neighbours. Now he captures Naxos, but gives it to the tyrant Lygdamis to secure his own tyrannical interest (1.61.4, 64.2). He not only illustrates but perverts Thucydides' paradigm of the tyrant as non-imperialist: though he could create an empire for his community, his only concern is to secure his own interests against his community. He uses the resources of potential empire to impose his power: money from Thebes and elsewhere, money and men from Naxos, troops from Argos (1.61.3-4), and to secure it: mercenaries, the revenues of Strymon and Attica, hostages sent to Naxos and the purification of Delos (1.64.1-2).

The contemporary audience might see prospective allusion to the later power of the Athenians. Their Delian League enslaved Naxos; here Naxos assists Pisistratus to enslave Athens and holds Athenians hostage.⁴⁴ The revenues of Strymon were later used to secure the interests of the Athenian empire. Herodotus says that the purification of Delos, the Ionian centre, secured the tyranny, but he is curiously intent on describing how the purification was *incomplete* (1.64.2).⁴⁵ Thucydides 3.104.1-2 perhaps offers the explanation; he specifically describes the Athenian purification of Delos in 425 BC ('the result of some oracle', cp. Pisistratus' original purification 'according to the oracles' [1.64.2]) as the completion of Pisistratus' work. Herodotus' apparent allusion to this and other later events may suggest Athenian progress to empire; it may equally suggest the continuation of the work of the archaic tyrant man by the modern tyrant city.

⁴² Gray (1995) 374-6 on this perverted justice.

⁴³ His encouragement to each individual to go to 'his own private business' after Pallene is again a mockery of *eunomia* (cp. 5.78) and may also make him an agent of *ἀμειξία*: 1.63.2; his preference for foreign soldiers shows his *ἀπιστία* of citizens: 1.62, 64, and those he exiles are a symptom of lack of *ὁμολοία*: 1.64.3. Herodotus confirms his political *ἀμειξία* when he describes the *demos* as 'pushed away': 5.69, until Cleisthenes took it into partnership: 5.66.

⁴⁴ Naxos was a pre-eminent Ionian colony (8.46: 'Ionians from Athens').

⁴⁵ Lavelle (1993) 93 n.20 is mystified by the reference to Delos.

The Spartan story illustrates the opposition *anomia/eunomia* by contrast with Athens, and contains in addition its own double conversion from *anomia* to *eunomia* on both the domestic and the foreign front. The Athenians come to dominate their neighbours in the fifth book of the *Histories* as the result of their direct release from *tyrannis* (5.78). The Spartans achieve the same conversion to power within a self-contained story which involves a release from the symptoms of the tyrannized community. Thucydides 1.18.1 also described Spartan *eunomia* as the anathema of tyranny: ‘it enjoyed *eunomia* and was ever without tyranny’. The domination of the tyrant’s interest in Athens contrasts markedly with the unity of purpose among the Spartans.⁴⁶ They had once suffered internal *κακονομία* to the highest degree (*κακονομότατοι*) and internal and external *ἀμειξία* (*ἀπρόσμεικτοι*), signs of the *anomia* that produces *tyrannis*;⁴⁷ this held them back from domination of others, but Lycurgus’ establishment of law and order (the *syssitia*, ephors and elders etc.) produced *eunomia* which released the now ‘united community’ (1.67.5 *κοινῶ*) to pursue war against neighbouring Arcadia, like a flourishing plant looking abroad for expansion (1.65, 1.66.1: *εὐθηνέειν*, also used of ‘eunomic’ Egypt: 2.124, contrast the tyrannical plant whose roots Pisistratus is intent on sinking deep into his own soil: 1.61.1, 64.1).

The previous *anomia* and the decision of the Pythia to call Lycurgus a god rather than a man (1.65.3) suggest that he could have become tyrant but did not choose that path. The release of the community to pursue its own common good in acquiring the agricultural lands of its neighbours then produces another conversion from *tyrannis* (= working for a master) to *eunomia* (= freedom to pursue conquest). The new community is at first deceived by an oracle into a reversal of their expectations (1.66); they fail in war and ‘work for’ their intended victims the Tegeans as agricultural slaves (i.e. are tyrannized: 1.66.4). They interpret a second oracle correctly and rise from slavery to dominance (1.67-8, i.e. tyrannize others).

