

REVIEW–DISCUSSION

WHAT KIND OF HISTORY IS 'INTENTIONAL' HISTORY?

Hans-Joachim Gehrke, *The Greeks and Their Histories: Myth, History, and Society*, translated by Raymond Geuss. Classical Scholarship in Translation. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023. Pp. xvii + 166. Hardback, £85.00. ISBN 978-1-316-51978-3.

Hans-Joachim Gehrke invented the term 'intentional history' [*intentionale Geschichte*] to denominate a notion and a form of comprehending the past that views its agents not as 'our' modern predecessors do, in methods and purposes, but as creators of a new, communal and self-conscious medium of local and regional but Hellenic memory. Its broader net encompassed oral traditions, all three genres of oratory, historical elegies, rituals, inscriptions, visual battlefield memorials, and even *polis* topographical organisation. This perspective is novel and helpful, although for cultural studies rather than for understanding political and military events.

Since 1985 Gehrke has published on Hellenic 'collective identities', ethnicities, and representations of foundational and more recent pasts, e.g., the uses of one nail-biting week bivouacked at Marathon.¹ He has blazed a path quite different from A. J. Woodman's (historiographically) pessimistic *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography* (London, 1988), one that finds truth and sophisticated rhetoric compatible, as Jonas Grethlein insists in his Forward (vii–x). This self-styled *opusculum*, originally composed in 'sometimes rebarbative German' (xv), began as guest lectures at the University of Munich (2012/13).² They now appear in readable English.

A brief Introduction (1–9) describes the 'vital elixir' of historical texts as a way of making sense of one's country's past—a matter actually hard to understand and difficult, if not impossible, of dependable access. Starting from the Brothers Grimm and Nietzsche's collective memory/ies, Gehrke identifies two forms of memories of the past, the community's and the 'critical',

¹ He lists twenty of his previous publications in the bibliography.

² The original German publication of which the present volume is a translation is H.-J. Gehrke, *Geschichte als Element antiker Kultur* (Berlin and Boston, 2014).

professional historians’—someone not a member of the community, fully or at all, an exile, an ‘egghead’, or an academic centuries or millennia afterwards.

‘Each group has a need for its own appropriate past, ... a form of remembering, ..., a “cultural memory”’ (5). ‘Conceptions of the past ... define the identity of a group and are characteristic of it’ (7). Such a view leaves history very subjective, but Gehrke would retort that it can be no other way. He says that his own approach is ‘etic and analytic’, although it concentrates on ‘emic conceptions and takes them very seriously’ (8). The first two chapters will distinguish ‘vehicles and media of intentional history’ from the structure and forms of such history. Later chapters will address truth, a question complicated by the fact that Hellenic historiography ‘eventually comes to drape itself in the cloth of rhetoric’ (9) and ‘aspired to have an effect on a broad public’.³

Chapter 1 examines first-person history, the reference group of ‘we’. Germans and Argentines, Nigerians, Americans, and Chinese do this, and likely everyone else too. Archaic Greeks did it—Mimnermos and Tyrtaios, Archilochos⁴ and Simonides later on, also the now forgotten Aristodama of Smyrna (12). This foreign poet honored by obscure Chaleion in Aitolian Lokris (*IG IX I*² 3.740 = *SIG* 532) furnishes Gehrke with a striking example of a community honouring an alien with citizenship for her ‘worthy’ poetic presentation and preservation of the locals’ past, probably a reworking of parochial myth. Although not a native ‘rememberer’, like Caesar’s Druids or comparable early literate Chinese specialists, she transmitted sacred and social ‘truths’ that ensured ‘the very survival of the group’ (16). In Greece, the poets performed this task in the Archaic period, as Herodotus acutely notes that Homer and Hesiod did (2.53). ‘[N]ot just stories, but history’ evolved in ‘a single mytho-historic space’ (17), before a different, more rationalist, approach emerged, signalled by Hekataios’ prefatory sneer at the ridiculous *logoi* of the Greeks.

