

HERODOTUS—THE MOST HOMERIC HISTORIAN?

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HERODOTUS—THE MOST
HOMERIC HISTORIAN?



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PREFACE

This book explores the relationship between Herodotus and Homer and the reason why Herodotus was considered Homeric in antiquity. It stems from a conference at the School of History, Classics and Archaeology of Newcastle University which took place in March 2019, where most of the chapters that make up the book were presented. The conference was funded by the Research Committee of the School of History, Classics and Archaeology at Newcastle, and by the Institute of Classical Studies in London. I wish to express my gratitude to both institutions for their generous support, to the speakers for accepting my invitation to Newcastle, to the other numerous participants for a successful and fruitful discussion during the event, and to the chairs of each session: Federico Santangelo, Rowland Smith, Christopher Tuplin, and Jaap Wisse.

I also wish to thank the *Histos* editors, Rhiannon Ash and Timothy Rood, for accepting this edited book for publication in the journal's Supplements, and especially the supervisory editor of the Supplements, John Marincola, for the extremely helpful guidance and valuable assistance in the final stages of the publication process.

Each chapter is autonomous and includes a self-standing bibliography, but all have benefitted from discussion during the conference and from subsequent exchanges of emails and texts. The Covid-19 pandemic has certainly made our work more challenging, especially because of limited access to libraries, but we hope that our efforts have produced something that will benefit Herodotean and Homeric scholars. If the book manages to stimulate further thoughts or provoke some constructive reaction, it will have accomplished its principal objective.

I. M.

Siena, October 2021

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HOMERIC AND HERODOTEAN INTERTEXTUALITY: WHAT’S THE POINT?

Christopher Pelling

One thing is clear. There is never likely to be just one ‘point’ to intertextuality, but all sorts of different point. This chapter sets the scene by introducing a series of questions that are worth bearing in mind.

Question 1: A Special Sort of Intertextuality?

A few years ago there began a vigorous debate whether historiographic intertextuality worked in the same way as other sorts, given that historiography at least purports to be dealing with real-life events. The principal contributions were made by Cynthia Damon and David Levene, with Ellen O’Gorman an important forerunner;¹ there were follow-up panels at two meetings of the Society of Classical Studies and one of the Classical Association, and most of these have been published as *Histos* working-papers.² I had my say in one of those,³ and will go over as little as possible of the same ground here. My basic answer was ‘no, or not much’, and insofar as there is any difference it is because we care about real-life events, not necessarily more than, but in a different way from how we care about fiction. Others were inclined to state the differences more emphatically.

Now we can add to that issue a further one: does intertextuality with Homer, especially Herodotean intertextuality with Homer, work in a different way from, say, Thucydidean intertextuality with Herodotus or for that matter Catullan intertextuality with Callimachus or Sappho? In those

¹ Damon (2010); Levene (2010) 84–6; O’Gorman (2006) and (2009).

² https://histos.org/Histos_WorkingPapers.html.

³ Pelling (2013).

other cases it is tempting to think of intertextuality as partly—only partly—a way of building a bond between author and reader, one where the reader may have an ‘I see what you did there’ response: it creates a sense, quite a cosy one, of sharing a joint culture, intimating that the reader is the sort of person that the text is targeting and that the author has in mind. If one was listening to a neoteric poet and picked up a hint of an inconspicuous line of Aratus or Pacuvius, one can imagine—human nature being what it was and is—listeners looking around the room, wondering how many others noticed it, and perhaps hoping that the answer was ‘not very many’, perhaps just relishing the feeling of being part of such a cultural in-group.

There is almost always more to it, of course: the point may be that someone’s experience, perhaps my own, is *not* quite like Sappho’s. When Plutarch echoes the erotic symptoms of Sappho 31 when talking of a young man’s falling for philosophy (*How to measure one’s own progress in virtue* 81D), we might suspect that the youth’s experience is not really quite as exciting as Sappho’s, and Plutarch’s own tongue was probably in his cheek as well.⁴ But Sappho’s excitement at least gives a start: author and reader both have something there that they can work on, they are part of the same, semi-private conversation, and the more arcane the model, the closer the bond. Luke Pitcher has talked about ‘author theatre’, the way an author contrives to project a particular personality;⁵ if this were, say, Virgilian or Plutarchan rather than Herodotean intertextuality, we might play with the idea of ‘reader theatre’ too, building a constructed ideal reader who picks up all the hints. There can then be an interesting interplay between real readers and that ideal reader, flattering an audience with the implication that they know so much and are so well-read; with some authors—Plutarch again—this may have an educational aspect too, inspiring readers to close the gap between their real, rather more deficient cultural level and the ideal one that is implied by the text.