Three oracles structure these internal and external conversions (1.65.3, 66.2, 67.4). Herodotus again uses conventional episodes. The oracle that greets the man of power and the oracle that leads to a reversal of expectation are familiar devices. The Spartans worked as slaves for the Tegeans as Perdiccas and Cyrus worked as labourers and herdsmen for masters whom they would eventually dominate (see further below). Herodotus saw the shackles in which the Tegeans said they enslaved the Spartans (1.66.4), and

⁴⁶ Herodotus’ comment that ‘tribal division’ inside a community is worse than ‘united warfare’ against a common foe comes close to describing the contrast between the effects of *tyrannis* and *eunomia*: 8.3.1.

⁴⁷ This is sometimes taken as a reference to her later policy of *xenelasia*. I think that it is more likely a basic sign of *anomia* as defined by the Anonymus.

describes in the same language the shackles that the Athenians put on their captive neighbours in their own rise to power (5.76.3). Lichas' story involves the conventional decipherment of a sign that leads to mastery of others. He matches the oracle to the new information he acquires from the unwitting smith in the iron foundry in the plain in the heart of the territory over which the Spartans will rule. Perdiccas also acquired his symbol of royal mastery from the very hearth of the unwitting king of the Macedonians. Lichas' exchange with the smith (1.68.2-3) finds verbal *comparanda* in the exchange between the tyrant Periander and his ignorant herald, in search of the meaning of the symbolic word of advice from Thrasybulus which will allow him to master the Corinthians (5.92); his other exchange is with his ignorant older son, in search of the symbolic word of advice that will enable him to master the younger son (3.50-51). The herald/elder son/smith knows only enough to relay the appearance of the secret, whereas the searcher immediately grasps its true meaning.

Herodotus thus analyzes the sources of power in constitutional terms through the adaptation of conventional episodes. As we have seen, an essential part of the emergence of tyranny in the stories of Deioces and Pisistratus is the people's gullibility; the tyrant's active deception is the necessary corollary. Deioces practises the more subtle deception: Pisistratus outrageously deceives the *demos* in a series of no less than four conventional episodes.⁴⁸ Herodotus thus demonstrates the complete gullibility of the Athenians. Pisistratus first pretends to champion the people of the hills in order to create his third party. He then pretends to have been wounded by his enemies and asks the *demos* for a bodyguard on the ground of his previous good service in the war against Megara. The *demos* give a bodyguard of men from the *asty* to him for this apparently good reason (he was their military champion) but it turns out to be an act of supreme folly; armed with clubs, the bodyguard rises up with Pisistratus to seize the acropolis and subject the *demos*. Plutarch, *Solon* 30, recognizes the narrative convention when he has Solon produce an even earlier parallel in the self-disfigurement of Odysseus but then underline the difference: Odysseus disfigured himself to deceive enemies, Pisistratus to deceive friends.

The pattern is also found in other Herodotean stories. For example, the Persian Zopyrus pretends to have been wounded by Darius and goes to the

⁴⁸ Pisistratus' deceits make up a full half of the narrative: 1. he is 'in word' the champion of the men of the hills, but has his heart set on tyranny: 1.59.3; 2. he pretends that his enemies have wounded him in order to acquire a bodyguard and deceives the *demos* 1.59.4-5; 3. Megacles and he 'contrive a very silly trick' that Athena is in person bringing him back from exile: 1.60.3-5; 4. he pretends to offer clemency to the surviving Athenians after the battle of Pallene but he and his sons are really 'contriving a most clever plan' to prevent them uniting again: 1.63.2.

Babylonians as an alleged deserter; having deceived the people in assembly, he asks for an army, which they give him, foolishly, since he will use it to subject them to the tyranny of Darius rather than protect himself and them against Darius. He wins their confidence in a triple series of pre-arranged victories over the Persians with this army and they appoint him ‘guardian of the wall’, which allows him to give Darius entry through the gates (3.154-60). Perdiccas, who is said to have won the ‘tyranny’ of the Macedonians (8.137.1), practises no overt deceit but is still given his power unwittingly by the king, who offers the sunlight on his floor in slighting lieu of thetic pay, realizing only after Perdiccas accepts the offer that he has given him power (8.138.4-5).