Later Greek inscriptions repeatedly cited poets and historians as the professional authorities when serious claims of individuals or *poleis* conflicted. These two groups always strived to surpass their predecessors, however, and no two Greek versions resembled each other (19)! Absence of definitive fixity

³ Gordon Shrimpton in *History and Memory in Ancient Greece* (Montreal and Kingston, 1997), esp. 262–9 and Appendix 1, sketched out, from statements in the ancient sources, a similarly ‘disturbing’ view of the gap between ancient and contemporary historiographical concepts. Ancient collective memory meant that ‘[m]oments of embarrassment suppressed in one community would probably be subjects of celebration in the memory and documents of its rivals’. Thus, for example, Herodotus’ many epichoric citations refer to ‘historical truths’ as arbitrated by a particular community, but not this investigator’s own views, what he knows on his own authority (1.5.3): *οἶδα αὐτός* .

⁴ Gehrke notes (29) that this local celebrity’s poems were inscribed on stone in Paros. Centuries later the poet-battler remained the honorand of a cult.

in this domain, this inherent pluralism, did not trouble the Greeks (as it would Europeans schooled in the absolute truth of the Bible). Men seeking ‘a good posthumous reputation’ (23) never lacked a writer to ensure it. Later readers imagined that those earliest ‘histories’ like the *Iliad* depended on contemporary eyewitnesses (23). Thus, they imagined Demodokos’ account of building the Trojan horse came from a contemporary, or, as we might say, from the horse’s mouth. The poetry of banquets and festivals—in demes, poleis, amphictyonic and Panhellenic venues—provided a ‘dense network of opportunities’ to perform such ‘intentional histories’. Many parties were not only audiences but performers and participants who sang and danced, fully integrated (27) by lyricists including Pindar and Bacchylides into creating and confirming collective memories.

In the fourth century, orators worked at ‘the cultivation of negative reputations’ (25), so that Lykourgos can foresee his opponent Leokrates’ jury will produce for him an inverted celebrity, a legal judgement that will become part of intentional history—a warning message to posterity. This notoriety is the reverse of posthumous glory, as Lykourgos said (*Leoc.* 9, 51, 150). But rhetoric already influenced the first historians (30). In Lykourgos’ preserved speech, and he was far from the first, he fabricated documentary texts. Gehrke treats the ‘oath of Plataiai’ and the famous decree of Themistokles, copied on stone and found at Troizen, as ‘history by popular decree’.⁵ These inventions of Athenians, part of *the* invention of Athens (31), have ancient predecessors in making these claims of intentional inauthenticity.

Material monuments, especially stone ones but also paintings such as those of the Stoa Poikilē, erected in significant community locations like temple precincts, agoras, and treasuries, were a sign and a reminder (*sēma* and *mnēma*) to connect the fast receding past and present—a field of tension (33–4). Monuments project past events onto future audiences, creating for the monument-makers one kind of imperishable immortality, a sentiment memorably voiced by Hektor in a battlefield challenge issued to the Akhaians (*Il.* 7.87–91). The visual and the verbal elements of such memorials paralleled the apparent sempiternal sameness (36) of rituals, another way of connecting past, present and future. Oldish man-made objects often became religious relics and/or historically important things, like the boar-tusk helmet and the ship of Theseus. So did unnatural objects such as the bones of heroes like Orestes, even before Homer, or the jaw of the monster Kalydonian boar. Likewise, important places, *lieux de mémoire*, such as Mykenean graves and Plataiai’s Persian War battlefield, signalled knowledge of temporally distant life and pivotal events—they became a useful medium of memory and cause

⁵ A nice phrase. A few problems in translation appear. The Stoa Poikilē stood ‘in the public state of the city’ (35): ‘space’ is likely meant. ‘The sculpture on the Temple of Zeus at Olympus’ (*ibid.*), for Olympia.

for veneration (37). The *herōs ktistēs*, founder-hero, might be a guardian salvaged from narratives nearly lost in—or newly created from—the mists of the past (39), or (exceptionally) as recent as Brasidas and, then, later Hellenistic panjandrums. Hero structures provided material embodiment for ‘constructed memory’ and each item required an ‘explanatory discourse’ and performance to keep them alive (40). This approach is enlightening. The statue, *herōon* structure, and/or battlefield needs a living action to confirm and explain what it is and what it means. Contemporary activities render the past present. One may find analogues in current costumed American secular rituals: battle reenactments of a 1777 battle at Fort Ticonderoga in northern New York state, or civil-war conflicts between Johnny Reb and the 20th Maine Union volunteers, or more peaceful colonial Fife-and-Drum-corps tootling on American Independence Day, 4 July, in my hometown of Exeter, New Hampshire, USA.⁶