Perhaps there can be a little of the same author–reader bonding if one notices a touch of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* in Herodotus, or of the Bible in Milton, but there cannot be much. The poems were too well-known for that, even though some readers still knew the poems more thoroughly and intimately

⁴ The attentive reader will notice several comparisons with Plutarch in this paper. This is doubtless connected to the fact that I contributed a similar discussion on the ‘point’ of Plutarchan intertextuality to a Fribourg conference in 2017, now published as Pelling (2020a). The two papers cover some of the same ground, especially in the opening paragraphs, but then diverge.

⁵ Pitcher (2009) 34–9.

than others.⁶ At the same time Herodotus could count on that familiarity, and perhaps therefore make it work harder: the task in this volume is to say more about what that work might be.

Question 2: Intertextuality—With What?

There are other complications too. What do we mean by Homer?⁷ Just the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*? Herodotus himself did not count the *Cypria* as Homeric (2.117) and had his doubts about the *Epigoni* (4.32),⁸ but the case about *Cypria* needed to be made, and not all of his readers will have agreed. There is also the question of genre: how far is any thought ‘how Homeric!’ and how far ‘how epic!’? If ‘how epic!’, does that just mean ‘how grand!’, or is it something sharper and more specific? Is it ‘ah, Homer!’? Or ‘ah, the Trojan War!’? Or more specifically ‘ah, what an Odysseus this man Themistocles is!’ Or is it narrower still, focusing only on the particular passage that is recalled, tracing similarities or differences in detail?⁹ Or is it broader, to the epic tradition rather than specifically ‘Homer’?¹⁰ Or broader still, summoning up not just the poetry or its themes but the whole world of long ago when heroes might be found and gods might personally intervene?

These questions only partly overlap with Question 1, for similar issues arise with other authors too, especially those dealing with historical events.¹¹ Does Thucydidean intertextuality with Herodotus point primarily to the writer or to the Persian Wars? Is Plutarchan intertextuality pointing more to Thucydides or to, say, Pericles as Thucydides depicted him, or to the general hard-headed way in which Thucydides interpreted historical actions, or even to canonical historiography as opposed to biography? We can do little but examine each case on its merits, and accept that usually it will be a bit of more than one of these.

⁶ Cf. Kelly (forthcoming), suggesting that some might know little more than a ‘highlights reel’; cf. Kelly (2015) and Haywood, below, p. 76.

⁷ Cf. esp. Graziosi (2002).

⁸ See Matijašić and Barker in this volume, above, p. 7 and below, pp. 175–6.

⁹ As, for instance, with the evocation of Sarpedon’s death posited by Barker, below, Chapter 6, but Barker finds that case exceptional; his broader stress falls on the evocation of an epic and Homeric tradition rather than the echoing of particular passages.

¹⁰ Kelly (2020).

¹¹ Damon (2010).

Question 3: What Counts as Intertextuality?

Take what Fraenkel called the ‘grammar of dramatic technique’¹², not just echoes of particular scenes or phrases but of whole ways of doing things; in this case we might rephrase it as a ‘grammar of narrative shape’. It is reasonable to think of Herodotus building towards an interim climax in the battle of Salamis at the end of Book 8, a sort of south summit before the final push in Book 9. It is reasonable too to think of Salamis as somehow proleptic of the end of the war and of Persia’s final defeat. These are both artistic points and ones of historical interpretation, as they indicate a chain of causation as well as a literary prefiguring. In its turn it is reasonable to think of Thucydides as doing something similar with Syracuse in Book 7, and to regard those events too as prefiguring and eventually causing the eventual defeat. Now is that Thucydidean intertextuality with Herodotus, or is it just that both are doing the same sort of thing? Is this elementary reception criticism or elementary comparative criticism or both? And if the resonance is felt as distinctively Herodotean, how much does that add to Thucydides? Is it just that Athens is the new Persia?

In the background there is also Homer, just as there so often is. When Hector dies, ‘it was as if all Troy were collapsing in flames’ (*Il.* 22.410–11), and many critics have found here a prefiguring of the fall of Troy just as the early Books, the catalogue of ships and the duel of Menelaus and Paris and so on, re-enact events that ‘feel as if’ they belong earlier. So are both Herodotus and Thucydides intertextually echoing, not a Homeric passage, but a Homeric mannerism? Is Thucydides producing a ‘window reference’ to Homer via the open window of Herodotus? Or, once again, is it all three of them just doing the same thing? It is likely to be a bit of all of these, but does it make a difference to interpretation exactly where our emphasis falls?

Question 4: Authors or Readers?

This is already treating intertextuality as a two-way thing, a matter of a dynamic between author and reader. We often talk, and I have just been writing, with the focus more on the author—what is he or she up to here? What, indeed, is their ‘point’?—but when Julia Kristeva coined the term in

¹² Fraenkel (1950) 305 on Aesch. *Agam.* 613f.: ‘for Greek tragedy there exists also something like a grammar of dramatic technique’.