Pisistratus secures his second tyranny by dressing a woman called Phye as Athena in a panoply, putting her in a chariot, teaching her some poses and driving into the *asty*, sending heralds ahead to proclaim that Athena was honouring Pisistratus and taking him to her acropolis (1.61.3). The episode is again conventional and Herodotus draws attention to the gullibility of the *demos* in his own voice (1.60.3). Pisistratus is here seen as the typical exile who returns to seize power in the polis, accompanied by a woman who seems to legitimize his coup. The exile Polyneices also returned from exile in the company of a false ‘Justice’ to take Thebes.⁴⁹

It is true that Pisistratus’ return has been interpreted as a deformed memory of an authentic sixth century ritual in which he posed as Heracles, with Athena as his protector.⁵⁰ The interest in Heracles on painted pottery from Athens in this period supports this hypothesis.⁵¹ Yet Heracles was not an exile and did not return to take up a tyranny. Rather, Pisistratus’ ‘Athena’ is as fraudulent as Polyneices’ ‘Justice’. She seems to be the military champion of Athens and leads back a man who was once military champion of Athens against Megara. She is in truth Phye of Paiania, and leads back one whose thoughts are on tyranny.⁵² She is also the conventional substitute woman in a story of deceit.⁵³ Her name Phye means ‘growth’ or ‘stature’ and

⁴⁹ Sinos (1993) 73-91 esp. 81, on Aesch. *Septem* 645-8.

⁵⁰ Most recently Cawkwell (1995) 77 n.22, with bibliography.

⁵¹ Connor (1987) esp. 42-7 follows Boardman (1975) 1-12, which however, as B. says himself (1988) 158, did not rely so much on Herodotus. The procession does resemble a real ritual. Herodotus describes how the community in Libya ‘every year chose in common the fairest maiden, dressed her up in Corinthian helmet and Greek panoply, put her on a chariot and took her around a lake’ in a very similar way to Pisistratus (4.180)

⁵² The true Athena was an opponent of tyranny: Aristoph. *Thesm.* 1143-4, 338-9.

⁵³ As in the story of Cambyses of Persia who asked for the daughter of Amasis of Egypt as his concubine, but Amasis disguised the daughter of the previous king as his own and sent her instead (3.1). The *comparanda* with the false Athena are notable, even through the local adaptations of the formula: ‘There was a daughter/woman, of the previous King

when accompanied by her size and beauty recalls the Homeric formula for physical excellence.⁵⁴ Yet her growth may be another manifestation of the tyrant's own plant imagery (cp. 1.60.1, 64.1) and she comes from a country deme in his domain.⁵⁵ Megacles is as deluded as the rest. Pisistratus had pledged to marry his daughter in return for his support; but he now refused to have proper sexual relations with her 'contrary to the custom' (1.61.2).⁵⁶

The battle of Pallene uses further conventions to emphasize the gullibility of the *demos*. The oracle which spurred Pisistratus into action suggests that the Athenians will be like tunny, foolish fish which swim en masse into any net to be killed (1.62.4).⁵⁷ The deceit by which Pisistratus sends his boys over the field of battle to subdue resistance has marked resemblances to the way he sends the false Athena to deceive the *demos*: 'mounting her/the boys on chariot/horses, sending forward heralds/he sent them forward, who announced the orders/they announced the orders of Pisistratus' (1.63.2).

The tyrant's deceptiveness and power explain other aspects of the story as well. The supernatural warning of his birth signals his power.⁵⁸ Hippocrates' self-activating cauldron is as unnaturally powerful as the images that warn of the rise of Cyrus (1.107ff.) and Cypselus (5.92): a monstrous flood of urine, a monstrous vine, a savage lion, a murderous millstone.⁵⁹ The unnatural 'growth' of cooking food also heralds the emergence of Perdiccas (8.137.3); the loaf that the king's wife baked for Perdiccas swelled to twice its size.