‘Greek Myths as a History of the Greeks: Motifs—Forms—Structures’ accurately captions the difficult Chapter 2. ‘History without Historians’ or ‘Everytown its Own Historian’ furnish alternate titles. Intentional history describes the ‘self-understanding of members of the group’ (42–3), and for this purpose myth furnishes the ‘royal road’ to understand ‘the history of the Greeks as they understood it themselves’. It is a ‘mytho-history’ which, like the stories each of us is ‘constantly retelling’ ourselves, can tone down or deny changes of direction or unexpected events as we ‘work it over again and again’. This chapter focuses on ethnic and *polis* traditions reaching back into the murk of yore: heroes named Aitolos and Doros, an elastic ‘period’ cherished by the horographers but disdained by the historians that later centuries deemed ‘proper’.

Three generations constituted the Greek legendary period, an imaginary but genealogised time before, during, and immediately after the axial Trojan War (46). The migrations followed the Trojan War wanderers and form ‘a bridge between “Once upon a time” and the present time’ (48). Hellen and his invented descendants source the different major kinship groups. ‘Historians’ invented various relations of kinship as needed or desired (55) to increase ‘one’s prestige and ... venerability’. Ancestry and spatial location mutually supported accounts of identity (53). Hekataios ‘used [genealogy] on himself’ to trace his ancestry (Hdt. 2.143) back to gods in sixteen easy steps. Somehow, the Pelasgians and the Leleges were transformed from autochthonous old Greeks

⁶ I have been invited by mail (June 2023) to join the Fort Ticonderoga Association and to visit artefacts that have ‘the power to inspire patriotism in the hearts of millions of Americans’. Thirty dollars will make me a ‘Founding Patriot’; \$45 will bring me also an ‘exclusive Founding Patriot’ baseball cap for ‘preserving the priceless legacy of the United States’ nation founding’. Samuel Johnson once (1775) said ‘Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel’.

into ‘not-really-Greeks’ (57; 50–1, thinking of Hdt. 1.56 and Kroisos’ investigations). When one wished to anchor barbarian peoples in the Greek world, these ‘historians’ invented (57) an ‘Aigyptos, Arabos, and Phoinix’. Internal consistency in these stories trumped inconvenient contradictions among different cities’ versions of local legends (54). Simple ‘rough and ready’ motives for ancestors’ actions sufficed, reduced by Gehrke to ‘the logic of pushing and being pushed’ (55).

Certain narrative patterns or structures often repeat—events depend on sexuality, kinship, drought and flood, etc. Better than just grabbing land from indigenes was to claim your folk was returning home, such as the homecoming Heraklid story (59; 70). Other narratives involve ‘blackmail or extortion and the threat of ... violence’ (60). Gehrke’s account here depends heavily on the precious Thera and Kyrene foundation stories preserved by Herodotus (4.146–66): emigration, deception, flight, stasis, etc. The founding *oikistēs* individualises the community movement; often he has been retroactively created and named for the group: Aiolos, Doros, Ion, etc. (62). Thus, a pre-colonial history is invented that forcefully connects an available Trojan War wanderer with a new settlement.

Writers borrowed motifs from legend, folktale, and myth. Herodotus traces Theras (4.147, not ‘Theros’), militant founder of Thera, back to Theban mytho-history featuring Oidipous and Kadmos (63 n 72). Founders and law-givers are celebrated regularly with cult, the poetry and songs of religious festivals, and expensive structures, from well before legendary Kyrenian Battos down to the pseudo-oikist of Amphipolis, the Spartan *condottiere* Brasidas, in the first decade of the Peloponnesian War. Oral and written narratives that reached Herodotus reflect elements of the (recent) activities of these groups and their agents fabricated an ‘interlacing of past and present’. *Status quo* was retrojected onto *status nascendi* (67). The name of a place or *ethnos* could be projected or extrapolated onto a hero/founder, such as imaginary eponyms, e.g., Phokos or Perinthos. Gehrke stresses the role of many oracles in choosing expeditionary leaders and destinations for settlements (65). ‘Mysteriously formulated injunctions’ necessitated complications and conflicts and often transgressions that needed expiation (66). Thus, narratives of migration and settlement, of seizures of land and political domination, legitimate current arrangements (70).