1966 it was at least as much about readers.¹³ The role of the reader duly figured more in the early stages as the idea was taken up, with the insistence that what we remember from other books will always affect the way we read whatever we have open in front of us. David Lodge's Persse McGarrigle puts it very well, not without some playful intertextuality of its own with Kristeva:

‘Well, what I try to show,’ said Persse, ‘is that we can’t avoid reading Shakespeare through the lens of T. S. Eliot’s poetry. I mean, who can read *Hamlet* today without thinking of “Prufrock”? Who can hear the speeches of Ferdinand in *The Tempest* without being reminded of “The Fire Sermon” section of *The Waste Land*?’¹⁴

Now an article on ‘the snakepit of intertextuality’ has pointed to an increasing focus on reader-response as a new turn in intertextuality scholarship:¹⁵ but in many ways that marks a return to Kristeva rather than a fresh start. That focus is also adopted by many of the papers in this volume.

Still, getting rid of the author from literary criticism has always proved more difficult than it might seem; indeed, when we talk of how texts work and how one aspect of a creation may go with another, we are usually piggybacking on assumptions of how an individual human mind works and how different thoughts may comprehensibly cohere with each other. Not long after Kristeva, ‘intertextuality’ came to be used in a way not far different from old-fashioned ‘allusion’, though with more of a nod towards the role of the reader. Stephen Hinds, in his very thoughtful book (1998), had to work quite hard to reintroduce the notion of ‘allusion’ as carrying a nuance not necessarily present in ‘intertextuality’, one where the reader’s role is partly one of identifying intentionality on the part of the author—that ‘I see what you did there’ response. One question for this volume is how far that identifying of authorial intentionality matters.

¹³ E.g., Kristeva (1986) 37 (written in 1966 and first published in 1969), discussing the contribution of Bakhtin to the idea of ‘the addressee’: ‘each word (text) is an intersection of word (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read. ... The notion of *intertextuality* replaces that of intersubjectivity, and poetic language is read as at least *double*’.

¹⁴ Lodge (1985) 51–2.

¹⁵ Soerink (2013) 362: ‘In recent times, critics have attempted to break free from these vexed problems of intertextuality [in that case, the question of whether Statius is imitating Silius Italicus, Silius imitating Statius, or both] by embracing a post-modern, reader-response, point of view’.

**Question 5: Different Readers, Different Intertextualities:
How Much Does That Matter?**

It is all very well to talk about ‘the’ reader, real, constructed, ideal, or in-the-text: but all readers are different, and commentators on any passage have to be wary of suggesting that only one inference can be drawn. Nor do we even need to go beyond ‘the’ reader to a plurality of readers, for we are sometimes more readerly alert than others. There are times when we let a text wash over us like a hot bath, and times when the brains are much more actively in gear.

Take for instance the story of the marriage of Agariste at Herodotus 6.126–31: that strange year-long competition, announced at the Olympic games, which ends with Hippocleides dancing upside down, very possibly *sans* underpants, and the Athenian Megacles winning in his stead. It ends with the tracing of Megacles’ descendants through to that later Agariste, dreaming in the last stages of her pregnancy that she will give birth to a lion-cub—hardly, as Stephanie West has commented, a dream likely to set a nervous soon-to-be mother’s anxieties at rest¹⁶—and the child turns out to be Pericles. Some readers or listeners (or ‘the’ reader/listener in some moods) may just have thought that the initial marriage-competition seems to belong in a world of long ago; some may have remembered particular literary works, perhaps dealing with the marriage competition for Tyndareus’ daughter Helen or perhaps the one in which Pelops won the hand of Oenomaus’ daughter Hippodameia (the Olympic games context might give a prompt in that direction); some might think not of particular literary treatments but of the myths themselves. The author cannot control which of those, if any, it will be.

Did it make a difference which train of thought a particular member of the audience chose to follow, or more likely unconsciously followed? Perhaps it did, at least to a degree (cf. Hornblower and Pelling (2017) *ad loc.*). If they were thinking of Pelops, they might dwell particularly on the competition itself, and think that this one at least had a different and less bloody conclusion; if they thought of Helen, they might think more of what it all led to, and reflect that the marriage had not gone well. That in its turn might affect how they responded to that final tracing down to Pericles, and whether they might think this a good lion or a bad lion, the sort to put on a gate at Mycenae or the sort to sing about in the *Agamemnon* (717–36). So yes, different

¹⁶ West (1987) 267 n. 26.

readers can find a passage thought-provoking without always having the same thoughts provoked.

Should, then, commentators and critics be chary about tying down implications, and simply regard an intertextually rich passage as an invitation to ponder, a start of a conversation that might take indefinitely varying lines?

Question 6: Is Intertextuality Complicating or Strengthening a Simpler Reading?

