

HERODOTUS—THE MOST HOMERIC HISTORIAN?

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HERODOTUS—THE MOST
HOMERIC HISTORIAN?



Edited by
IVAN MATIJAŠIĆ

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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

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

ELTON BARKER is Professor of Greek Literature and Culture at The Open University. His research interests focus primarily on poetic rivalry in Homer and representations of space and place in Herodotus. He is author of *Entering the Agon: Dissent and Authority in Homer, Historiography and Tragedy* (2009), as well as two co-authored books on Homer with Joel Christensen: *A Beginner's Guide to Homer* (2013), and *Homer's Thebes* (2020). His work on spatial analysis led to the edited volume *New Worlds out of Old Texts* (2016) and to the establishment of the Pelagios Network, which is developing digital tools and methods for scholarly research into historical places (see the Pelagios special issue of the *International Journal of Humanities and Arts Computing*, 2021).

GIULIA DONELLI holds an MA and a PhD in Classics from King's College London, where she currently teaches. Previously, she was a Teaching Associate in the Department of Classics and Ancient History at the University of Bristol, where she remains an Honorary Research Associate. Her main research interests are Greek lyric poetry, Herodotean historiography, and the early developments of Greek prose.

MARIA FRAGOULAKI is Lecturer in Ancient Greek History at Cardiff University. Her main research interests are ancient Greek historiography, especially Thucydides and Herodotus, kinship and international relations in antiquity, memory and performance studies. She is author of *Kinship in Thucydides: Intercommunal Ties and Historical Narrative* (2013), and co-editor (with Christy Constantakopoulou) of *Shaping Memory in Ancient Greece: Poetry, Historiography, and Epigraphy* (2020). She is currently working on a monograph on Thucydides and Homer and co-editing (with Neville Morley) a volume on *Doing Things with Thucydides: Politics, Education, Performance*.

THOMAS HARRISON is Professor of Ancient History at the University of St Andrews. His research focuses primarily on the archaic and classical Greek world, with particular interest in Herodotus' *Histories*, Greek religious ideas, and the interface between the Greeks and foreign peoples. His publications include *Divinity and History: The Religion of Herodotus* (2000), *The Emptiness of Asia: Aeschylus' Persians and the History of the Fifth Century* (2000) and *Writing Ancient Persia* (2011). He is currently working on a study of Greek religious belief.

JAN HAYWOOD is Lecturer in Ancient History at the University of Leicester. He is the co-author of a book on cross-cultural receptions of the Trojan War tradition with Naoise Mac Sweeney (*Homer's Iliad and the Trojan War: Dialogues on Tradition*, 2018), and he has a co-edited with Zosia Archibald a volume in honour of the ancient historian J. K. Davies (*The Power of Individual and Community in Ancient Athens and Beyond*, 2019). He has also published several articles and book chapters in the field of ancient Greek historiography, and is now working on a book concerning the sources of information that informed Herodotus' *Histories*, and a separate article on human and divine agents in the *Histories*. He is also the co-founder of the Herodotus Helpline with Thomas Harrison, a free, online seminar series set up in April 2020, which is open to anyone interested in Herodotus and his world.

IVAN MATIJAŠIĆ is post-doctoral researcher in Ancient History at the University of Siena. He holds a PhD in Classics and Ancient History from the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa. He has held research and teaching positions in Venice, Münster, and Newcastle. His research interests focus on Greek historiography, epigraphy, ancient geography, and the history of classical scholarship in the twentieth century. He is the author of two books: *Shaping the Canons of Ancient Greek Historiography* (2018) and *Timachidas of Rhodes* (2020).

CHRISTOPHER PELLING is Emeritus Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford University. Among his books are *Literary Texts and the Greek Historian* (2000), *Plutarch and History* (2002), *Herodotus and the Question Why* (2019), and commentaries on Plutarch's *Antony* (1988) and *Caesar* (2011), on Herodotus Book 6 (coedited with Simon Hornblower, 2017), and Thucydides Books 6 and 7 (2 vols, 2022). He is now working on a further Plutarch commentary, this time on Alexander.

OLGA TRIBULATO is Professor of Greek language and literature at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. She is the author of *Ancient Greek Verb-Initial Compounds: Their Diachronic Development within the Greek Compound System* (2015) and she has edited, among other volumes, *Language and Linguistic Contact in Ancient Sicily* (2012). Her research interests focus on the Greek dialects and literary languages, epigraphy, ancient bilingualism, Atticist lexicography, and Greek theories of language correctness. She is currently the PI of the ERC project *Purism in Antiquity: Theories of Language in Greek Atticist Lexica and Their Legacy (PURA)*.

CHRISTOPHER J. TUPLIN is Gladstone Professor of Greek at the University of Liverpool. He is the author of *The Failings of Empire* (1993), *Achaemenid Studies* (1997), and some 140 research essays on Greek and Achaemenid Persian history; editor of *Pontus and the Outside World* (2004), *Xenophon and his World* (2004), and *Persian Responses: Cultural Interaction (with)in the Achaemenid Empire* (2007); and co-editor of *Science and Mathematics in Ancient Greek Culture* (2002), *Xenophon: Ethical Principles and Historical Enquiry* (2012), and *Aršāma and his World: The Bodleian Letters in Context* (2020). His current major project is a commentary on Xenophon's *Anabasis*.

DIE ANOTHER DAY: SARPEDON, ARISTODEMOS, AND HOMERIC INTERTEXTUALITY IN HERODOTUS*

Elton T. E. Barker

I, I can remember
Standing, by the wall
And the guns, shot above our heads
And we kissed, as though nothing could fall
And the shame, was on the other side
Oh we can beat them, for ever and ever
Then we could be Heroes, just for one day.
‘Heroes’, David Bowie

After his depiction of the desperate last defence at Thermopylae led by Leonidas and his three hundred Spartiates, Herodotus records the post-battle credits. First comes a roll call of the star performers, followed by a record of the inscriptions set up in commemoration. Then Herodotus recounts the story of Aristodemus (7.229):

But of two of the three hundred, Eurytos and Aristodemus, it is said, though it was possible for both of them to have come to an agreement either to be saved together [and return] to Sparta, since they had been

* The ideas in this chapter first breathed life in Christ Church, Oxford, where I held a temporary lectureship under the care of Richard Rutherford. Languishing in a drawer for over a decade after their author ‘lost his spirit’ on receiving harsh (but fair) feedback from two *JHS* reviewers, that they see the light of day now owes much to the continued support of Chris Pelling, who never lost heart that there was something worth discussing here, and to the prodding of Jan Haywood that I should call the *Herodotus Helpline*. Taking the opportunity to ‘revisit’ a failure, I am grateful for all the feedback I received there (and subsequently) from fellow Herodoteans David Branscome, Roger Brock, Paul Cartledge, Paul Demont, Tom Harrison, Scarlett Kingsley, John Marincola, Ivan Matijašić, and Rosaria Munson, as well as from Adrian Kelly, Tom Nelson, and the two *Histos* referees. I dedicate this essay to Richard, a singularly discerning scholar of Homer and Herodotus alike, and to the memory of my former PhD student Doris Post, whose sensitive and tenacious explorations into ambiguity helped me think anew about its value in Herodotus.

let go from the camp by Leonidas and were lying sick at Alpeni with an extreme eye problem, or, if they didn't want to return, to die along with the rest—though it was possible for them to do either of these things, they were not willing to agree, but being divided in opinion Eurytos, when he learned of the Persians' circuit, demanded his armour, put it on, and ordered his helot to lead him to those fighting; and just so the helot led him and then fled, while Eurytos rushed into the crowd and was killed. But Aristodemus with his spirit leaving him was left behind (Ἀριστόδημον δὲ λιποψυχέοντα λειφθῆναι).

When Aristodemus arrives home, his fellow Spartans are furious with him and shun him. Yet, according to Herodotus, he made up for it in the final battle of Plataea.¹

My concern here is with the word that I have clunkily translated as 'with his spirit leaving him', *λιποψυχέοντα*. Standard translations of this word range from 'swooning' (LSJ *s.v.* *λιποψυχία*) to 'be faint-hearted' (the *Cambridge Greek Lexicon*). The slippage from 'fainting' to 'faint-hearted' is evident in English translations of this passage, such as by George Rawlinson (1858) ('Aristodemus, on the other hand, *was faint of heart*, and remained at Alpeni'; Aubrey de Sélincourt (1954) ('Aristodemus, on the other hand, *finding that his heart failed him*, stayed behind at Alpeni'; or Robin Waterfield (1998) ('*Faint-hearted* Aristodamus, however, stayed away from the fighting').² In contrast, Tom Holland's 2013 Penguin renders *λιποψυχέοντα* as 'had passed out', while Andrea Purvis' Landmark translation (2007) opts for something in between: 'faint and feeble'.³

¹ Hdt. 7.231. All translations are mine. I return to this section in its entirety (7.229–32) below, §3.

² So too Carey (1847–9) ('But Aristodemus, *failing in courage*, was left behind'). Compare Macaulay's less judgemental 1890 version: 'But Aristodemus was left behind *fainting*'. Vacillation between fainting and faint-hearted is apparent in the two translations attributed to Godley (1920). The Loeb Classical Library text reads: 'But Aristodemus' *heart failed him*, and he stayed behind'. Contrast this to the version on Perseus: 'Aristodemus, however, *lost his strength* and stayed behind'.

³ Scarlett Kingsley suggests to me that the trend for (mis)translating *λιποψυχία* in Herodotus is established in the first Latin translation of the *Histories* by Lorenzo Valla (1406–57), who glosses Aristodemus' situation as: *sed quum discreparent, Aristodemus quidem prae ignavia remansisse: Eurytus vero audito Persarum circuitione* ('but, when they differed, Aristodemus indeed remained because of cowardice; but Eurytus, on hearing the circuit of the Persians ...'). In later Latin translations (e.g., Jakob Gronovius' 1715 edition) Valla's invention *Aristodemus*

The translation of this one word is significant because it makes a difference to what we think is going on in this passage. Two important recent discussions of Thermopylae turn on this translation of Aristodemos' loss of spirit. John Marincola describes how 'Eurytus heard that the battle had begun and ordering his helot to help him don his armor, he rushed back into the battle, where he died fighting. Aristodemos, however, did no such thing, and returned to Sparta *having saved his skin*'.⁴ Deborah Boedeker's paraphrasing is even more damning: 'Aristodamos was the sole Spartan to return home after Thermopylae: off-duty during the battle because of an eye ailment, *he stayed away from* the final struggle rather than going bravely and blindly to fight and die, as did his more *right-thinking* comrade Eurytos'.⁵ I will return to this polarised judgement of Eurytos and Aristodemos below, and particularly the idea that going off 'blindly' into battle to die is (or could be seen to be) thinking right.⁶ What I want to highlight here is the agency these two highly sensitive readers of Herodotus ascribe to Aristodemos. Implied in Marincola's translation 'having saved his skin' is the idea that Aristodemos actively avoids battle—a point that is made explicit in Boedeker's 'he stayed away from the final struggle'. That understanding is also evident in the three translations cited above, where it is said that Aristodemos 'remained at Alpeni' (Rawlinson), 'stayed behind at Alpeni' (de Sélincourt), and, the even more forceful Waterfield version, '*stayed away from* the fighting'. The clause in Herodotus, however, reads: Ἀριστόδημον δὲ λιποψυχέοντα λειφθῆναι, where λειφθῆναι is passive—'he was left behind'.⁷ Determining whether he *stays* or is *left* behind turns on the translation of λιποψυχέοντα.⁸

quidem prae ignavia remansisse replaces the Greek of Herodotus, Ἀριστόδημον δὲ λιποψυχέοντα λειφθῆναι.