Indeed, we might say that this legitimising function outweighs any other element in origin aetiologies. Plausible narratives explain, legitimise, and create an identity for a bunch of homeless exiles or semi-organised ruffians. A ‘poetics’ of violence and mobility—ejections, travels, land-grabbing, and enslavement/expulsion/eradication of others—can be found in the somewhat repetitive, but differently detailed narratives of Archaic Hellas, eighth to sixth centuries (71). Gehrke concludes this exposition by cautioning historians not to look for ‘traces of concrete historical memories’ in this Hellenic material.

Rather the tales are ‘structurally historical’ instruments to interpret their world(s) in which aggressive predation was standard procedure (72 n 91). Gehrke notes the preserved Assyrian point of view of Danaan hit-and-run attacks. Readers will consider analogies in the European settlements of North and South America, Africa and Australia.

Chapter 3 addresses extant Greek historiographers. Artistic compositions, ‘words like the truth’ as Hesiod described them, via rhetoric trumped the search for ‘real’ history. While the Muses could sing ‘true things’, they chose otherwise. They propagated ‘not mere idle and arbitrary fantasies’ but narratives open to rewriting, extension, and modification as (later, changing) circumstances required (75). In Gehrke’s somewhat depressing analysis, ‘this [false and true concoction] bothered only a very few individuals’. Indeed, ‘once it [historiography, as Herodotus or Thucydides conceived it] did arrive upon the scene, it was widely ignored’ (75). Gehrke compares this disregard to that which meets professional historians now. The older relevant historicalish prose authors, such as Pherekydes (*FGrHist* 2), did nothing else but ‘free themselves from the demands of metre’, as Strabo critically observed (1.2.6, cited 76 n. 10). They kept the other poetic elements *in statu nascendi*. Hekataios’ works belong among the very *logoi* that Herodotus had declared problematic, precisely *geloion*, ‘laughable’, as Herodotus presents his predecessor’s methods of recording the past. He rejects this predecessor, denominating him a *logopoios*.⁷

The pejorative term—‘story-maker’—is not merely competitive scrutiny, or the ‘ridicule’ afflicting the *logioi* of Herodotus’ opening rape-for-rape ultimate cause of the Persian Wars, but the application of critical criteria. Historians now call this ‘objectivity’ or ‘rectification of claims’, ranking it superior to the subjective substitution of one prejudice, communicative memory, or limited point of view for another (81). Herodotus, however, does not summarily reject the ‘stories of the Hellenes’, as Hekataios did. He records (many of) the local traditions, speculations, and family glorifications in their contradictions and tries to judge their veracity. He elsewhere applies research-based criticisms (84). He refines a method (the *histōr* or judge, indeed) for dealing with so many contradictory accounts of events and explanations for them. This generous view of the Herodotean project (86–7)⁸ notes that this *histōr* did not find ‘intentional histories’ alien to his concept but folded them

⁷ Hdt. 2.143.1; 5.36.2, 125; cf. his only other application of this unflattering term to the fabulist Aisop, 2.134. The term is contemporaneously contemptuous in the orators.

⁸ Gehrke oddly never mentions Detlev Fehling’s *Herodotus and his ‘Sources’* (Leeds, rev. ed. 1989), a damning and clever, if unpersuasive, indictment of Herodotus’ ‘method’, his every number and citation, although Gehrke generously cites many other modern authorities.

into it with the equivalent of distancing quotation marks while often suspending judgement, explicitly or not.⁹

Thucydides then continued at least Herodotus' 'forensic' method and rigorously extended it, applying severe skepticism to all traditional accounts of olden times. His 'realist' vision of 'the human thing' (*τὸ ἀνθρώπινον*), human behaviour, remains attractive to post-Hobbesian analysts of politics and war. He boldly posits an atemporal human nature that produces nearly invariant results before the age of electronic propaganda and data tracking. Further, he asserts an inarguable accuracy in describing events just past. Like Herodotus, Thucydides had no legitimate heirs, at least ones that he would acknowledge and raise as legitimate from his Halimousian hearth (91). This sometimes reductive analysis so far remains perceptive in a large sweep.