What about a reader who misses the intertextuality completely? Even with Homer, that must sometimes have happened. How much does he or she miss? In this last case even this reader might wonder anyway if this is quite the best way to set up a wedding; the ambivalence of the lion figuring too has been discussed often enough without any reference to any Agariste intertextuality, though usually with reference to those other literary and artistic lions. Similarly, even if readers dozily missed the recollection of Paris's 'evil-starting ships' (*νηας ἀρχεκάκους*, *Il.* 5.62–3), they would anyway know that the ships Athens sent to Ionia were going to be 'the beginning of evils' (*ἀρχὴ κακῶν*, 5.97.5): that after all is what the text says, and it would not have said it unless the evils were going to be big ones. Still, there may be subtler complications that that culturally uninformed reader would miss: evils for whom? Just for Paris's Trojans in the *Iliad*, but for both 'Greeks and barbarians' now, with a typically Herodotean double gaze:¹⁷ are these evils, then, even more far-reaching? Should we broaden our own perspective accordingly? Yet, once again, even the Homer-alert reader might not happen to think precisely along those lines, and we must be careful not to exaggerate the gulf between an informed and less informed response.

A different sort of complication, one that amounts almost to undermining, may come especially in character-speech, when the original Homeric context may intimate that the grandiloquent speaker is getting something wrong. More on this later (Question 8).

Question 7: What Value is Added?

By now we have moved beyond that initial 'game for two' approach, a line linking author and audience, and turned the line into a triangle. The third

¹⁷ Pelling (2006) 79–80.

point is the material—the plot, the narrative, what the writer is writing about and the audience is hearing about. In what ways can intertextuality colour the events that are described? This, probably, is the most important dimension of all.

In my earlier paper on historiographic intertextuality I made two points in particular, one of immediacy and one of plausibility;¹⁸ persuasiveness, *πιθανότης*, or believability might have been better terms than plausibility. When a narrative evokes an earlier, classic account the audience puts the two together; the event in the narrative here-and-now is no longer wholly singular, even if there are also ways in which it may differ from the more distant model. As Aristotle sagely pointed out, what happened once must be possible, as otherwise it would not have happened (*Poet.* 9, 1451b17–19): so if Thucydides echoes Salamis when describing the battle in the Great Harbour at Syracuse,¹⁹ or if Plutarch or Dio echoes Salamis or Syracuse when describing Actium,²⁰ that makes the narrative more believable. These things happened once, and so there is no reason why they should not have happened again. The echoes also make the narrative more immediate, for it enables the later author to summon up an idea already there in his listeners' and readers' mental furniture, so that they can more or less consciously join the dots and 'perhaps even feel'²¹ what it must have been like: pretty grim, to say the least.

Mutatis mutandis, we can say the same about Herodotus' echoing of the fighting in the *Iliad*, and fill out their picture of how it must have been: see Fragoulaki in this volume. That need not imply that all the audience took the *Iliad* to be literally and historically true (or true enough), though some may have done: all that is necessary is that they took it as conveying some impression of what warfare was really like and had always been like. Different members of an audience would doubtless remember (say) *Iliad* 17 in differing degrees of detail, just as different people in the comic theatre might identify a piece of paratragedy in differing detail: Antiphon in one row might think 'prologue of the *Andromeda*', whereas Crito sitting behind him might only think 'that character sounds a bit tragic and overblown', but both would be using those memories to add more colouring to what would be, if not exactly black-and-white, a little less colourful if they did not. The same

¹⁸ Pelling (2013).

¹⁹ Rood (1999) 159–62.

²⁰ Pelling (1988) 283.

²¹ O'Gorman (2006) 103.

goes for the battle-scenes of Herodotus, and readers would find the narrative more convincing too. There is some research suggesting that something similar is still true in jury rooms, where juries are more likely to believe a narrative if it maps on to a pattern that they find familiar from their reading or listening or viewing, though these days it is more likely to be from TV or film than from a literary epic.²² That is an interesting parallel in another way too, as it suggests that the awareness may be subconscious: it 'feels right', whether or not the juror could put a finger on exactly where that feeling comes from.

'Pretty grim', then, they might indeed conclude—but clearly more than that. A Homeric resonance can also add momentousness and elevation: this is the new Trojan War, and will live in memory just as Homer's war did. It is the same sensibility as we see when Simonides has the Spartans march out in his Plataea elegy with echoes of Achilles;²³ or when, apparently some time around 460, the Athenian Stoa Poikile included scenes of Marathon alongside ones of Theseus and of, once again, the Trojan War.²⁴ Thucydides brashly set out to go one step further when he made the case that the Peloponnesian War was even bigger and bloodier than the Trojan War, and for that matter than the Persian War as well (1.23); Livy would make a similar claim about the Second Punic War (21.1.1).²⁵ If it is right to find an echo of *Iliad* 15.716–8, Hector firing the ships, as the Persians scramble into their ships after Marathon (6.113.2), this sort of 'elevation' is one of the effects.²⁶ Many too have found hints of the *Iliad* in Herodotus' opening chapters, and if that is right all three of these categories can be at play, immediacy, believability, and momentousness: once again things start with a woman, here Candaules' wife as earlier Io, Europa, Medea, and Helen, but in more than a routine a-woman's-place-is-in-the-wrong way: it is when it all becomes a matter of masculine assertiveness and pride that it really escalates. And it will all end in many, many tears. That, then, is a matter of

²² Dershowitz (1996); cf. Pelling (1999) 343–4.