⁴ Marincola (2016) 227 (my italics).

⁵ Boedeker (2003) 26 (my italics). In his important analysis of this passage (see below, §3), Lateiner (2002) 363 translates: 'Aristodamos, however, nearly *swooning* [in pain], stayed behind'. The parenthesis '[in pain]' mitigates somewhat his translation 'swooning' and his use of the active voice ('he stayed behind') for λειφθῆναι.

⁶ Whether or not the pun is intentional, Boedeker's use of 'blindly' (cf. Lateiner (2002) 366) draws attention to the 'extreme' state of ophthalmia with which both Eurytos and Aristodemos were suffering (ὀφθαλμιῶντες ἐς τὸ ἔσχατον, 7.229.1): it's a bit more than 'an eye ailment'. See below, pp. 196–7, 197–8.

⁷ The verb is also an infinitive, marking indirect discourse. This typical Herodotean strategy of recording an event through a point of view other than his own is another aspect to take into consideration: see my analysis of the passage in §3 below.

⁸ In her analysis of Brasidas at Pylos (Thuc. 4.12.1), Foster (2012) 194 n. 23 offers a similar translation: 'The Thucydidean *hapax* λιποψυχεῖν is not easy to connect with Herodotus (who

The issue here, and the reason why translators and critics tend to translate *λιποψυχέοντα* as ‘faint-hearted’, relates to the immediate fallout. Upon arriving back home, Aristodemus is roundly abused and dishonoured (7.231). So unambiguous is the Spartan condemnation of Aristodemus for making it back home alive that a description of him simply ‘fainting’ rather than actively shunning battle hardly seems sufficient. It’s a point noticed by the commentators like Reginald Macan:

λιποψυχέοντα... always refers to physical exhaustion, a bodily faint: Grote here renders it ‘overpowered with physical suffering’ (which is not quite its usual force). The alliteration *λιπ. λειφθῆναι* (which Baehr thinks designed) is also bad, but helps to explain a corruptela. Valckenaer’s emendation is also supported by Tyrtaios 10.7 [= 10.18 *IEG*²] *μηδὲ φιλοψυχέιτ’ ἀνδράσι μαρνάμενοι*.⁹

The proposal to emend the manuscript readings of *λιποψυχέοντα* to *φιλοψυχέοντα* has recently been forcefully reasserted by Annalisa Paradiso. Observing that *λ(ε)λιποψυχέω* is accepted by all editors in this passage,¹⁰ she argues that its apparent meaning here ‘to lose one’s spirit’ *out of cowardice*¹¹ contrasts with other evidence from our extant corpus of Greek literature, where it consistently denotes a fainting that is ‘physical in sense, without any moral connotations’.¹² Because this non-judgemental sense sits ill with the ‘logical need to see a reference to desertion’¹³ (as she sees it), Paradiso, like Macan and How and Wells, prefers the emendation *φιλοψυχέοντα*. To paraphrase the conclusion to her argument: *φιλοψυχέω* should be considered the more appropriate reading since it belongs to ‘a Spartan ethical political vocabulary’ as represented in the poetry of Tyrtaios; its presence in

also uses the verb once (7.229.1) of Aristodemus, where it seems to indicate faintheartedness, hardly characteristic of Brasidas here). I agree: it is hardly a characteristic of Brasidas, and should make us think again about Aristodemus. I return to Thucydides in my concluding paragraph.

⁹ Macan (1908) *ad loc.* See also How–Wells (1912) 231 *ad loc.*: ‘*λιποψυχέοντα* elsewhere (Thuc. iv. 12; Xen. *Hell.* v. 4. 58; Paus. iv. 10. 3) means “swooning”, hence *φιλοψυχέοντα*, “showing a faint heart” (cf. inf.), is better’.

¹⁰ Paradiso (2002) 163 n. 2.

¹¹ Paradiso (2002) 163: ‘per codardia’.

¹² Paradiso (2002) 164: ‘in senso fisico, non morale’. Her argument is based on its use in extant Greek literature, which she lists in 165 n. 6.

¹³ Paradiso (2002) 167: ‘la necessità logica di vedere nel punto un accenno alla diserzione’.

Herodotus would then indicate an explicit quotation from Tyrtaios.¹⁴ Thus *φιλοψυχέω* means ‘to choose life’ in the sense of ‘to desert’: fittingly Aristodemos is nick-named ‘the deserter’ (*ὁ τρέσας*) when he returns to Sparta.¹⁵

It seems to me that both the commentators and Paradiso are right to draw attention to the beats of Tyrtaios’ poetry in the background of this passage in Herodotus. We have just read a rip-roaring account of the courageous, but ultimately doomed, last stand of the three hundred at Thermopylae; in picking over the bones, we now learn that the Spartans were (at least)¹⁶ a man down: Aristodemos did not fight. Yet every Spartan knew and had been raised on the shield rattling poetry of Tyrtaios, where young men are cajoled to ‘fight, standing fast by one another’, to ‘make the spirit in your heart big and strong’, and not to ‘love life when you are fighting men’.¹⁷ Eurytos embodies this spirit. He calls for his armour as soon as he hears of the Persian encirclement of his comrades, and rushes back into battle to die. And then there’s Aristodemos, who has the same excuse,¹⁸ but is left behind because his spirit fails him and he didn’t want to die. No wonder the Spartans are so angry with him when he turns up back at home after the battle’s been lost and won, when Spartan reputation for fighting heroically has been affirmed. He is the living symbol of someone who ‘loved life’ (*φιλοψυχέοντα*), the one who ‘ran away’ (*ὁ τρέσας*).¹⁹ His non-dying threatens the Spartan way of life.²⁰

¹⁴ Paradiso (2002) 169: ‘al vocabolario etico-politico spartano’.

¹⁵ Paraphrasing Paradiso (2002) 169, who translates *ὁ τρέσας* as ‘il disetore’. I have benefitted from discussions about Paradiso’s argument with Angeliki Douri, Clivia Saracino, and Olga Tribulato.

¹⁶ Herodotus also gives an account of a Pantites who apparently didn’t die in battle either: see below, pp. 191–2, 197.

¹⁷ Tyrtaios, fr. 10.15–18 *IEG*²: ὦ νέοι, ἀλλὰ μάχεσθε παρ’ ἀλλήλοισι μένοντες, | μηδὲ φυγῆς αἰσχρῆς ἄρχετε μηδὲ φόβου, | ἀλλὰ μέγαν ποιείσθε καὶ ἄλκιμον ἐν φρεσὶ θυμόν, | μηδὲ φιλοψυχεῖτ’ ἀνδράσι μαρνάμενοι.

¹⁸ Or *prophasis*: see below, n. 139.

¹⁹ Another echo of Tyrtaios: ‘But when men run away (*τρεσσάντων δ’ ἀνδρῶν*), all excellence is lost. No one could sum up in words each and every evil that befalls a man, if he suffers shame’ (fr. 11.14–16 *IEG*²).

²⁰ See especially the discussion in Ducat (2005) and (2006), to which my account owes much. I wonder too whether Aristodemos was such an attractive figure for Herodotus to think through and unpick Spartan ideology, especially after such a seemingly tub-thumping battle narrative, because of his name—Aristodemos, ‘the best of the demos’ (cf. Lateiner (2002) 369). Herodotus the punster: Irwin (2007), esp. 46–7, 51.

Or so the story goes. As I argue below, the account here is a good deal more complicated, and one critical question will be to what extent or in what way our reading of Aristodemos aligns with Spartan judgement of him. Still, Paradiso's brief article helps establish some important parameters. When she writes that λ(ε)ιποψυχέω has a uniform semantic range that means 'to faint' (*svenire*), what exactly is that semantic range?²¹ Or, when she talks about the logical need to see a reference to desertion (*diserzione*), how much of that logical need is driven by Spartan focalisation? Do we, should we, feel the logical need as strongly as the Spartans? More broadly, how is this section as a whole (7.229–32) structured and how does it relate to the follow-up battle at Plataea, which Herodotus briefly trails here? To put it bluntly: how does reading λιποψυχέοντα, with the non-ethical implications of this word, sit with the description of Aristodemos not wanting to die?²²

The argument to adopt the emendation, φιλοψυχέοντα, marks an attempt to remove the somewhat awkward disjunction between the description of Aristodemos being left behind and his total and utter rejection by Spartan society. In this paper, I want to argue the reverse: that we would do well to keep the manuscript reading of λιποψυχέοντα precisely because of this disjunction. To do so I take my cue from the D scholia to Book 5 of the *Iliad*, which describes 'the ψυχή leaving Sarpedon' at line 596 with the same word from Herodotus, λ(ε)ιποψυχέω (Σ *Hom. Il.* 5.696):

Z^s: ἔλιπε ψυχή· ἐλιποψύχησεν. Z (YQ ἐλειποψύχησεν).²³

The precise language that Homer uses to describe Sarpedon's swoon is significant, and I argue that being more precise about that language can help us better understand the semantic range of λ(ε)ιποψυχέω. That is to say, by examining what is meant by 'the ψυχή leaving' in Homer (and elsewhere) we can defamiliarise the idea of 'swooning' and gain a better sense of its use and

²¹ Paradiso (2002) 167: 'L'univocità semantica'. Similarly, when Macan writes that Grote's translation of λιποψυχέοντα (as 'overpowered with physical suffering') 'is not quite its usual force', *what* is its usual force?

²² Hdt. 7.229.2: οὐκ ἐθελήσαντος δὲ ἀποθνήσκειν. The description that Aristodemos 'was not willing to die' is a critical point for Paradiso (2002) 164, and the reason for her re-examination of the passage (and support for the emendation).