Since Thucydides' method explicitly posits the unknowability of the details of past human conflicts and a continuity of determinative human motives and political pressures, his continuator Xenophon, the last of the extant, relatively 'pre-rhetorical'¹⁰ historians, consequently never 'deal[s] with the distant past'. Starting abruptly, approximately a month after the time of Thucydides' abrupt, surely unintended, last sentence and adopting his implicit precepts but not following his actual example,¹¹ this mostly fourth-century presentist historian provides no narratives of the distant, or the recent, past prior to his opening sentence, which omits author, title, or preface.¹²

⁹ E.g., Hdt. 2.44.1, 123.1; 4.195.2; 7.152.3. See below on Hdt. 6.117, the curious case of Epizeos.

¹⁰ The phrase is my own. Every composition has a rhetoric, every genre borrows from other genres, every essay has a point of view, so what we mean by 'rhetorical historians' is a matter of degree, but certain historians acquired the title by seemingly subordinating the search for truth to the search for effect.

¹¹ Thucydides dilates in the prefatory 'Archaeology' (a modern misleading translation of a term, not used by Thucydides, meaning 'an account of ancient times') describing what he considered a sufficient history of the Bronze and early Iron ages up through (and minimising) Herodotus' war narrative: two battles by land and two by sea! (1.1–11, 12–19: *τὰ μὲν οὖν παλαιὰ τοιαῦτα ἤϋρον. χαλεπὰ ὄντα παντὶ ἐξῆς τεκμηρίῳ πιστεῦσαι, κ.τ.λ.*). It might be better termed 'A speculative sketch of the pre-historical (*archaia*) ages'. Or perhaps, following the Korinthian speaker's lead and Thucydides' less than flattering description of Nikias' final military exhortation (1.71.2; 7.69.2), 'the obsolete and antiquated ages'. Later, Thucydides produces another sketch (6.1–5) of the mainland's colonisation of Sicilian sites by force—marauders are mentioned. Finally, he reconstructs (6.53–9) the not so distant overthrow of the Peisistratid tyranny as sexual revenge rather than democratic liberation, an openly polemical correction of 'intentional histories', both popular recollection and 'professional' accounts.

¹² John Marincola notes that speakers in Xenophon contest past battles and wars, although that is a different matter from a historian's investigations. See his 'The Rhetoric of History: Allusion, Intertextuality and Exemplarity in Historiography', in D. Pausch, ed., *Stimmen der Geschichte. Funktionen von Reden in der antiken Historiographie* (Berlin and New York,

Meanwhile, communities bearing and hearing their histories continued uninterruptedly to develop their own methods for remembering the past. Gehrke mentions Athenian tragedy and epideictic orations as two ways of inventing this more popular, self-flattering Athenian past (92). Elenchic historiography's brief flowering yields back to mythic history. Gehrke regards this as a pyrrhic victory, the fabrication of a false discourse (94), one that he describes in the final chapter.

Chapter 4, 'Greek Historiography Between Fiction and Truth', describes the influence of rhetoric, especially Gorgias' influences, on his possible pupil Isokrates' philosophical forays describing past events, then on that man's influential philosophical-oratorical formation of his pupils, the historians Ephoros and Theopompos, and their concepts of history-writing. One can disregard the questionable evidence for this popular ancient mode of biographically chaining paedagogy while still considering the reasonable attribution of influences. Certainly, the influencer Isokrates affected the purposes and compositional fourth-century *Zeitgeist* more than the more theoretical Plato or Aristotle.¹³ The Isokratean avenue provided an easier, more elegant and more pleasant method, for practitioners and audiences. It led, if not to historiographical ruin, then surely to fiction or 'faction', not to the difficult examination and determination of historical objectivity. Rhetoric touched even the two giants, but rhetorical *hēdonē* and *thelxis* overwhelmed the efforts of those who later called themselves historians. *Eikos* was good enough, after Gorgias cut through jungles of obstacles, such as autoptic and archival research and point-of-view distortion. Truth became intractable (100) in a 'swamp of mere competing subjective opinions'.