²³ Fr. 11 W², with, e.g., Rutherford (2001) 38, 'surely the point of the Achilles paradigm is ... the fact that his war was a panhellenic effort, like the Plataea campaign, and that his exploits were immortalized in song, just as Simonides promises to immortalize the Plataiomachoi'. As Elton Barker points out, it is interesting that Achilles is pointed to, not Agamemnon, though the Peloponnesian connections might rather have suggested the latter: Agamemnon's various deficiencies in the *Iliad* might have compromised the 'elevation'.

²⁴ Paus. 1.15, with, e.g., Arafat (2013) and Arrington (2015) 201–3.

²⁵ O'Gorman (2009) 236.

²⁶ Hornblower–Pelling (2017) *ad loc.*; Fragoulaki in this volume, below, pp. 122–4.

interpretation too, structuring the way the reader looks at events and the strands that make it intelligible. It all builds our 'cognitive framework' for making sense of what might otherwise be just one thing after another, helping to transform a mere chronicle into a history.²⁷ We shall return to this later.

Differences though are usually more interesting than similarities. Here it is not just that Candaules' wife becomes something of a personality as well as a sex-object, for that is already true of Homer's Helen; she also becomes an initiator. Candaules' wife is not prepared to play the Briseis and wait around for nineteen Books before she becomes a personality: she is a Queen, after all. She therefore becomes the first of several strong Herodotean women who have a vast impact on history: Tomyris, Atossa, Artemisia, Masistes' wife. The world of the *Iliad* has changed; perhaps it had already changed a little by the time of the *Odyssey*, as Penelope and Arete and even Nausicaa are not bad at taking the initiative themselves. So broader reflections can be prompted by difference as much as by similarity, and we shall see more of that too when we turn to historical interpretation (Question 9).

Immediacy may have a further aspect too. If things happened once, they can happen again; if they happened twice, it is even more likely that they can happen a third time, and that may be in an audience's lifetime. Pondering intertextuality may make readers and listeners more alert to further parallels in their own past experience, or more aware that a pattern may reassert itself even if it has not done so yet.²⁸ We are more used to thinking in such terms with Thucydides, given his explicit reflections on the further repetitions that history may have in store (1.22.4, 3.82.2). But nothing precludes their relevance to Herodotus too.

Question 8: How Does Character-Text Intertextuality Interact with the Narrative Voice?

So far then we have a triangle, author, audience, and material. It often becomes a quadrilateral when a fourth viewpoint is added, that of characters within the text, for it is not just the narratorial voice that can turn Homeric. Artabanus ends his diatribe against Mardonius with a picture of him lying dead in defeat, torn apart by dogs and birds (7.100.3): that appalling threat

²⁷ Particular thanks to Elton Barker for re-emphasising this point to me.

²⁸ O'Gorman (2009) 236–7.

must recall the proem of the *Iliad*. When Dionysius of Phocaea says that ‘now everything is on a razor’s edge, men of Ionia ...’ (6.11.1–2), he may or may not be quoting Homer, for perhaps it was already a proverb at the time of the *Iliad* and stayed that way for Dionysius and for Herodotus. But the audience can think of Homer in any case, and Dionysius can himself be sensed as ‘elevating’: it is as serious, as momentous, as that. If some of the audience remember that in *Iliad* 10 the razor’s choice was between ‘life and grim death’, better still, and here too a difference is evocative: for the Greeks now it is a fate ‘whether to be free or slaves, and runaway slaves at that’, and that may be even worse than death. A Book later the Spartan ambassador at Syracuse gives a near-quotation and near-hexameter—near but not quite in each case—when the possibility is raised of Spartans ceding their leadership to Gelon: ‘Loud would be the cry of Agamemnon, scion of Pelops’ line ...’ (7.159.1, ἦ κε μέγ’ οἰμώξειε ὁ Πελοπίδης Ἀγαμέμνων ...).²⁹ It is outrageous—so the ambassador implies—for this upstart Syracusan to think that he is in that legendary league.