²³ Edition: van Thiel (2014).

implications in our passage.²⁴ My argument will be that, where the emendation of *φιλοψυχέοντα* would seem to straightforwardly map Herodotus' text to Spartan ideology, *λιποψυχέοντα* more problematically (and productively) brings this passage into contact with the *Iliad's* representation of Sarpedon's epic career, intertextual resonances that unsettle and destabilise the Spartan management of commemoration along Homeric lines.

At one level, then, this chapter is about one word, and how it may (or may not) be in Herodotus, and what's at stake in the choices we make about whether or not it is. But, at another level, it is about broader scholarly discussions on intertextuality.²⁵ And not only its points of contact with and differences from the idea of allusion (though that is important), but also what it means to use intertextuality (or allusion) as a strategy for reading points of contact with the Homeric poems, in comparison to oralist approaches that use traditional referentiality to tease out, and apart, interplay between any number of potential sources.²⁶ Herodotus' narrative straddles two distinct literary contexts—the oral texts of early Greek poetry (composed and performed at various institutional settings) and the written prose of individual inquiry.²⁷ On the cusp of a medial shift,²⁸ Herodotus potentially affords us a glimpse of these different interpretative strategies at play. To again anticipate my argument: I will suggest that being more precise by what we mean when we write about Homeric (or epic) resonance and/or an intertext (/allusion) can help us better understand how such moments work in Herodotus, and, crucially, how they work *differently*. In this way I hope to contribute both to an understanding of Herodotus' narrative on Thermopylae, particularly the contests over its memorialisation, and more broadly to discussions of Herodotus' interplay with Homer.

²⁴ I suspect that the common rendering of *λιποψυχεῖν* as 'to swoon' doesn't help, since it often has gendered connotations of over-corseted Victorian ladies getting hot under the collar for a Mr Darcy.

²⁵ See also Pelling, above, Ch. 2.

²⁶ Foley (1991) 7 defines traditional referentiality as the process by which repeated words and phrases (and whole scenes) in early Greek hexameter poetry 'are not simply compositionally useful, nor are they doomed to a "limited" area of designation; rather they command fields of reference much larger than the single line, passage, or even text in which they occur'.

²⁷ Goldhill (2002); cf. Barker (2009) ch. 3.

²⁸ Barker (2021).

1. The Living Daylights: The Departing *ψυχή* in Homer and Later Traditions²⁹

As we have already glimpsed, the conjunction λ(ε)ιποψυχέω has a counterpart in the Homeric collocation of λείπω with ψυχή. In fact, the two words belong to a formal unit of utterance in early Greek hexameter poetry—what scholars often term a ‘formula’³⁰—namely, τὸν δ’ ἔλιπε ψυχή.³¹ This phrase, or close variations of it, uniformly denote—with one exception—life leaving a body, whether real (τόν γε λίπη ψυχή, used by the narrator of Sarpedon, *Il.* 16.453), imagined (ψυχή δὲ λέλοιπεν, used by Eumaios of Odysseus, *Od.* 14.134), or of animals (τὸν δ’ ἔλιπε ψυχή, the sacrifice of a pig, *Od.* 14.426). At *Odyssey* 18.91, as he weighs up his options, Odysseus ponders punching his rival beggar at the banquet so hard that ‘his life would depart [from him]’ (ὥς μιν ψυχή λίποι, *Od.* 18.91). As it is, so as not to arouse the suspicion of the on-looking suitors, Odysseus only ‘lightly’ taps Iros; even so, Iros is knocked out cold, bleeding profusely from mouth and ears. We are left in little doubt that his life would have left him had Odysseus hit him as hard as he could. The traditional referentiality of λείπω combined with ψυχή to signify death is confirmed by the only other formula in which they are paired.³²

Support for the view that the ψυχή equates in some way to the life-spirit is provided by Achilles when refusing Agamemnon’s offer of recompense. ‘I have suffered many pains in my heart,’ he reflects, ‘always risking my ψυχή in making war’ (ἔπει πάθον ἄλγεα θυμῷ | αἰεὶ ἐμήν ψυχὴν παραβαλλόμενος πολεμίζειν, *Il.* 9.321–2). The risk is all too real, even for a goddess’ son since, he asserts, ‘a man’s ψυχή cannot come back (ἄνδρὸς δὲ ψυχή πάλιν ἐλθεῖν) either by theft or force, once it has crossed his teeth’s barrier’ (9.408–9). In both instances it is clear that by ψυχή Achilles means his ‘life’ (or, perhaps better, ‘life-breath’³³), meaning that to lose it is to die. Similarly in the

²⁹ The argument here represents a much-condensed version of Barker (2011), focusing only on those points directly pertaining to the proposed Homeric intertext in Herodotus.

³⁰ Foley (1997) 151–3. Bakker (1997) 48–50 describes formulas as intonation units.

³¹ *Il.* 5.696; *Od.* 14.426; cf. *Il.* 16.453; *Od.* 11.221; 14.134; 18.91. There are no other instances of this unit of utterance in extant early Greek hexameter epic.

³² *Il.* 16.855–7 = 22.361–3: ψυχή ... λιποῦσ’ ἀνδροτήτα καὶ ἦβην. Used of the deaths of Patroklos and Hektor, this collocation of λείπω with ψυχή occurs nowhere else in early Greek hexameter poetry.

³³ On an etymological link between ψυχή and ψυχεῖν, meaning ‘to blow or breathe’: Snell (1953) 9. Cf. the scholia vetera on Hom. *Il.* 5.696, who gloss Sarpedon’s loss of ψυχή

Odyssey's shadowy Hades, Autokleia laments to her son that 'once the *θυμός* has left the white bones ... the *ψυχή* flutters out like a dream and flies away' ('ἐπεὶ κε πρῶτα λίπη λεύκ' ὀστέα θυμός, | ψυχή δ' ἤϊτ' ὄνειρος ἀποπταμένη πεπότηται', *Od.* 11.219–23). In this case, the departing *ψυχή* is paired with the loss of *θυμός*—itself another indication of a person's life force—to fully embody the idea of death.³⁴

The one exception—that is, when the unit of utterance τὸν δ' ἔλιπε ψυχή means something else other than signifying death—occurs in the passage that I mentioned above, when the scholia had glossed the *ψυχή* leaving Sarpedon as ἐλ(ε)ιποψύχησεν (*Hom. Il.* 5.692–8):

οἱ μὲν ἄρ' ἀντίθεον Σαρπηδόνα δῖοι ἑταῖροι
εἶσαν ὑπ' αἰγιόχοιο Διὸς περικαλλεῖ φηγῶ·
ἐκ δ' ἄρα οἱ μηροῦ δόρυ μείλινον ὥσε θύραζε
ἴφθιμος Πελάγων, ὅς οἱ φίλος ἦεν ἑταῖρος.
τὸν δὲ λίπε ψυχή, κατὰ δ' ὀφθαλμῶν κέχυτ' ἀχλὺς·
αὐτίς δ' ἐμπνύνθη, περὶ δὲ πνοιῇ βορέας
ζώγρει ἐπιπνείουσα κακῶς κεκαφήοτα θυμόν.

Then his godlike companions sat divine Sarpedon
beneath a beautiful oak of aegis-bearing Zeus,
and from his thigh he pulled the ashen spear,
mighty Pelagon, who was [Sarpedon's] dear companion.
And the spirit left him [Sarpedon], and mist poured over his eyes.
But he breathed again, and Boreas' breath
invigorated him after he painfully gasped for breath.

The wound caused by Tlepolemos' spear cast is such that, when the spear is removed, Sarpedon's *ψυχή* leaves its body as if his life were departing with the flow of blood from the open wound. The impression of a fatal wound is made all the stronger by the presence of another unit of utterance that (almost) always denotes death: κατὰ δ' ὀφθαλμῶν κέχυτ' ἀχλὺς, 'and mist

as a loss of breath: [*ψυχή*] *ψυχή ἐνταῦθα τὸ πνεῦμα φησι*. Clarke (1999) 57 defines *ψυχή* more strictly as 'the last gasp of breath exhaled by the dying man'.

³⁴ τὸν μὲν λίπε θυμός and the variant λίπε δ' ὀστέα θυμός are unequivocal death formulae: *Il.* 4.470; 12.386; 16.410, 743; 20.406; *Od.* 3.455; 11.221; 12.414; *h.Ap.* 361.

poured over his eyes'.³⁵ And yet Sarpedon does *not* die. Thus, this marks the only instance where a departing *ψυχή* does *not* indicate death. It's as if the *ψυχή* could pass the teeth's barrier *and* return again.

The oddity has been noticed by the commentator Geoffrey Kirk: 'That formular flexibility can be confusing is shown in this description of a warrior losing and then recovering consciousness, since the soul "leaving" the body, 5.696 *λιπέ ψυχή*, normally implies death (16.453; *Od.* 14.134, 14.426, 18.91)'.³⁶ Kirk is right to observe the formular flexibility but confusing may be the wrong word to describe what is going on. In fact, Homer works hard to clarify that Sarpedon has not died after all, repeating the word for breath in short succession in three different forms: Sarpedon 'breathed' (*ἐμπνύνθη*) again, for the 'breath' (*πνοή*) of Boreas 'breathed' (*ἐπιπνείουσα*) life into him. Where an audience's understanding of the traditional referentiality of *τὸν δ' ἔλιπε ψυχή* (and *κατὰ δ' ὀφθαλμῶν κέχυτ' ἀχλύς*) would, from their knowledge of all its other instances, have created an expectation that Sarpedon has died, Homer gives his hero second wind.³⁷ By having Sarpedon 'die' here, only to bring him back to life, the poet marks Sarpedon out as an important figure in this Troy story.³⁸ He is preserved to play an important role later.

We learn what that role is when we next hear of a *ψυχή* leaving a body. For it is precisely *Sarpedon's* death that is, finally, fatally, signalled by the

³⁵ *Il.* 16.344 (Akamas); 20.421 (Polydoros); *Od.* 22.88 (Antinoos). The two exceptions are here and at *Il.* 20.321 (*κατ' ὀφθαλμῶν χέεν ἀχλύν*), where Poseidon steps in to save Aeneas in a clash of heroes and narrative traditions (sacking and surviving Troy).

³⁶ Kirk (1990) 128 *ad loc.* 5.696. Cf. Sullivan (1988) 158: of the thirteen examples of *psychē* as an active element, twelve signify death; only this one is different.