Apries/in the deme Paiania, very big/of a size three fingers short of four cubits, and well shaped/in other respects well shaped, whose name was Nitetis/whose name was Phye, the last of her line/--'. This girl/woman, Amasis/(Pisistratus and Megacles), adorning her with gown and gold/rigging out in a panoply, putting on a chariot and showing her a pose likely to make her appear most convincing, sends to the Persians as his own daughter/drove into the asty.

⁵⁴ Homer's formulaic line on heroic beauty parallels the description of her great size and beauty: *εἶδος τε μέγεθος τε φύην τ'*: *Iliad* 2.58. 'Labda' as the crooked letter is a similar cipher of her disability: Garland (1995) 98; also Vernant (1982) 19-38.

⁵⁵ Rhodes (1981) 205 for the deme. Paiania could symbolize the *paian* 'song of capture' that Polyneices sings on his own return from exile: Aesch. *Suppl.* 635.

⁵⁶ The tyrant's refusal to 'mingle' may allude literally to the *ameixia* of *anomia*. Lavelle (1993) 119-20 believes it refers to his sexual otherness. Pisistratus' refusal reverses the claim of later lawcourt speakers that their ancestors refused liaisons with tyrants: Thomas (1989) 142.

⁵⁷ Lavelle (1993) 91, with Aesch. *Persae* 424. The Athenians are duped again by a foreign tyrant when Aristagoras of Miletus persuades them to support his revolt in Ionia where he failed to persuade Cleomenes: 'it was easier to fool 30000 Athenians than one Spartan': 5.97.2; 5.50.2.

⁵⁸ Lavelle (1993) 90, discusses the warning, with parallels and bibliography.

⁵⁹ Gray (1995) 368, 372-3 on the much discussed lion and millstone in particular.

The contrast between the rustic or marginalized appearance of the emerging tyrant and his later powerful reality confirms his deceptiveness. So does his identity as the youngest of the triplet of brothers or partners, who holds the least valuable land or animals.⁶⁰ Thus, Perdiccas and his two older brothers, though royal sons of Temenos, worked in exile as *thetes* serving as herdsmen for the king of the Macedonians (8.137.1-2). They shared the land three ways, the eldest herding the horses, the other the oxen and Perdiccas the youngest, the smaller grazing animals. Similarly, Pisistratus, though apparently well-born, creates the triple division of the land and pretends to champion the poor people of the hills, to challenge the more comfortable parties of the plain and the coast (1.59.3).⁶¹ Thus also, Cyrus, the royal grandson of Astyages, was brought up as a herdsman's son and spends his youth in a mountain wilderness on the margins of Persia (1.110); but he reveals royal instincts when he plays the king with the village boys, ordering spear-bearers and royal dwellings, and flogging one boy for disobedience (1.114).

Buxton highlights the myth of 'the dangerousness of the *oros*, which invades, seduces and threatens to overturn the polis'.⁶² The settled polis and the unsettling margins constitute 'contrasts between the symbolic terms used in myths.'⁶³ Pisistratus' bodyguard is also a symbol of this powerful threat. Herodotus insists (1.59.5) that his bodyguards were *κορυνήφοροι* not *δορύφοροι* (club-bearers rather than spear-bearers; cp.1.98.2, 1.114.2),⁶⁴ and that they took the initiative: 'these rising up with Pisistratus took the acropolis'.⁶⁵ Modern historians' reconstructions see the bodyguard as realities, part

⁶⁰ Perdiccas and Pisistratus are examples. In other stories too the youngest and weakest of three brothers who share the land frequently rises to power by eliminating or courting the others: Polycrates shares the polis three ways with his brothers before eliminating them (3.39); the Persians eventually restore the youngest, Syloson, to the tyranny (3.139-49); the three Scythian brothers create the three tribes of Scythia, but the youngest acquires magic possessions to secure the rule of his own tribe (4.5-6).

⁶¹ Hippocrates is described as *idiotes* to contrast him with the *tyrannos* his son became (as Amasis is also, before his tyrannical coup: 2.174), not because he had held no public office. His description as an '*idiotes* seeing the sights of (*theoreonti*) the Olympic Festival' contrasts with the tyrant's inability to travel to festivals for fear of loss of security: Xen., *Hiero* 1.11-12, Plato, *Rep.* 571-9. Historians find support for the triple division of Attica in the mythical division of the land between the four sons of Pandion but the names of the regions are different in that myth: Strabo 392. Thucydides 2.55 recognizes 'plain' and 'coast' in his own times, but not hills.