In these last two cases at least, there is a mismatch with what actually materialises. Dionysius’ rhetoric is inspiring, but only for a few days. That sun is so hot, the training is so laborious, and before long the workshy Ionians are saying that ‘it is better to put up with anything rather than suffer like this, and accept the slavery that looms, whatever that may turn out to be’ (6.12.3). So much for that razor’s edge: they will now go with the slavery, please. As for all that grand Spartan talk in Syracuse, Gelon has got the right answer: it looks as if you have leaders but are short of people for them to lead. Go back home and tell them that the spring has gone out of the year (7.162.1); and that last phrase is a piece of intertextuality as well, summoning up a speech of Pericles where he spoke of Athens’ war-dead in those terms (*Rhet.* 1365a31–3, 1411a24). That is what such grandiose Greek posturing will lead to, the slaughter of the flower of their youth, epic enough, it is true, but not the sort of outcome that the ambassadors have in mind. So these character-text ‘elevations’ have a habit of falling flat, something that will recur in later narratives and events as well: Agesilaus starts off his Asian campaign with a sacrifice at Aulis, but all is spoilt when the Boeotians come up and wreck the ceremony, and anyway Agesilaus is not going to get far before he is recalled (*Plut. Ages.* 6.6–10).

²⁹ The near-but-not-quite quotation and hexameter: Hornblower (1994) 66 and Dover (1997) 106–7. On the Gelon episode more generally see Grethlein (2006), Pelling (2006) 89–92, and Matijašić and Haywood in this volume, above, pp. 9–10 and below, pp. 75–8.

And yet, and yet ... Things fall flat—for *the moment*. Agesilaus does not get far, in reality or in Plutarch; Alexander though will, two generations later, and the text reminds us of that soon enough (*Ages.* 15). In many ways the battle of Lade, the one that Dionysius is trying to train his rowers for, prefigures the later battles of the Persian Wars; but those battles go Greece's way, not Persia's, and not least because then the Greeks are more in tune with Dionysius' inspirational tone. The Spartan ambassador might be over-cocky, but Thermopylae is looming, and Sparta will indeed produce heroes on a Homeric scale. In the battle-narratives things often go badly wrong, sometimes farcically wrong. That is particularly true in the preliminaries at Plataea, where discipline on the Greek side breaks down completely. So much for all that Spartan military skill and the grandiosity of their claims. Yet for all those false starts and stumbles, there will be fighter after fighter who, in those Laconic phrases, 'becomes a good man' on the battlefield, fights 'remarkably' (*ἀξίως λόγου*), and dies a hero. That character-text elevation was not so wrong after all: it might have given a wrong idea of the distance still to be travelled before we see its vindication—itself a Homeric technique³⁰—but in the end this will indeed after all be Greece's finest, and most momentous, hour.

Question 9: How can Intertextuality Affect Historical Interpretation?

Such intertextual parallels have their intratextual counterparts, with a similar sense that events or morals are repeating themselves. Thus Xerxes' expedition seems to re-enact aspects of Darius' march into Scythia, while Solon's insights are echoed in a number of later events and other characters' musings. True, this recurrence does not always happen. Persia does not usually lose, and there are Babylon and Egypt and Ionia as well as the Massagetae and Scythia and Greece. It is a pattern of *potential* recurrence, no more, and it may also be that some aspects recur and some aspects do not.

³⁰ Schadewaldt (1938) 15, 'The poet deceives the listeners over the distance of the path in front of them'. Thus Zeus' promise at *Il.* 11.186–94 would seem to point to success for Hector immediately after Agamemnon's removal from the battlefield: 284–309 seems to be delivering on that expectation, but then Hector himself is removed, and the real *aristeia* begins only in Book 15. The long-distance preparation is itself a mark of the momentousness of what is to come.

It is arguable that these qualified patterns play an important part in historical explanation: one notices which parts of a pattern recur and which do not, and uses these as a prompt for identifying what could have made the difference. The procedure is theorised by the Hippocratics for isolating the causes of disease (*On the Nature of Man* 9; *Epidemics* 6.3.12; *On Ancient Medicine* 17–19). Historical explanation is more complicated, and the essential singularity of each event will anyway exclude exact repeatability;³¹ but something can still be done, and we can see Herodotus doing it. If the Spartans cared immensely about Athens' support in 480 and rather less in 479, something must have changed, and that will be the building of the Isthmus Wall (9.8.2); or a constant rather than a variable may offer an explanation, when one needs to invoke Corinth's inveterate hatred of Corcyra to make sense of their involvement in an apparently surprising war (3.49.1). I say a good deal more about this elsewhere.³²

With intertextuality too the most interesting aspects are often not what is recurrent but what is different: I have discussed this too elsewhere,³³ and in particular the way that differences can track a pattern of historical change. My prime test-case there was once again the battle of Thermopylae, and in particular the themes of 'wrath', *μῆνις*, and 'fame', *κλέος*, both of them very Homeric notions. At Thermopylae though, they are refracted in a new and different way, one that throws more weight on to the collective and less on the individual (see also Fragoulaki in this volume). It is now the wrath of the city as a whole that is in point, not just of the single superhero; it is now the glory and fame not just of an Achilles or a Helen but of 300 Spartans. Things have moved on.