³⁷ Perhaps it is inevitable that the poet should draw on the language of death to denote a fainting episode since the loss of consciousness (albeit only temporary) looks to the outside observer like death. Still, this doesn't detract from the lengths to which Homer goes to make Sarpedon breathe again. The three other examples of 'fainting' (all in the *Iliad*) similarly rework death formulae (Kirk (1990) 129) to stress different aspects about the importance of the moment: Hektor (11.349–60; 14.419–39), like Sarpedon, is revived to die another day; Andromache's momentary 'death' (22.466–74) symbolises the impact of Hektor's death on her and the loss of her life as she knows it. Aeneas, Troy's great survivor (see above, n. 35), is initially rescued by Aphrodite (5.308–17), just as all indications suggested he was about to die: Morrison (1999) 139.

³⁸ As Adrian Kelly suggests to me, the dynamics surrounding Sarpedon's 'death' are a good example of the experience of the narrative in the flow of performance. At one point it looks like he's dead (which is fully traditional in the sense that he's not going to survive the war); at the next he lives on. This kind of excitement, and real directional shift, must have been vital to keeping audiences in thrall.

return of the departing soul motif. As Zeus looks down on Sarpedon readying himself to face the Achillean Patroclus and contemplates stepping in to save his son, Hera warns him: he can do it, but the other gods wouldn't approve. Instead, she suggests, he should take care of Sarpedon's body once its 'spirit and years of life have left him' (*ἐπήν δὴ τόν γε λῖπη ψυχὴ τε καὶ αἰών*, 16.453). This moment is all the more highly charged given Sarpedon's earlier recovery, and serves now not only to 'correct' the formular abnormality from back then but also to mark his death as the first fatality of someone who had enjoyed a certain amount of airtime in the narrative. What is more, Sarpedon's death marks the beginning of a *series* of important fatalities in the *Iliad*. The other two, the deaths of Patroclus and Hector, are connected not only logically—Patroclus' killing of Sarpedon leads directly to his own death at the hands of Hector, who in turn will be killed by Achilles as a result—but also linguistically: the same couplet, used for the deaths of both Patroclus and Hector, reworks the collocation *λείπω* with *ψυχὴ* for use in the death formula 'and his spirit flew from his limbs to Hades, lamenting its fate, leaving manliness and youth behind' (*Il.* 16.856–7; 22.362–3).

If, with one exception, the departing *ψυχὴ* signifies death in extant early Greek hexameter poetry, what then of its Homeric afterlife? The semantic range of the collocation of *λείπω* with *ψυχὴ* can be summed up briefly: all examples point to it signifying death, whether it is Pindar's Achilles, who 'lost his life' (*ἀπὸ ψυχάν λιπών*, *Pyth.* 3.101) in war by the bow, or Aelian's Cercidas, who, on the verge of death, consoles his friends with the prospect that he was going to meet Homer, Hecataeus, and others—and then 'he died' (*τὴν ψυχὴν ἀπέλιπεν*, *VH* 13.20).³⁹

More complex is the compound with which I am concerned in this chapter, *λ(ε)ιποψυχέω* or *λ(ε)ιποψυχία*.⁴⁰ Overwhelmingly, outside of Herodotus and other historiographical texts,⁴¹ evidence for this compound comes from two traditions. Throughout the Hippocratic corpus *λ(ε)ιποψυχία*

³⁹ While continuing the meaning from epic, nevertheless, both examples reveal a subtle shift in agency, as the departing *ψυχὴ* gives way to the person himself or herself 'leaving their *ψυχὴ* behind'. The finality of the soul's departure also appears to be reinforced by the addition of *ἀπὸ*, in the sense of 'from, away': Smyth (1956) §1684. See also: *h. Ven.* 272; Thgn. 1.569; Ar. *Av.* 1553–8; Eur. *Phoen.* 1554; Xen. *Cyr.* 8.7.22, 26; Pl. *Grig.* 523e5; *Phd.* 91d; Plut. *De Alex. fort.* 336F–337A.

⁴⁰ On *λειπο-* compounds: Tribulato (2015) 255. With compounds of this nature, the first member usually governs the second: so, *λ(ε)ιποψυχία* would literally mean 'one who leaves his *ψυχὴ* behind', which fits with the point in the previous note.

⁴¹ Discussed briefly at the end of this chapter, below, pp. 203–4.

occurs largely with the meaning of losing one's consciousness, as in *fainting*, which is the primary sense attributed to it in LSJ. The fifth-century *de diaeta acutorum* (11.13), for example, reads: 'if intense pain is present, to continue until the loss of consciousness (πρὸς λειποψυχίην); afterwards administer an enema'.⁴² Fainting episodes of this kind may also be denoted by the compound λ(ε)ιποθυμία.⁴³ In his discussion of bulimia, Plutarch uses both interchangeably (Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 695A):

Bulimia is not, as people think, hunger, but a pathological state of the stomach that causes fainting (λειποψυχίαν) by concentration of heat. Just as smelling salts are useful in cases of fainting (λειποθυμίας), so ...

If we recall, however, that the unit of utterance τὸν δ' ἔλιπε ψυχῆ (generally) signifies death (as τὸν μὲν λίπε θυμός does exclusively), it is interesting to note that there are other instances in the Hippocratic corpus where the compounds λ(ε)ιποψυχία and λ(ε)ιποθυμία preserve such a sense. In *Epidemics*, for example, λειποψυχία serves as a prelude to death: 'He appeared to have lapses of consciousness (λειποψυχίαι) ... All signs were bad. He said he wanted something under him, stared fixedly, resisted a brief time, and died (ἔτελεύτησεν)'.⁴⁴ It is this meaning that prevails in the Aesopic corpus. Here, λ(ε)ιποψυχέω/λ(ε)ιποψυχία *only* means death, as in *The bird catcher and the viper* (Gibbs 138 = Perry 115; Chambry 137):

The viper was enraged and bit the man. As he breathed his last (λειποψυχῶν), the bird catcher said, 'Woe is me! I was intent on stalking someone else, while I myself have been hunted to death (εἰς θάνατον) by another'.⁴⁵

⁴² For dating: Craik (2015). Cf. *Epid.* (mid-fourth century) 5.1.25; 7.1.24, 84; *Mul.* 9.3; 11.4; 14.4; *Ep.* 16.28.

⁴³ *Aph.* (c. 400 BCE): λειποθυμία, 1.23; 7.8 (or λειποψυχή? cod.: I, edd.). Cf. *Liqu.* (c. 400 BCE): λειποθυμίας, 2.16; λειποθυμικοῖσι, 2.28. Like λ(ε)ιποψυχία, λ(ε)ιποθυμία seems to derive from a hexameter unit of utterance, in this case the death formula τὸν μὲν λίπε θυμός: see above, n. 34.

⁴⁴ *Epid.* 7.1.10. Cf. *Liqu.* 1.32: a 'loss of consciousness—even to the point of death' (λειποθυμίας, ταῦτα ἔς θάνατον). Similarly, Plutarch recounts an episode concerning Xanthippus' dog, which swam across the strait at Salamis to be with his master 'only to faint and die straightway' (λειποθυμήσας ἀποθανεῖν εὐθύς, Plut. *Them.* 10.6); cf. *Pomp.* 49.5.

⁴⁵ Cf. *The one-eyed doe* (Perry 75 = Chambry 105, ἐλιποψύχει); *The tuna fish and the dolphin* (Gibbs 160 = Perry 113; Chambry 132, λειποθυμούντα, λειποψυχοῦντα). The same mortal

These examples are particularly pertinent to the case before us since, as recent scholarship has shown, Herodotus' *Histories* is in dialogue with both the Hippocratic corpus and Aesop 'the storyteller' (λογοποιός, Hdt. 2.134.3).⁴⁶ While it doesn't matter to my argument whether Herodotus himself coins the word λ(ε)ιποψυχέω/λ(ε)ιποψυχία from Homer or whether he takes it from another prose source such as the Hippocratic or Aesopic corpora,⁴⁷ it may be worth reflecting a moment on its duality in those traditions. Without the capacity to monitor a person's vital organs, it's hard to say how deep a loss of consciousness will be, how long it will last, and whether it might be fatal or not. What we see in Aesop, and to a lesser extent among the Hippocratics too, is a persistence of the idea that we saw in Homer, namely that fainting is closely associated with death.⁴⁸ As a 'prelude to death' motif, λ(ε)ιποψυχέω/λ(ε)ιποψυχία functions as medical knowledge (in the form of hindsight) in the Hippocratic writers and narrative logic (in the form of last words/punchlines) in the Aesopic fables.⁴⁹

This brief survey has helped flesh out the passing remarks made by both Macan and Paradiso about the semantic range and charge of λ(ε)ιποψυχέω/λ(ε)ιποψυχία. Uses of the word consistently and exclusively denote a corporeal loss of consciousness in all of our prose texts, which bears out Paradiso's gloss of λ(ε)ιποψυχέω as fainting ('svenire') 'in senso fisico, non morale'. There is nothing 'faint-hearted' in any of the examples that we have considered. But that is not all. On the one hand, as a compound denoting 'the ψυχή leaving' the body, it additionally has connotations of death, especially in Aesop; this is also the sole meaning of the collocation λείπω with ψυχή in all of Homer and early Greek poetry. On the other hand, such mortal resonances in λ(ε)ιποψυχία can, I suggest, be traced back to the epic unit of utterance, τὸν δ' ἔλιπε ψυχή. Based on evidence from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, this phrase too signifies death, bar one exception, when, with a skilful manipulation of its traditional referentiality, Homer has Sarpedon lose

connotations of λ(ε)ιποψυχεῖν are present in a fragment of Xenarchus' *Purple-shell* (Ath. 6.225c). λ(ε)ιποψυχεῖν is also preserved in a fragment of Sophocles (fr. 496.1 *TGF*), but with no context.

⁴⁶ Hippocratic corpus: Thomas (2000); Demont (2018); Pelling (2019) 80–105. Aesop: Kurke (2011), anticipated by Griffin (1990; republished in 2014); cf. Griffiths (2006) 139.

⁴⁷ On the other hand, it does matter to me whether we hear/read the specific case of τὸν δ' ἔλιπε ψυχή in relation to Sarpedon in Herodotus' use of the compound λ(ε)ιποψυχία. See below, §3.

⁴⁸ See above, n. 37.

⁴⁹ I owe this point to Roger Brock.

consciousness *and not die*. Flagging up Sarpedon's importance for this Troy story to the audience, Homer gives us a hero who lives to die another day.

It seems to me worth contemplating whether this arresting usage of a traditional formula attracted Herodotus' interest, or, at any rate, whether using it to think again about Aristodemos' own moment when 'he lost his *ψυχή*' (*λιποψυχέω*) can be a productive reading of Herodotus' Thermopylae narrative. But before homing in on that episode in more detail, there is much to unpack about the influence of Homer on Herodotus and the precise relationship of the latter to the former. Indeed, it is my broader goal to use a consideration of the Homeric influence on Herodotus' Thermopylae narrative and its fallout to contribute to how we can understand, define, and better discuss Herodotus' interplay with Homer.