The loss of fourth-century texts (Strasburger once guessed that only two or three percent survive) complicates the analysis, even though we do have significant chunks of Ephoros and Theopompos. These two provided Gehrke's well-chosen representatives of Isokratean 'rhetorical history'. Working from recent German scholarship on this influential but painfully superficial thinker, Gehrke follows and quotes the wealthy but misunderstood Isokrates. His efforts in his longest speech, the apologetic *Antidosis* (ca. 353) (not, as Gehrke has it in his text, the *Panathenaios* (338))¹⁴ attempt to harness his own and his

2011) 259–89, see pp. 269–79 for discussion of Xenophon's speeches at *Hell.* 6.3, 6.5, and 7.1.

¹³ Meanwhile, Herodotus had pioneered but not paved a permanent roadway to critical history, and Thucydides' equally idiosyncratic, demanding path struck most successors as more brambly than primrosed. That is, these two innovators' path-breaking routes towards establishing truths about the past flamed out.

¹⁴ Pp. 102–3. Gehrke gives correct numerical references, but someone has made an error in the text of p. 102: the material he is addressing in detail comes from the *Antidosis*. Gehrke gives the correct number for the *Antidosis* (*Discourse* 15) in spite of the inaccurate name, and the footnote references to *Discourse* 12 (which is the actual *Panathenaios*) are accurate. Both

city's proud past in order to make good citizens better (*Antid.* 15.270–309). The writer must appear credible, creditable, and decent (*Antid.* 15. 277–9). In this quest, Isokrates grants full licence to exaggerate or minimise (*Busiris* 11.4), whether in *epainos* or *apologia*, in epideictic or dicanic efforts at persuasion (103).

Gehrke does not intend to serve as an apologist for these fourth-century remodelling paradigms. He deems Isokrates' project 'the exact opposite of history', a 'utopia projected into the past', 'models for emulation' (104), a programme that might inspire 'disgust and horror'. Rhetoricians, however, he observes, aim at plausibility and moral improvement, such as one finds in Isokrates' defence of mytho-historical figures against criticism, as Gorgias had served as attorney for Helen. He must reason and doubt what is *mythōdes* or miraculous or excessively theatrical, but the methods of rhetoric suffice to produce something 'truthy'. (This last, post-modernist word is mine, not Gehrke's.) He has struggled valiantly to make sense of Isokrates' method when scrutinising the usable past. Common sense and the common consensus of experts is good enough for Isokrates (105–7), however stale and unoriginal, and however unsupported by evidence the result may be. Isokrates' reputation and influence on an intelligent tranche of educated Greeks must have some respectable basis, as Gehrke implicitly argues. The modern inclination to dismiss him as a significant thinker must be resisted, if we are to understand the historiographical weight of Ephoros and Theopompos.

Gehrke cites Ephoros' rhetorical credentials (112–18), but also Polybios' unusual praise of this predecessor. To be sure, this praise serves his demolition of Timaios (Polyb. 12.28.10 = *FGrHist* 70 T 23). Elsewhere and unsurprisingly, the exasperated fact-seeker Polybios severely criticised Ephoros (e.g., 9.1.4 (recondite genealogy), 12.25f (laughable on land battles, likewise Theopompos!)). Gehrke criticises Eduard Schwartz and Felix Jacoby for applying inappropriate standards (112 n 71) to Ephoros' *Universal History*. Ephoros ascribed significance to autopsy,¹⁵ although the proviso *εἰ δυνατόν ἦν* frees him from any or much guilt for doing little of it. To assert, however, that 'he applied the whole extensive set of tools that had been developed in critical and theoretically reflective historiography since the sixth century BC' suggests an enthusiasm for novelty that does not carry conviction (115). 'A classic', 'the authority' (Gehrke's italics, 116) makes this defence of Ephoros valuable reading for those who have dismissed him as a second-rate moraliser and over-reaching rhetorical historian, myself included. Have historians wrongly spent so little effort re-evaluating his *oeuvre* since G. L. Barber's antiquated 1935 monograph, *The Historian Ephorus?*

essays, despite their different epochs, dwell on Isokrates' excellence and exhibit his *makrologia*.

¹⁵ P. 114, citing Polyb. 1.27.7, a misprint for 12.27.7 = *FGrHist* F 110.