Something similar can be said of Themistocles. He has more than a touch of the Odysseus about him: recent scholarship has made that clear.³⁴ Evidently there is still room for an Odysseus figure in the world of the *polis*, and it is just as well for Athens that there is. But how will the collective of the city cope with having men as big as this? Not too well; there are enough hints that there may be trouble ahead, for Themistocles as for Pausanias, and his future will not be one of growing peacefully old in his grateful and appreciative equivalent of Ithaca. Times have changed in other ways too. This time it is not an Athena that plants a crucially good idea in

³¹ O'Gorman (2006) 102–3.

³² Pelling (2019).

³³ Pelling (2006).

³⁴ Blösel (2001) 185–6 and (2004) 158–60; Baragwanath (2008) 317.

Themistocles' mind, it is the very human Mnesiphilus—not unlike the way that Herodotus himself no longer has a Muse to appeal to, but human eyes and ears and intelligence. So is this a new and godless world, rather as many have found in Thucydides? No, not at all: the gods *will* be seen to be active, but in a non-Homeric way, and still leaving a very great amount for the mortals to achieve by themselves.

Perhaps one could say some at least of the same about the relation of the *Aeneid* to the *Iliad*, with all the reflections that prompts on how Homeric heroism adapts to an enhanced, though not wholly new, sense of collective responsibility; or indeed of the relation already of the *Odyssey* to the *Iliad*, with new and more devious arts necessary in a world away from the battlefield.

Question 10: Is Intertextuality So Very Different from Other Forms of Allusiveness?

One sort of critic tends to talk about intertextuality, another about Herodotus' allusions to his contemporary world; yet similar things can be said. Plotting of historical change: yes. If Hippias warns the Corinthians that they, of all people, will have reason to rue not strangling the infant Athenian democracy at birth (5.93.1), those who had lived through the late 430s would know what he meant; they will similarly catch the understated point when Corinth lends Athens ships and Herodotus notes that 'at that time the two cities were on the friendliest terms' (6.89). When he comments how unpopular it will be to say that Athens was the saviour of Greece at 7.139.1, again everyone will know why, and see the paradox of how so many roles had changed since the time that Sparta and Athens worked in unity—fractious unity, it is true, but unity that somehow managed to pull it all off. Believability: yes. When Herodotus notes that Corinth would not have gone to war over Samos if it had not been for their inveterate hatred of Corcyra (3.49.1), those who knew what had been happening in the 430s would find it all too credible. The same goes for Athens and Aegina: could they really have hated one another as much as Herodotus' account so often implies? Those who remembered the mass expulsion of 431 (Thuc. 2.27.1) or the slaughter of 424 (Thuc. 4.57.4, noting 'the hatred that had always existed') would need no convincing. Immediacy? Yes: these things still mattered greatly, and Thucydides' Plataean debate (3.52–68) suggests how memories of 480–79 could still be a matter of life and death. Momentousness? Yes: those living through the Peloponnesian War, or for that matter the decades

beforehand when they might have heard Herodotus reciting, would need no persuasion that the fractiousness between the Greek states that is always simmering in the narrative was going to have very big consequences indeed; so would the similarities, as well as any differences, that Herodotus suggests between imperialists eastern and western. Those ‘three generations of evils’ of 6.98.2, ‘some coming to Greece from the Persians and some from themselves as they contended for the ἀρχή’ would be all too clear to those who had lived through them: ‘the’ ἀρχή, one notices, as if there is always one at least in prospect, and it is just a question of who will have it.

Historical interpretation is always a game for two, fitting a picture of the past into a framework that is already part of a reader’s or listener’s mental furniture. A large part of that mental furniture is constructed out of past narratives, whether those are drawn from literature or from life. Stories work ‘in cahoots’.³⁵

Question 11: Any Light on Homer Too?

Intertextuality can say something about both authors, not just one. At the very least, it may cast light on how an author might be read, and very often that may strike a modern reader as one-sided, even simple. As Virgil’s *Aeneid* became an Augustan classic for later authors to define themselves against, any ‘further voices’ questioning the hero or the Roman achievement could be drowned out: ‘the *Aeneid* of Vergilian scholars is very different from the *Aeneid* of Lucan specialists’.³⁶ When Dio or Appian or Plutarch added a Thucydidean patina to a passage, it could conjure up a world where politics was always a matter of hard-headed and brutal pragmatism;³⁷ there is not much hint of emotion, still less of any ‘humanitarian aspect’,³⁸ yet it is not too much of a stretch to find both in Thucydides’ Mycalessus (7.29–30). In *Ajax* Sophocles exploits Homeric hints to sketch a value-scheme of heroic individualism to which Ajax subscribes and which Odysseus qualifies; but Ajax ‘carries the implications of the heroic code to the extreme possible point, as no-one in Homer, and perhaps no one in life, ever did’.³⁹ What of

³⁵ I again develop these ideas further in Pelling (2019), esp. 55–7.