2. A View to a Kill: Homer at Thermopylae

It is commonplace to talk about the Homeric influence on Herodotus, though the precise nature of that influence is more difficult to pin down.⁵⁰ Ancient witnesses testify to the debt Herodotus owes to Homer and to him assuming his predecessor's epic mantle in prose form.⁵¹ Modern critics have been no less interested in seeing Herodotus' evocation of Homer, and have catalogued instances where a debt may be perceived.⁵² A clear evocation of, and indebtedness to, Homer is on display in Herodotus' opening statement. His concern to preserve the deeds done by people so that they aren't 'without glory' (*ἀκλεᾶ*, *1.praef.*) headlines a critical feature of epic—to preserve the glory of men (*κλέα ἀνδρῶν*, *Il.* 9.189)—that his narrative aims at reproducing.⁵³ Similarly foregrounded is his concern to get to the bottom of *why* Greeks and barbarians came into conflict (I.I.I), just as Homer begins his narrative by asking which of the gods set Achilles and Agamemnon apart in strife, and why (*Il.* 1.8–9).⁵⁴ Herodotus' narrative of a momentous conflict

⁵⁰ As evidenced by the contributors to this volume.

⁵¹ 'Ὀμηρικώτατος, according to Longinus (*Subl.* 13.3); cf. D.H. *Pomp.* 3. A second-century BCE inscription from Halicarnassus proclaims Herodotus as the 'prose (*πεζόν*) Homer of historiography': Isager (1998). See Matijašić, above, pp. 1–2 and Haywood, above, pp. 59–61 for further discussion and bibliography.

⁵² E.g., Strasburger (1972); Boedeker (2002); Rutherford (2012); cf. Murnaghan (2021). See the discussion by Matijašić, above, pp. 15–22.

⁵³ Goldhill (2002) 12–13; Pelling (2019) 22–3; Matijašić, above, pp. 18–19.

⁵⁴ The question why: Pelling on Herodotus (2019); on Homer (2020).

that pits Greeks against foreigners (1.1.1; 7.20.2) clearly recalls the Trojan War context of Homer's *Iliad*,⁵⁵ while the inquisitive wandering Odysseus (*Od.* 1.4) provides a guide of some sort for his persona as a historian (1.5.3).⁵⁶ Homeric echoes can elevate the action, as in the description of the Athenian ships as ἀρχὴ κακῶν (5.97.3), like those ἀρχεκάκους-bearing ships of Paris (*Il.* 5.62–3).⁵⁷ They can also pattern experience, as when the panicked reaction of the fractious (and fracturing) Greek coalition at Salamis (8.56) to the Persian sack of Athens is set against the backdrop of the Achaeans' rush to the ships in *Iliad* Book 2 (especially *Il.* 2.149–54).⁵⁸

It is worthwhile asking, however, how many such examples directly recall episodes from or moments in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and how many more could equally be better regarded as conveying general 'epic' content, style, motifs, or themes? Some slippage is already evident in the way scholars describe scenes in Herodotus as having an 'epic coloring' or identify Herodotus' evocation of Homer by use of 'poetic' language.⁵⁹ As Chris Pelling has remarked:

It is easier to make, and indeed to accept, those grand generalisations than to be sure that 'Homer' is what comes to Herodotus' listeners' minds every time he occurs to us, or indeed that 'Homer' would have meant to Herodotus what he means to us.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Carey (2016) 71.

⁵⁶ Marincola (2007); Barker (2009) ch. 3.

⁵⁷ Pelling (2006a) 79–80.

⁵⁸ Pelling (2006a) 83–4, (2006b) 111; Bowie (2007) 144–5 *ad loc.*; Barker (2009) 163–72.

⁵⁹ Boedeker (2001) 122 and Marincola (2006) 14 (respectively). Marincola (2006) 14 continues: 'Herodotus' original audience *would not have failed to hear Homeric echoes* when Artemisia tells Xerxes to "put away in your heart this thing also" (8.68γ.1 ~ *Il.* 1.297), or when Psammenitus weeps for his friend "on the threshold of old age" (3.14.10 ~ *Il.* 22.60)—my italics. This is precisely the issue at stake: would audiences have identified these particular moments from the Homeric poems, rather than hearing the traditional referentiality of such language? And does it make a difference if they do? I am sure that I have also too readily conflated the two in the past.

⁶⁰ Pelling (2006a) 77. Urging caution when studying Homeric intertextuality in Herodotus: Grethlein (2006); cf. Rood (1998) 41. Haywood (above, Ch. 3) is more confident that Herodotus' reader would recognise engagement with Homer. My issue is less with the idea of recognition than that the intertext is always (only) (a specific moment or line in) the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. It is important to note, however, that, while Haywood is perhaps more willing to see examples of epic motifs as proof that 'Herodotus treats Homer at various points as text',

The problem is not only the point, as Chris Carey suggests, that: ‘Alongside such specific and general glances toward Homer and Troy Herodotus also draws on other epic cycles to shape his narrative’.⁶¹ There is also a broader problem about how we read, or *listen to*, intertextual allusions in and to early Greek hexameter poetry.

I have already touched upon the idea of traditional referentiality in my reading of the resonant phrase τὸν δ’ ἔλιπε ψυχή. There I argued that taking evidence of its uses (and variations) in and through early Greek hexameter poetry in toto can help us retrieve its (customary or normative) semantic charge as conveying death. Here I want to reflect briefly on the potential difference between listening out for a particular unit of utterance’s traditional import and thinking of it rather as intertextuality and/or allusion.

Attempts to disentangle different interpretative strategies *and why that matters* have recently been made by Homerist Adrian Kelly. Across a series of articles Kelly addresses the ‘WYSIATI, or what you see is all there is’ fallacy, by which ‘scholars are prone to filling the gaps in our evidence by pretending that there aren’t any’. This fallacy in turn:

leads them to construct the literary history of the Archaic period around the central pillars of the Homeric poems, and then to link those texts with every other ... In sum, we are told that we should use the same strategies of the Augustan poets in Rome as the model to understand the visible beginnings of Greek literature.⁶²

The issue with this strategy isn’t so much to do with the different textual status of the Homeric poems, or, as Don Fowler put it, the problem of talking about intertextuality when there aren’t texts. After all, as Fowler argues, ‘modern constructions of intertextuality in film and television, and of ancient

he is more sceptical ‘whether the same can be said for the epic tradition in toto’ (above, p. 70 n. 50).

⁶¹ Carey (2016) 87. Richard Hunter (2004) 238 elegantly sums up the problem of how to measure Homeric influence in later poetry: ‘The traditional language of epic is the basis of the language of all subsequent hexameter and elegiac poetry, as well as a vital component of the language of tragedy, and so Homer is immanently present in a special way in the very fabric of much Greek poetry. Nevertheless, the conservatism of poetic language over time, combined with the “formulaic” character of Homeric language itself, can place particular obstacles in the way of identifying significant re-use of Homeric language by later ... poets’.

⁶² Kelly (2020) 269.

theatrical intertextuality in respect of Aristophanic parody of tragedy, allow for precisely this kind of detailed reference in performed texts'.⁶³ Rather, it is the point, which Fowler glosses over here in his assertion of an intertextual approach, that there are *different kinds of referentiality* at play. With respect to Homer's poems, performed and composed within a framework in which traditional units of utterance—individual phrases, type scenes, story patterns—were continually being used and reused, referentiality 'entails the invoking of a context that is enormously larger and more echoic than the text or work itself'.⁶⁴ As Kelly argues, we shouldn't however limit our understanding of traditional referentiality to Homer's poems: this interpretative framework *also* has application to early Greek poetry more generally, especially the poems of Sappho and Archilochus.⁶⁵ Moreover—and this is the critical point—Kelly demonstrates⁶⁶ that our interpretation can be enhanced if we take this many-to-many approach, rather than seeking to establish a specific hierarchical relationship that limits us to a single direct reference which only goes in one direction, regardless of whether we conceive of that as marking allusion or intertextuality.⁶⁷

⁶³ Fowler (2000) 131–2.

⁶⁴ Foley (1991) 7. For the term of 'resonance', which aims to capture something of the echoic nature of listening (out) for poetic interplay: Graziosi and Haubold (2005); cf. Foley (1999) 6, 20, etc.

⁶⁵ Sappho: Kelly (2020); Archilochus: Barker–Christensen (2006).

⁶⁶ In his discussion of Sappho fr. 1, Kelly (2020) shows that the 'programmatically appeal to Aphrodite can be framed and understood next to any similar action in the multitude of epic narrative situations with which the individual audience member would have been familiar; its appeal is not limited to Homeric cognoscenti. This kind of intertextual dynamic, drawing on the typical situation and the range of particular stories possible within it, *enlarges our readings*' (289, my italics).

⁶⁷ I don't have space here to discuss whether we would better call one-to-one mappings between texts as intertextuality or allusion. For judicious discussions, see Lyne (1994), e.g., 187: 'The trouble with the term "allusion" is that it ... encourages us to invoke the "author's intention" to settle any unwelcome facts or difficulties'; and Hinds (1998), e.g., 48: getting rid of the author 'is (or should be) much harder to justify ... in matters involving the close textual explication of particular phrases, lines or paragraphs'. The issue concerning my argument here is rather with the limiting nature of only reading with a specific, one-to-one, unidirectional reference in mind, as in Currie (2016). More nuanced is Thomas Nelson's forthcoming study, whose range of evidence and subtlety of analysis persuasively argues that patterns of allusive signposting can be detected throughout early Greek poetry—a phenomenon that he calls 'indexicality'. It should be noted, though, that he allows for allusive engagement between mythological *traditions* (so Burgess (2006); Bakker (2013)), rather than insist on its operation between isolated, putative *texts* (so Currie (2016)). For a complementary argument that lends greater stress to the heuristic framework of traditional

Kelly himself sees a change in reading strategy occurring at the time of Stesichorus in the generation before Herodotus.⁶⁸ Yet it is worth pondering the extent of any possible change in a written narrative such as Herodotus', and whether aspects of traditional referentiality may have continued to reverberate through it.⁶⁹ I ask this because Herodotus himself seems alert to differences in the epic tradition that he inherits, and aware of the Homeric epics within that tradition as discrete entities. While sceptical about the authorship of the *Epigoni* (4.32), Herodotus rejects outright the attribution of the *Cypria* to Homer (2.117) based on differences in their accounts of Helen's journey to Troy: he notes that, whereas the *Cypria* presents the voyage as a mere three-day crossing, in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* Homer demonstrates knowledge of a much wider canvas for Helen's wanderings (2.116).⁷⁰ For the purposes of my argument, it is sufficient merely to note that Herodotus treats the Homeric epics as internally consistent and complete poems.⁷¹ As do his characters—when at 7.161.3 the Athenians quote from

referentiality, see the introduction in Barker–Christensen (2020), in which we offer a pragmatic (others may say inconsistent) approach to using these different concepts for analysing Homer.