Theopompos' emphatic and dramatic judgements on Philip and the Athenian demagogues, *inter alios*, colour our estimate of his massive works (*FGrHist* 115). Gehrke too easily has him share Isokrates' cultural and 'philosophical' goals. His literary career outside of historiography, it is true, included festive orations for cities and festivals, eulogies and panegyrics. After an *Epitome of Herodotus*, he wrote *Hellenic Histories* (F 5–23, again starting approximately when Thucydides stops) before his massive *Philippika*, a fifty-eight-book work probably only completed after Alexander's accession (F 330 = Plut. *Demosth.* 25). He certainly did not portray the Macedonian autocrats and war-buddies as Isokratean saviors of Hellas. In his punning Gorgianic word-play, they were not *hetairoi* but *hetairai*, not comrades, but whores (! F 225 = Polyb. 8.11.5–13; cf. Demetr. *On Style* 27 and 247). Philip showed himself randy with women, wicked in his alliances, and an enslaver by fraud and force, oh, and a drunkard. Gehrke logically enough attributes Theopompos' tendency to moralising to rhetoric's orientation towards praise and blame, but Xenophon anticipated him in this inclination.

The censorious Polybios censures Theopompos most for extravagant and irrelevant censoriousness (*atopia*; Polyb. 8.8–11 = *FGrHist* 27, 225). Theopompos himself, amidst a slew of criticisms, pauses so as not to seem prolix: ἀπλῶς δ'εἰπεῖν, ἵνα πᾶσομαι μακρολογῶν. It is not clear to me that Theopompos regarded himself as a teacher rather than an historian indulging a writer's licence to expose, diminish, and inveigh against (*aischrologia*) the brutish conqueror who had brought down the contentious Hellenic republics. Certainly he ticked several boxes for historians, such as those demanding experience of military and political events (T 20a = Dion. Hal. *ad Pomp.* 6.2–3). He too was an exile (from Chios); he too was a politician who consorted with other politicians and military men, again like Polybios later. His impulse towards empirical research led him to investigate geography and archaeological data (p. 124; cf. F 129 = Strabo 7.5.9). While there is clearly a rhetorical element to Theopompos' historiography (a truth for any writer), one hesitates to call him a rhetorician writing history, since rhetoric's pretensions to truth were so 'precarious and fragile' (125).

Gehrke leans on presumed audience expectations, an area where information is mostly wanting (125). All sane writers cater to their imagined audiences, even if they explicitly dismiss *hoi polloi*, as Thucydides did (1.20, 21, 22; 6.54), but I was startled, nevertheless, when properly reminded that the notorious innovator Douris of Samos chastised precisely Ephoros and Theopompos for failing to provide the mimetic representation of past events that would provide audience pleasure (*hēdonē*; *FGrHist* 76 F 1). This ironic full circle brings historical prose back to its despised poetic origins (127), a *kakotechnia* of bombast, swaggering with startling exaggeration (*kompos*). It focuses on bared and beaten breasts, teeth-gnashing, weeping, and other sensational body-

language—monstrous and marvellous ‘theatrics’. Phylarchos (*FGrHist* 81 F 53–6 = Polyb. 2.56–63) served as Polybios’ whipping boy for ignoble historians favouring horror and mayhem. This noisy form of purple prose predates, however, Alexander’s expedition and Kallisthenes’ abortive account of it (*FGrHist* 124, *pace* p. 127), as the fragments of Ktesias’ early-fourth-century *Persika* (*FGrHist* 688) demonstrate. Knidian Ktesias already had mixed what happened with what was reported to have happened, with what could have happened, and what did not happen at all (as Stronk observes in the introduction of his edition of the *Persika* (Dusseldorf, 2010, introduction, text, and translation at https://www.academia.edu/78324183/Stronk_2010_Ctesias_Persian_History_Part_I_Introduction_Text_and_Translation_Dusseldorf_2010)). Gehrke defends a historiography that provides an adequate impression of events (129), but this is either self-evident or over-the-top pleading.¹⁶ When ‘emotional effect and success in deception’ are more important than facts (130), we have travelled a bridge too far, and no citations of Polybios in favour of attractive accounts (*terpsis, enargeia*) will bridge the difference (131). Indeed, to judge from Polybios’ plain and plodding prose, he did not put his considerable energies into the production of charm or pleasure, much less the miraculous or the fictional. We all agree that ‘the literary in history writing’ is ‘by no means *eo ipso* objectionable and to be rejected in principle’. We usually agree that a firm line between history and Hollywood should be drawn and, therefore, not welcome Oliver Stone’s (2004) cinematic and anachronistic *Alexander* fantasies. This \$155-million-dollar, sensationalising extravaganza contributes nothing to edify the greater public or to alter historians’ dialogic differences, despite Gehrke’s generous defence. (cf. 133–4).¹⁷

Long ago (1930), in *1066 and All That, A Memorable History of England*, the British satirists W. C. Sellar and R. J. Yeatman proclaimed: ‘History is not what you thought. It is what you can remember’. We might edit that insight to ‘It is what you can remember and what others think and urge you to remember, which actually amounts to very little’.