³⁶ Fowler (1994) 239 = Fowler (2000) 16. ‘Further voices’: Lyne (1987).

³⁷ Pelling (2010).

³⁸ Bosworth (1993), on the Melian Dialogue—not, admittedly, a reading with which all would agree.

³⁹ Winnington-Ingram (1980) 19.

Herodotus' intertextuality with Homer? Does it point not merely to ways that Homer could be read, but to how he could be *under*-read?

Take that example again of Thermopylae, with ideas of *μῆνις* and *κλέος* being recast in a new, more communitarian light (Question 9). It is not hard to find some less individualistic thinking in the *Iliad* too. The community matters already, and it is easy enough to find passion if one lets one's colleagues down. Achilles feels it himself: his rage at Agamemnon has led him to fail Patroclus and his own men (*Il.* 18.98–126). Nor is the tension between individual *κλέος* and the community's interests absent from Hector's dilemma in *Iliad* 22: should he stay and fight, or should he return within the walls as Priam and Hecuba plead? If Herodotus is implying a clear-cut set of 'heroic values' that have now changed, is he being over-simple about the *Iliad*, whether or not he is over-simple about Leonidas too?

Perhaps; but also perhaps not, if we prefer to see this in terms not of Herodotus defining this world against Homer, but of his appropriating a tension already there in Homer and exploring it in a world that is different but not as different as all that. Here again, similar issues come up with other authors and genres, and we could debate Sophocles' *Ajax* or Flavian 'secondary epic' in the same way. Virgil's *Aeneid* again raises similar questions: if an Augustan hero requires different virtues, is this because the values of the *Iliad* will no longer do? Or is it that the clash between the martial and the humane is already there in the *Iliad*, and the poem is still as relevant and as thought-provoking as ever?

Question 12: Is Homer Already Doing the Same?

Might the Homeric poems themselves already be doing something along the same intertextual lines? This takes us into the murky world of Neoanalysis, and there is a debate about whether 'intertextuality' is the right word to describe the gesture to an earlier version in a world where, probably, we should not be thinking of fixed texts.⁴⁰ Still, whether or not we use the word, it is not unreasonable to find the thing. Earlier I made very familiar points about the way that the catalogue of ships or the duel of Menelaus and Paris may 'feel as if' they belong at the beginning of the war or the death of Hector

⁴⁰ For the debate see, e.g., the various papers in Montanari–Rengakos–Tsagalis (2012), together with the thoughtful reflections of Burgess (2006). The opposite points of view are clearly put by Kelly (2012) and Currie (2016). I develop some of the points in this paragraph further in Pelling (2020b).

'feels as if' all Troy is falling; but it may be more than that, with an audience—certainly a seventh-century, perhaps still a fifth-century audience—mindful of other epic poems, perhaps on the same poet's lips or perhaps on others', treating precisely those themes. Much could then be summoned up and conveyed very succinctly, with an audience very well primed to 'fill in the dots'; this could also—again, a very familiar point—do something to raise a story of four days to a story of the war as a whole, bringing out the fuller significance of these four days and their 'momentousness'. And people might find a few extra resonances in 'And Zeus' will was being accomplished' (Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή, *Il.* 1.7) if they recalled from the *Cypria*, or the oral tradition that surfaced in the *Cypria*, how Zeus had sought to solve the overpopulation problem by fanning up the Trojan War (*Cypr.* fr. 1)—and so on. It may even be that there is some 'intertraditionality' if it is right to think of Homer evoking 'Heracles epic', poems embodying a bygone age of even greater individualism and one in which the seriousness of human mortality is underplayed in the ease with which a father god will save his son.⁴¹ At some early stage, then, it may be that intertextuality of any sort, with any author, would have been felt as a gesture towards Homer, an intertextuality of its own within that earlier category of the 'grammar of technique': 'ah yes, it's doing that Homeric thing again'. Whether that was still the case for Herodotus I rather doubt; too much has happened in between, not least Pindar and Simonides with their own intertextual games (even if they did not have a word to describe it: I skirt carefully around that important issue). Maybe we should be content to say that the technique was yet another part of historiography's multifarious debt to grandfather Homer. But others may disagree.

No shortage, then, of questions; and later in this volume there will be no shortage of answers.⁴²

⁴¹ Barker and Christensen (2014); Tsagalis (2014a).

⁴² My thanks to the editor and to Elton Barker for perceptive comments on an earlier draft.

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