⁶⁸ Kelly (2015). Another candidate for a shift in approach is Simonides: on the interplay with Homer in his 'Plataea' elegy, see especially Boedecker and Sider (2001); Rawles (2018); Nelson (2021) 136–9. Much of my discussion here on Herodotus may be pertinent to thinking about the blanket specificity of Simonides' engagement with Homer—(when) is he referring to, and making play with, particular moments in the *Iliad*, say, or how many of his Homeric soundings may be better explained through the framework of traditional referentiality?

⁶⁹ Herodotus between orality and literacy: Thomas (1989) 15–34; cf. above, n. 27. While there have been many insightful studies of the impact of Homer (and oral performance more generally) on Herodotus' composition of the *Histories*, the question of the impact of oral poetics (viz. traditional referentiality) on reading Herodotus has attracted far less attention. Pelling (2019) 59–60 is sceptical that any difference, even if discernible, would be significant. I am less sure: Barker (2021).

⁷⁰ Namely the 'beautiful robes woven by the women of Sidon' in Paris' bedchamber (*Il.* 6.289–92) and the travels of Helen and Menelaus to Egypt (*Od.* 4.227–30, 351–2). See Ford (1997) 103; Currie (2021). Cf. Graziosi (2002) 124 n. 82, 193–5; Pelling (2006a) 77 n. 6; Haywood (above, Ch. 3), with further bibliography (above, pp. 62–7 with n. 15).

⁷¹ Note especially Herodotus' gloss on the *Iliad's* testimony for Helen being in Sidon: 'and nowhere does [Homer] backtrack on himself' (*καὶ οὐδαμῆ ἄλλη ἀνεπόδισε ἑωτόν*, 2.116.2). So Ford (1997) 103: 'This (correct) claim is based on the notion of the *Iliad* as a definite and delimited text quite distinct from other epics.' Cf. Currie (2021) 20–7; Nelson (2021) 122. For Graziosi (2002) 116, Herodotus uses these passages to present Homer as a 'proto-historian'. For Haywood (above, p. 69), it is more of a case of Herodotus displaying 'his own critical acumen as an inquirer'.

Homer's Catalogue of Ships, they do so appealing to the *Iliad* as an authority on the basis of it representing a coherent narrative, and their place (as they see it) in it: 'the poet Homer says that, of all who came to Ilion, [Menetheus] was the best man in ordering and marshalling armies' (cf. *Il.* 2.552).⁷² Within little more than a generation, the lines that follow in Homer's catalogue (linking Salamis to Athens), have become so hotly disputed that the impression is of a stable 'text' already in the form (more or less) as we know it today.⁷³

If Herodotus knew an *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as distinct and distinctive poems, then we should feel reasonably confident about identifying and following up any apparent references to them. But this in turn raises another, more pressing, question: in what ways might his text be engaging with them *as* distinct and distinctive poems, or (or as well as) more generally with epic kinds of referentiality? To sharpen what we mean by Homeric interaction, I turn again to Kelly, this time his 2015 study of Stesichorus. His key parameters for observing, and making use of, Homeric touches relate to 'the level and sustained nature' of the interaction, as well as a demonstration of a 'continuum' in representation.⁷⁴ Both points suggest that

Stesichorus had access to more than just a general knowledge of the poems, almost certainly to a written text, but also that the nature of interaction is closer to the developed intertextuality of a later age: rather than merely showing knowledge of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, or invoking

⁷² In appealing to Homer for authority, the Athenians are following the Spartans' lead, whose appeal to Agamemnon—'Surely, he would groan aloud (Ἦ κε μέγ' οἰμώξειε), Agamemnon, the son of Pelops, if he heard that Spartiates had been deprived of their leadership by Gelon and the Syracusans' (7.159)—reworks Nestor's own act of ventriloquism (in imagining Peleus' angst) in the *Iliad* (7.124–5). On the *Iliad* intertexts here: Pelling (2006a) 89–90; Grethlein (2006); (2010) 160–73; Bowie (2012) 281–2; Matijašić, above, pp. 9–11, and Haywood, above, pp. 75–8.

⁷³ *Il.* 2.557–8, cited by Aristotle to show how the Athenians used Homer to assert their claim on Salamis (*Rhet.* 1375b26–30); Graziosi (2002) 228–9. While it is arguable whether the poems were already circulating as *written* texts at the time of Herodotus, Graziosi (221, using Nagy (1989) 16) cites evidence from the *Histories* which implies that, however they circulated, they cannot be altered by performing rhapsodes simply to please local tastes: Cleisthenes, the tyrant of Sikyon, bans Homeric recitations because the poems celebrate the enemy city of Argos (Hdt. 5.67.1). By 'more or less' I mean to include the minor differences in vocabulary or structure as implied by the ferocity of the dispute over the Athenians inserting two lines; cf. Graziosi (2002) 231.

⁷⁴ Kelly (2015) 39.

Homer as an authority figure, or even alluding to big moments in the poems, Stesichorus seems also to be engaging a larger reading of their themes ... in order to augment the semantic power of his own text. For the first time that we can see, the audience is being encouraged to access large swathes of the poem and its details, and actively to apply that knowledge to the current composition.⁷⁵

What Kelly writes here about Stesichorus I suggest applies equally to Herodotus. Therefore, I propose considering those ‘passages where Homeric “touches” are reasonably uncontroversial, either because they are particularly roistering or because they come in clusters’,⁷⁶ or, additionally, if there is a specific pointer in terms of vocabulary or application.⁷⁷ Significantly, of all the passages in Herodotus where critics have commonly observed Homeric ‘touches’, the most roistering, detailed, and sustained cluster around Leonidas’ last stand at Thermopylae.

From the beginning of Book 7, Herodotus presages the epic conflict between his new Achaeans and Trojans by recalling significant moments from the *Iliad*.⁷⁸ While multiple origins are attributed to the conflict, none of which are necessarily mutually exclusive (as in the *Iliad*’s dissection of the strife between Agamemnon and Achilles), Herodotus traces one cause back to a dream that visits Xerxes urging him to attack Greece (7.12.1); in much the same manner, Homer marks the explicit beginning of Zeus’ plan to honour Achilles by having Zeus send a dream to Agamemnon urging him to attack Troy (*Il.* 2.16–34).⁷⁹ Thereafter follows a series of troop catalogues (7.61–83, 89–99, 202–4), which mirror the famous catalogue of ships later in the same book of the *Iliad* (*Il.* 2.494–759).⁸⁰ In both cases, it is worth noting

⁷⁵ Kelly (2015) 43.

⁷⁶ Pelling (2006a) 77.

⁷⁷ Such as the (re)use of a Homeric *hapax* (see below, n. 87) or, as I suggest in this chapter, the reworking of a striking motif, like that evoked by the unit of utterance τὸν δ’ ἔλυπε ψυχῆ in the form λιποψυχέω. Bakker (2013) 159 similarly describes the possibility of intertextuality within early Greek hexameter epic’s formulaic system: ‘The more restricted an expression [and] the more specific the context in which it is uttered’, the higher its degree of ‘interformulariness’. For a comprehensive anatomisation of markers of allusion in works of early Greek poetry: Nelson (forthcoming).

⁷⁸ Carey (2016) 89; Nicolai–Vannicelli (2019); cf. Foster (2012) 202.

⁷⁹ Carey (2016) 73–5. On the multiple causes of the war and the relationship to the *Iliad*: Pelling (2019) 22–39.

⁸⁰ Carey (2016) 75–8; Nicolai–Vannicelli (2019).

that the focus falls on *Xerxes*—his motivation and the roll call of troops under his command—not on the Greeks. Herodotus’ Greeks do not straightforwardly map on to the Achaeans from the *Iliad*, nor his Persians to Homer’s Trojans.⁸¹ Herodotus’ intertextual engagement with Homer is more complicated, and complicates any simple us-versus-them binary.⁸²

It is important to keep this in mind when we come to the battle of Thermopylae. After marking the time of battle with rather non-specific evocations of battle narratives in the *Iliad*,⁸³ Herodotus deploys more strategically placed references which align his account of Thermopylae to the critical moment in the *Iliad* when Patroclus enters the fray. In particular, it is when Leonidas falls that the Iliadic references—and here we can be confident of targeted intertextuality—come thick and fast, marking a renewed intensity in both fighting *and reading*. This is Herodotus ‘at his most Homeric’.⁸⁴ The battle is a ‘great struggle’ (*ὄθισμὸς ἐγίνετο πολλός*: 7.225 ~ *Il.* 17.274).⁸⁵ Such is the ferocity of the fighting that the bodies fall one on top of one another (7.223.2, 225.1 ~ *Il.* 17.361–2). The Greeks/Achaeans defend the corpse and repel the enemy time and again (four times in Herodotus, 7.225.1, trumping the three in Homer, *Il.* 18.232–3). The Greeks realise that the battle turns to the enemy (7.225.2) as Ajax does in the *Iliad* (17.626–33). Leonidas’ corpse is decapitated (7.238) in a fulfilment of Hector’s wish to do the same to Patroclus (*Il.* 17.126–7, 18.176–6). In the background, resonances between this Spartan *Leonidas* and the lion similes recurrent in the *Iliad* no doubt linger.⁸⁶ At any rate, Herodotus is alert to the lion within. He brings his account of the battle to a resounding climax by picturing ‘the stone *lion*

⁸¹ Unlike, arguably, in Simonides’ Plataea elegy: see above, n. 68. Pelling (2019) 202 catalogues the evidence for the Persian Wars being represented as the new Trojan War.

⁸² E.g., Pelling (1997), nuancing the fundamental studies of Hall (1989); Cartledge (1993).

⁸³ Time of battle: 7.217.2, 219.2 ~ *Il.* 11.1–2; 19.1–2; cf. 8.83.1; 9.47: Pelling (2006a) 92 n. 48. The generic nature of these references already suggests a continued role for using traditional referentiality to think about Herodotus’ use of Homer. I explore this idea in more detail below.

⁸⁴ Longinus 13.3 (above, n. 51). Munson (2001) 175–8; Boedeker (2003) 34–6; Carey (2016) 81–4; and especially Pelling (2006a) 92–8, to whom I owe the references that follow.

⁸⁵ Cf. Pelling (2019) 202–3.