⁶² Buxton (1992) 12.

⁶³ Buxton (1992) 15.

⁶⁴ Homer *Iliad* 7.9,137-50 first opposes a *korynetes* to a *doryphoros*.

⁶⁵ Aristotle *Ath.Pol.* 14 changes this to '*Pisistratus* rose up with them'. Polycrates of Samos, who also rose from a triple division, is said to have engineered a similar coup

of Pisistratus' actual bid for popular appeal among the hills, since the *κορύνη* has rustic associations.⁶⁶ Some appeal to the criterion of the unconventional: 'the historical element is distinguished in that and as long as it preserves its own unrepeatable character'.⁶⁷ The clubs look unrepeatable and historical. Yet in mythic narratives even apparently unique details can be generic and symbolic: 'deceptively simple imagery which occurs just once, as a *hapax legomenon*, may be quite difficult to find'.⁶⁸ Lavelle argues, rather opaquely, that the clubs symbolize rustic weakness and clear the *demos* of blame.⁶⁹ Yet Aristotle has the tyrannical Pentilids beat their town citizens with the *κορύνη*⁷⁰ and Plutarch associates it with the lawless country brigand.⁷¹ The weakness is illusory. The negative/positive division of rustic and refined is already reflected in Pisistratus' allegation that he was attacked in the 'fields' when he finds protection in the *agora*. The same division is in Pollux's story that Pisistratus made the people dress in skins to shame them into keeping out of the town, which incidentally contradicts his popular appeal.⁷² Tyrants regularly come from the outlands to dominate the centre.

This kind of mythic reading of Herodotus' account of the rise of Pisistratus seems to me preferable to Lavelle's reading, which does not accommodate his themes of power.⁷³ It is of course true that contemporary family interests sometimes did produce distortions in accounts of tyranny.⁷⁴ The Pisis-

with a small force: '(the island) was so easy to subject that one of the locals 'rose up and took it' (cp. 1.59.6) with fifteen hoplites and is now tyrant of it' (3.120).

⁶⁶ Mosse (1969) 61-7 notes the connexion of this type of club with the semi-free population of Sicyon: Pollux 3.83. Theocritus 7.29 identifies the rustic country shepherd by this club and the skin he wears.

⁶⁷ Brillante (1990) 109, citing Brelich, who also noted 'the need to emphasize the use made of the same motif in different contexts'.

⁶⁸ Vansina (1985) 139-146, quotation: 139. By 'find' is meant 'discover'. Imagery here includes anything symbolic.

⁶⁹ Lavelle (1993) 90 n.14: 'The substitution (of clubs for spears) is undoubtedly another element of apology, for *korynephoroí* euphemizes that awarding of the bodyguard by *Athenians* (an unflattering admission I take to be factual): the misconduct of collaboration is mitigated somewhat by the qualification, for the bodyguard was not standard and direct reproof for the award was impeded only by oblique admission.'

⁷⁰ *Pol.* 1311b28.

⁷¹ The brigand Periphetes was called *Korynetes* because he carried a club: Plut. *Theseus* 8.1; Walker (1995) 35-47. D.S. 15.57.3-58 refers to *stasis* at Argos as 'the law of the club'.

⁷² Pollux 7.68. Buxton (1992) 10-11 discusses the 'outsiderdom' of skins.

⁷³ See n.5.

⁷⁴ Athenians projected the late fifth century tyranny of the Thirty back on the sixth century tyranny of the Pisistratids and claimed that the sixth century *demos* returned from exile to defeat the Pisistratids under various ancestors, just as the fifth century *demos* had