¹⁶ In Gehrke’s ‘concluding perspectives’ (135), even Timaios (*FGrHist* 566) and Flavius Josephus are cited for their concern for ‘reliability’ which ‘stood particularly high up in the scale of [their historiographical] values’. While it is fair to find ambivalence in Hellenic attitudes towards the difficult reconciliation of truth and literary fiction, and fair to observe that ancient authors were concerned with style and narrative impact, our author here has sympathised excessively with ancient purveyors of distortion and misrepresentations in his attempt to understand their rationales.

¹⁷ Cf. *inter alia*, P. Cartledge and F. Greenland, edd., *Responses to Oliver Stone’s Alexander. Film, History and Cultural Studies* (Madison, 2010) 384 pages of controversy with an Afterword by Stone. The ‘swords and sandals’ trajectory does not work as well for a historical figure as for a fictional composite, like the hero of *Gladiator*. I found the ambitious but laboured film more incoherent than the mythico-historical figure constructed by the extant sources.

In conclusion, how might Herodotus' account of sightless Epizelos (6.117) fit into the Gehrkean approach? This brave Athenian hoplite fought in ranks at Marathon, but did not fit the self-gratulatory *Marathonomachoi* victory narrative of rough-and-tough citizen-soldiers overcoming Eastern hordes.¹⁸ Epizelos at first encounter saw a giant bearded phantom in full armour strike down this soldier's next-in-line, his *parastatēs*. He himself became entirely blind from that day on. Henceforth, whether in excuse or necessity, he repeated his epiphany story of death and disability for the rest of his life. Herodotus heard it from one or more Athenians. Herodotus thought this *thauma* worth inserting in his post-battle account of Athens' longest day. This problematic aria complicates the 'greatest generation' of the Athenian *Eroica* symphony opening with the march out and ending with the unfortunately necessary march back. Herodotus doggedly and with marks of dubiety included Epizelos' anomalous tale. These miracles but not all the others that accreted around this marvellous day round out his Marathon. He retells this individual's collapse—and other warts on the face of the Athenian popular version. Such as ex-tyrant Hippias landing near his supporters, some treasonous Attic party signalling some instruction or information to the embarked enemy fleet, the hasty about-face of the army to a city where some citizens might welcome the Persian-Ionian invasionary force.

That canonical, often epideictic, epitaphical, and hymnic celebration of the doughty hoplite charge and victory kept straying further, as decades and centuries passed, into the realms of myth and more impossible numbers. Pausanias' references to this battle (Paus. 1.15, 32), to many helper-hero epiphanies (Echetlaos, Marathonios, Theseus?), and to ghost horses still whinnying in the night and epic representations in the official Stoa Poikilē painting attest to popular pressures from the nascent democracy to magnify the significance of an only minor setback for Dareios' westward expansion. I imagine that Gehrke would interpret its inclusion as signalling Herodotus' explicit adherence to telling stories that he had been told, even when they ran counter to the dominant local, intentional narrative. But, we also acknowledge Herodotus' adherence to the supra-ethnic impartiality that he embodied (but did not establish) as central to rightly recording the narratives of the Greeks and their histories, even when a narrative did not flatter its immediate audience's woundable sensibilities.¹⁹

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¹⁸ A notable and suitable example for narratives of Intentional History on which Gehrke and colleagues have published.

¹⁹ 7.152.3: ἐγὼ δὲ ὀφείλω λέγειν τὰ λεγόμενα, πείθεσθαι γὰρ μὲν οὖν οὐ παντάπασιν ὀφείλω· καὶ μοι τοῦτο τὸ ἔπος ἐχέτω ἐς πάντα τὸν λόγον ...