⁸⁶ There is a lion simile in the battle over/for Patroclus: *Il.* 17.61–9 (describing Menelaos). Similarly, in the oracle that Leonidas interprets (Hdt. 7.20.4, which I discuss shortly), lions (as well as bulls) are said to be no match for the ‘Persian invader’ (the ‘grammatically obscure’ *τόν*: Macan (1908) ad loc; cf. How–Wells (1912) ad loc.). The lion Leonidas: Pelling (2006a) 92–3 with n. 48; Carey (2016) 84–5; cf. Pelling (2019) 202–3.

of Leonidas' (ὄκου νῦν ὁ λίθινος λέων ἔστηκε ἐπὶ Λεωνίδῃ, 7.225.2) that marks the spot where Leonidas' Spartans made their desperate last stand. This brief flash-forward to a time after, when these events have been inscribed into stone, anticipates the next step of this narrative, which turns the focus on to the act of memorialisation (I'll come back to this). Even this stone memorial recalls the depiction of Patroklos' death in the *Iliad*: there, Homer describes the stillness of Achilles' (usually swift) horses, in mourning for their lost rider, by comparing them to a grave stele (*Il.* 17.434–5). In terms of the level and sustained nature of the interplay, and indeed continuity of theme—the battle over a fallen warrior—there seems little doubt that an *Iliad* palimpsest detailing the death of Patroclus underlies and underpins Herodotus' depiction of the last moments at Thermopylae.⁸⁷

But to what effect? In her analysis of battle scenes in Homer and Herodotus, Deborah Boedeker has drawn a comparison between vivid depictions of death in the *Iliad*, which serve a memorialisation function that honours all equally, and Herodotus' own more prosaic, down-to-earth accounts, which gloss over detailed battle description in favour of the scrutiny, and in particular the civic evaluation, of those deaths. One exception that proves her rule is precisely Herodotus' description of the death of Leonidas, which, Boedeker argues, 'appropriates the more monologic, heroic poetics of the *Iliad*, focused on the glorious death of an individual'.⁸⁸

It is worth pausing to consider this idea in more detail. At the critical moment at Thermopylae, when the Greeks realise that they have been surrounded, Leonidas dismisses the allies. To explain his motivation, Herodotus turns to the precedent established by epic: this was about *kleos*. 'If he stayed there,' Herodotus writes (7.220.2), 'great **glory** would be left

⁸⁷ Not that Herodotus' engagement with Homer is restricted only to this episode from Book 17 of the *Iliad*. Arguably, the most striking use of a Homeric word, since it's a *hapax* in both Homer and Herodotus, is *περισταδόν*. Used by Homer to describe Antilochus being surrounded by the Trojans (*Il.* 13.551), Herodotus redeploys it to describe the decisive moment when the Greeks are surrounded (7.225.3). Thucydides also uses it, to describe the Athenians being surrounded at Syracuse (7.81.4, again a *hapax*). See Allison (1997) 89–90. Cf. Smith (1900) 74; Foster (2012) 202. For the re-use of *hapax legomena* in the fifth century: Nelson (2021).

⁸⁸ Boedeker (2003) 34. One should note that Boedeker is referring only to the *Iliad*'s representation of death as 'an equalizer of sorts' (33). Still, even allowing for that restricted focus, its heroic poetics are more varied and more complicated: see, e.g., Warwick (2019).

behind (*μένοντι δὲ αὐτοῦ κλέος μέγα ἐλείπετο*),⁸⁹ and the prosperity of Sparta would not be wiped away (*ἐξηλείφετο*).⁹⁰ To mark the moment, Herodotus quotes an oracle (in epic hexameter), which prophesies either the sack of Sparta or the death of its king: ‘Recollecting these lines’, Herodotus continues, ‘and wishing to lay down **glory** (*κλέος καταθέσθαι*) for the Spartans alone’ (220.4),⁹¹ Leonidas sent away the allies. With respect to these lines, Christopher Pelling suggestively argues:

In a microcosm of that proemial interplay of heroes and writer, Leonidas and Herodotus both have their roles in monumentalising that *kleos*, one in doing, the other in describing ... Leonidas and the Spartans are almost writing their own script, carefully ensuring that everything looks right (hair nicely combed for these modern equivalents of the Homeric ‘long-haired Achaeans’, 208.3).⁹²

Kleos, the strong, if not all-powerful, motivating force for the individual in Homer, is here reconfigured as the *kleos* of the group, to be part of a group, one of the Three Hundred Spartans.

This, we should remind ourselves, is Leonidas’ view. Herodotus’ narrative, as ever, is less straightforward, and one may already detect disquieting hints, unsettling any neat and univocal assessment—the fact that Leonidas feels the *need* to orchestrate who stays and who goes, for one thing.⁹³ Above all, there is the *form* of the narrative to consider. John Marincola begins an important article on Thermopylae by describing how Herodotus

⁸⁹ Translating *ἐλείπετο* as passive, as Pelling (2006) 93: ‘great glory *would be left* for him’. Equally, it could be middle (e.g., Godley (1920): ‘*he would leave behind* a name of great fame’), which arguably better suits Pelling’s argument; the subsequent reference to *κλέος καταθέσθαι* (220.4) Pelling *does* translate as middle (to ‘lay down the *kleos* of the Spartans’). See below, p. 193 with n. 126.

⁹⁰ The line resonates with Herodotus’ proem, to preserve *kleos* and ensure deeds did not fade (*ἰ. praef.*) and has an ‘almost Gorgianic jingle’: Pelling (2006a) 93 n. 50. It’s a jingle that Macan (1908) *ad loc.* finds ‘not pleasing’.

⁹¹ Reading *μούνων* (to agree with *Σπαρτιητέων*), where the manuscripts have *μοῦνον*: Baragwanath (2008) 69 n. 39. So Macan (1908) *ad loc.*: ‘[*μοῦνον*] agreeing with *Λεωνίδην* it would give an absurd sense’. I return to this word, and its traditional referentiality, below, pp. 190–4.

⁹² Pelling (2006a) 93–4. Cf. Pelling (2019) 203–4.

⁹³ Pelling (2006a) 95; Carey (2016) 83 n. 31; cf. Baragwanath (2008) 68. The tension between fight and flight is a major concern in Homeric epic and elsewhere in early Greek poetry: Barker–Christensen (2006), esp. 17–26. See further below, pp. 194–6.

has modelled his account on Homer, before immediately pulling himself up: ‘I say “modelled on Homer,” but it is more accurate to say that Herodotus has retained some elements of Homeric battle narrative while doing other things in a very different way’.⁹⁴ One of the most marked differences, as throughout the *Histories*, is his use of the first-person, his inclusion of different voices, and, above all, his inquiry into what has (been said to have) happened.⁹⁵ The process of memorialising Thermopylae, for example, begins even before it reaches its thrilling climax: when Leonidas falls, Herodotus interrupts his narrative to claim that he has ‘learned by inquiry’ (7.224) all the names of the three hundred who fell.⁹⁶ Immediately after recounting the battle’s final throes, Herodotus turns to record who was said to be ‘best’ (*aristos*).⁹⁷ This honour goes to the Spartiate Dienece, whose laconic sayings make such a light deal of death as to leave behind a ‘memorial’ (*μνημόσυνα*, 227).⁹⁸ Two more Lacedaemonians (brothers) are cited in despatches, before a lone Thespian is mentioned. The trend continues with the catalogue of inscriptions that follow, which retains the (almost) exclusive focus on Sparta (228).⁹⁹ Following their leader’s example, the Spartans dominate (/are seen to be managing?) the rollcall of honours. As Pietro Vannicelli suggests, the Thespians (among others) are in danger of being written out of the story.¹⁰⁰

It is in this context of memorialisation that Herodotus introduces the case of Aristodemus.

⁹⁴ Marincola (2016) 219.

⁹⁵ Marincola (2016) 219–20, 227. Cf. Dewald (1987); Marincola (1987); Boedeker (2003).

⁹⁶ Marincola (2016) 233 argues that, by stressing that he has learned by inquiry all their names, Herodotus performs a ‘historiographical achievement’ to rank on par with the ‘historical achievement’ of the three hundred.

⁹⁷ The contest over who is ‘the best’ (*aristos*) of the Achaeans is a critical dynamic in the *Iliad*: Nagy (1979). It is equally highly charged in Herodotus: see below, §4. I do not mean to suggest that Herodotus’ interplay with Homer is not reflective of lived experience more generally: Tritle (2006) 216 does well to remind us that knowledge of the *Iliad* would have shaped expectations in battle. See also Pelling, above, Ch. 2.

⁹⁸ Another Iliadic touch: Phoenix reminds Achilles that his father, Peleus, had instructed him to teach Achilles to be ‘a speaker of words’ as well as a ‘doer of deeds’ (*Il.* 9.433).

⁹⁹ The first references the four thousand Peloponnesians, the second specifically the Spartans and their laws. The third, though for the seer Megistias, homes in on his loyalty to the leaders of Sparta.

¹⁰⁰ Vannicelli (2007) 317–18 on 7.226–7; cf. Vannicelli (2018) 157.

3. No Time to Die: Aristodemos at Thermopylae

Balancing the reports of praise and evidence of commemoration are accounts of blame. The first records the unenviable fate of Aristodemos. Here I quote the episode in full, since part of my argument concerns its complex structure (7.229–32):¹⁰¹

[229] Δύο δὲ τούτων τῶν τριηκοσίων λέγεται Εὐρυτόν τε καὶ Ἀριστόδημον, παρεὸν αὐτοῖσι ἀμφοτέροισι κοινῶ λόγῳ χρησαμένοισι ἢ ἀποσωθῆναι ὁμοῦ ἐς Σπάρτην, ὡς μεμετιμένοι γε ἦσαν ἐκ τοῦ στρατοπέδου ὑπὸ Λεωνίδεω καὶ κατακέατο ἐν Ἀλπηνοῖσι ὀφθαλμιῶντες ἐς τὸ ἔσχατον, ἢ εἴ γε μὴ ἐβούλοντο νοστήσαι, ἀποθανεῖν ἅμα τοῖσι ἄλλοισι, παρεὸν σφι τούτων τὰ ἕτερα ποιέειν οὐκ ἐθέλησαι ὁμοφρονέειν, ἀλλὰ γνώμη διενειχθέντας Εὐρυτόν μὲν πυθόμενον τῶν Περσέων τὴν περίοδον αἰτήσαντά τε τὰ ὄπλα καὶ ἐνδύντα ἄγειν αὐτὸν κελεῦσαι τὸν εἴλωτα ἐς τοὺς μαχομένους, ὅκως δὲ αὐτὸν ἦγαγε, τὸν μὲν ἀγαγόντα οἴχεσθαι φεύγοντα, τὸν δὲ ἐσπεσόντα ἐς τὸν ὄμιλον διαφθαρῆναι, Ἀριστόδημον δὲ λιποψυχέοντα λειφθῆναι.