tratids did haunt fifth century Athens.⁷⁵ Herodotus does defend the Alcmaeonids against the charge of collaboration with the Persians and the tyrant Hippias in 490 BC; he alleges their exile throughout the period of the tyranny (6.121-4), contrary to the evidence of the archon lists, which record the archonship of Clisthenes (*IG* 13 1031). Yet this political consideration does not seem to be an emphasis in the story of Pisistratus. Far from defending the Alcmaeonids, Herodotus emphasizes Megacles' complicity in the deception of the *demos* in the story of the false Athena. There is plural reference to Megacles and Pisistratus throughout. He also plainly reveals that Megacles took the initiative in making Pisistratus his son-in-law, and that it was Pisistratus rather than Megacles who made the marriage invalid. Megacles did take the final decision to break the partnership, but this is no 'laudable' reaction to insult, as Lavelle maintains. Until he was insulted, he was all for the tyrant. The Alcmaeonids preserved face in the fifth century by eliminating memories of their curse and intermarriage with Pisistratus; Herodotus juxtaposes both in the denouement of their relationship: Pisistratus made a mockery of his marriage with Megacles' daughter partly because of the curse.

Lavelle also argues that the Alcmaeonids presented the rise of the tyrant as irresistible in order to defend themselves and the *demos*. He argues the same for the conventional episodes: '(the episodes of trickery are) designed not to reveal the truth of things (the Alcmaeonid collaboration), but to conceal it' (p. 97). Yet historical reality as we conceive it was not the only truth for ancient people; stories of tyrants were regularly conceived in conventional and mythical terms,⁷⁶ sometimes as soon as twenty years after the actual events,⁷⁷ and the tyrants' irresistibility is a constant feature. This is because 'myths rework, pare down, clarify and exaggerate experience'.⁷⁸ The

returned from exile under the leadership of Thrasybulus and defeated the Thirty: Thomas (1989), 139-144, 251-4. Andocides (1.106) completely inverted Herodotus' Pallene when he alleged that it was the tyrant (not the *demos*) who returned from exile, and fought and defeated the *demos* at Pallene (not vice-versa) to institute his tyranny (rather than end it): Thomas (1989), 252.

⁷⁵ The comic poets in Plutarch *Pericles* 7, 16 warn of the emergence of 'new Pisistratids'. Kagan (1990) 193f. sums up the contemporary suspicions about Pericles. The *demos* was still haunted by thoughts of Pisistratids during the affair of the Hermae: Thuc. 6.53.3, 60.1.

⁷⁶ Vernant (1982); also Sourvinou-Inwood (1991).

⁷⁷ Xen. *Hell.* 6.4.36-37, describing an event which occurred less than twenty years previous to writing, makes the death of Alexander of Pherae entirely mythic, on the model of Herodotus' death of Candaules and Clytaemnestra's murder of Agamemnon.

⁷⁸ Buxton (1992) 14.

conventional episodes in the story of Pisistratus seem to me to serve the contexts of power rather than the subsequent Alcmaeonid cover-up.

Herodotus' first account of mainland Greek history thus illustrates political thought about constitutional strength and weakness and the dynamics that produce them in order to serve contexts of power. This is in keeping with his reputation as the first historian of power and change. His comparison of ancestral Athens and Sparta is full of resonance for the contemporary audience as they see him begin to trace the rise of Athens from tyrannized weakness to imperial greatness and address contemporary debates. These contexts have shaped the image of the tyranny of Pisistratus.⁷⁹ Herodotus inherited most of his conventions, but he adapts them to the political analysis, selecting and arranging and making old components serve new themes. He presents the barbaric origins of the Athenians as the result of his own research (1.56-58), and delivers his own verdict against 'what is said' about their cleverness (1.60.3). His challenge to the *epitaphios* tradition and his discourse on power make him critic and creator of tradition as well as transmitter.⁸⁰ The anecdotal (or episodic and conventional) nature of the episodes and his separation of the rise from the end of the tyranny have suggested to some that there was no coherent public tradition about the tyranny in the fifth century.⁸¹ Yet his own account is wholly coherent, and his overall analysis of the growth of Athenian power is made more effective by the separation of early weakness from the beginning of later power.

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⁷⁹ Modern reconstructions of Pisistratus' tyranny are much more positive: Andrewes (1956) 100-115; Berve (1967) 47-77, 542-55; Mosse (1969) 61-76; Wilcoxon (1979) 33-45. Cawkwell (1995) 73-86 insists that the *demos* was unimportant.

⁸⁰ His protestations that he merely reports 'what is said' often assert his disbelief: 2.123, 7.152.

⁸¹ Raaflaub (1988) 220.

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