[2] εἰ μὲν νυν ἢ μούνον Ἀριστόδημον ἀλγήσαντα ἀπονοστήσαι ἐς Σπάρτην ἢ καὶ ὁμοῦ σφῶν ἀμφοτέρων τὴν κομιδὴν γενέσθαι, δοκέειν ἐμοὶ οὐκ ἂν σφι Σπαρτιήτας μῆνιν οὐδεμίαν προσθέσθαι· νῦν δὲ τοῦ μὲν αὐτῶν ἀπολομένου, τοῦ δὲ τῆς μὲν αὐτῆς ἐχομένου προφάσιος, οὐκ ἐθέλησαντος δὲ ἀποθνήσκειν, ἀναγκαίως σφι ἔχειν μνηῖσαι μεγάλως Ἀριστοδήμῳ.

[230] οἱ μὲν νυν οὕτω σωθῆναι λέγουσι Ἀριστόδημον ἐς Σπάρτην καὶ διὰ πρόφασιν τοιήνδε, οἱ δὲ ἄγγελον πεμφθέντα ἐκ τοῦ στρατοπέδου, ἐξεὸν αὐτῷ καταλαβεῖν τὴν μάχην γινομένην οὐκ ἐθέλησαι, ἀλλ' ὑπομείναντα ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ περιγενέσθαι, τὸν δὲ συνάγγελον αὐτοῦ ἀπικόμενον ἐς τὴν μάχην ἀποθανεῖν.

[231] ἀπονοστήσας δὲ ἐς Λακεδαίμονα ὁ Ἀριστόδημος ὄνειδός τε εἶχε καὶ ἀτιμίην· πάσχω δὲ τοιάδε ἠτίμωτο· οὔτε οἱ πῦρ οὐδεὶς ἔναυε Σπαρτιητέων οὔτε διελέγετο. ὄνειδός τε εἶχε ὁ τρέσας Ἀριστόδημος καλεόμενος.

[232] ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ἐν τῇ ἐν Πλαταιῆσι μάχῃ ἀνέλαβε πᾶσαν τὴν ἐπενειχθεῖσαν αἰτίην.

¹⁰¹ I print the text as in Hude (1908). The more recent OCT by Wilson (2015) incorporates two emendations: at the beginning of 229.2 he reads εἰ μὲν νυν (συνέβη) ἢ μούνον ... (suppl. Richards) and at the beginning of 232 τὴν ἐπενειχθεῖσάν (οἱ) αἰτίην (suppl. Stein). Neither seems necessary, though it doesn't affect my argument either way.

[229] But of two of the three hundred, Eurytos and Aristodemos, it is said, though it was possible for both of them to have come to an agreement either to be saved together [and return] to Sparta, since they had been let go from the camp by Leonidas and were lying sick at Alpeni with an extreme eye problem, or, if they didn't want to return, to die along with the rest—though it was possible for them to do either of these things, they were not willing to agree, but being divided in opinion Eurytos, when he learned of the Persians' circuit, demanded his armour, put it on, and ordered his helot to lead him to those fighting; and just so the helot led him and then fled, while Eurytos rushed into the crowd and was killed. But Aristodemos with his spirit leaving him was left behind (*Ἀριστόδημον δὲ λιποψυχέοντα λειφθῆναι*).

[2] Now if either Aristodemos alone had suffered many pains and returned to Sparta, or if there was a rescue for both of them, it seems to me that the Spartans would not have imposed any wrath on them. But as it was, [it is said that] when one of them was dead, and the other held on to the same motive, and was not willing to die, they were compelled to be greatly wrathful with Aristodemos.

[230] Some, then, say that it was thus and with such a motive that Aristodemos came safe back to Sparta. According to others he had been sent on a message from the camp, and, though it was possible for him to seize the battle while it was still in progress, he was not willing, but waiting around on the road he survived, while his fellow-messenger arrived back to the battle and died.

[231] When Aristodemos returned to Lacedaemon, he was abused and dishonoured. He suffered dishonour in the following way: no Spartan would light for him fire, nor speak with him. And they held him in abuse, calling him 'the runaway'.

[232] But he made good on the whole charge that was brought against him in the battle at Plataea.

I find this a difficult passage to translate.¹⁰² The whole first paragraph (as I have rendered it above) is one sentence, all in indirect discourse (headlined by *λέγεται*),¹⁰³ with two impersonal neuter participles (*παρεόν*), the second of

¹⁰² The shame is lessened somewhat by the fact that Donald Lateiner uses this very passage to exemplify 'Herodotos' variously paced and limber compositional techniques': Lateiner (2002) 364.

¹⁰³ The bare *λέγεται* foregrounds the issue of focalisation. Cf. Lateiner (2002) 366.

which picks up on and clarifies the point of the first (‘though it was possible for them to do either of these things’),¹⁰⁴ and a series of balanced clauses indicated by μέν and δέ that carefully delineate and unpick the actions and fates of the two Spartans (Εὐρυτον μέν ..., ὅκως δέ [the helot] ..., τὸν μέν [the helot] ..., τὸν δέ [Eurytos] ..., Ἀριστόδημον δέ ...).¹⁰⁵

The second paragraph also lacks a main verb. Its first clause—a contrary to fact condition—is governed by Herodotus expressing his judgement (δοκέειν ἐμοί), in which he speculates that, had there been no difference of opinion and action between the two men, there would have been no repercussions. The second clause—still governed by λέγεται?¹⁰⁶—states the situation ‘as it was’. This paragraph is again structured by balanced clauses (εἰ μέν νυν ..., νῦν δέ τοῦ μέν ..., τοῦ δέ ...), which serve on this occasion to differentiate whether the Spartans had cause to be angry or not (δοκέειν ἐμοί οὐκ ἂν σφί Σπαρτιήτας μῆνιν οὐδεμίαν προσθέσθαι... | ἀναγκαίως σφί ἔχειν μηνῖσαι μεγάλως Ἀριστοδήμῳ).

The third paragraph (7.230) introduces an alternative story (οἱ δέ responding to the resumptive οἱ μέν νυν οὕτω), with its own pairing of Spartans (this time Aristodemos and a nameless fellow messenger—Eurytos again?), further indirect discourse (an implied λέγεται), and another impersonal neuter participle (ἐξείον). All this builds up to a rather different,

¹⁰⁴ [T]he resumptive repetition of the accusative absolute clauses with παρεόν ... retards the forward momentum and marks the moment of bifurcation: Eurytos to die with glory, Aristodamos to live with shame’: Lateiner (2002) 368.

¹⁰⁵ Lateiner (2002) 367 demonstrates both the intricate structure of, and the subtle process of discrimination in, the λέγεται clause: ‘Herodotos’ first sentence begins with ten plural verbs, participles, and (number-free) infinitives for both Eurytos and Aristodamos that continue until their shared moment of crisis, their “decision-making”. From this point, ‘Herodotos splits their stories deploying eight singular verbs, participles, and infinitives, six for unstoppable Eurytos and but two for unheroic Aristodamos’. Similarly, ‘plural and “collective” nouns, pronouns, and adjectives emphasize at first their common problem and cause’; after they go their separate ways, ‘modifiers are singular and no word is shared’. Finally, ‘adverbs also reinforce initial homogeneity, at first “sharing” or conjunctive terms such as τε καί, ὁμοῦ, ἅμα ... When the hoplites separate, we find heterogeneity: ἀλλά (“but”, here placed on the razor’s edge ...) and, in unusual profusion, Greek markers of antithesis: μέν ... δέ’.

¹⁰⁶ Lateiner (2002) 363 translates: ‘[the Spartans] say it was necessary for them to vent their [communal] vengeful wrath on Aristodamos’. Unfortunately, he doesn’t comment on his addition of ‘the Spartans’ (as represented by the parenthesis), and I have found no help from the commentators either. I come back to the thorny issue of focalisation below, pp. 195–6.

and certainly more clear-cut, depiction of an Aristodemos who was unwilling *to fight* (καταλαβείν τήν μάχην γινομένην οὐκ ἔθελῆσαι, 230), not simply unwilling *to die* (οὐκ ἔθελήσαντος δὲ ἀποθνήσκειν, 229.2). A final clause adds the gloss that he dallied in order to stay alive (ἀλλ' ὑπομείναντα ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ περιγενέσθαι, 230), while his comrade returned to battle and died. The searing indictment that he faces when back home follows logically (7.231).

The lengthy sentences; the difficulty of determining focalisation; the carefully balanced clauses; the intense focus on judgement—all this is quite Thucydidean. And, as with so much of Thucydides, particularly his scenes of deliberation, the complexity is quite deliberate. This is a passage that we're supposed to dwell on,¹⁰⁷ to worry about, to try to pick apart, just as the Spartans discriminate Aristodemos from their ranks. We are here far from the rapid and vivid depiction of a rip-roaring glorious 'no surrender' backs-to-the-wall last man stand, and just as far from Leonidas' wish to set down Homeric *kleos* for his Spartans.

Engagement with Homer plays an important role. As we saw in §2, Pelling demonstrates how epic fame (*kleos*) is reconfigured in the Thermopylae narrative to apply to the group at large, thanks largely to Leonidas' management of the battle's final movement. Following on from this, in the passage just quoted (7.229–31) Pelling draws attention to words like 'wrath' (μῆνις), 'insult' (βνείδος), and 'dishonour' (ἀτιμία). As key lexical terms and thematic concepts in the *Iliad*, they have a particular association with Achilles: here, again, Pelling notes, they are transferred to the collective. The Spartans feel wrathful with Aristodemos and, as a result, abuse and dishonour him; in Homer it is Achilles who feels wrath at being dishonoured by Agamemnon, and who hurls abuse at him.¹⁰⁸ 'So'—Pelling writes—'the Homeric themes are there, but indeed *with a difference*: and we should not talk simply of "contrasts", rather of more interesting "interplays" of the worlds of then and now'.¹⁰⁹

Pelling's choice of the plural 'interplays' is instructive. With the possible exception of μῆνις,¹¹⁰ it may serve our reading of the Herodotus passage if

¹⁰⁷ 'Herodotus' careful syntax proves equally expressive for those who tarry to appreciate': Lateiner (2002) 364. He aptly describes how this carefully balanced structure 'steers us through a minefield of possible alternatives' (367). On the agony of deliberating over judgement in Thucydides: Barker (2009) ch. 4.

¹⁰⁸ Pelling (2006a) 95–6; cf. Pelling (2019) 204.

¹⁰⁹ Pelling (2006a) 96.

¹¹⁰ The *Iliad*'s headline of μῆνις (*Il.* 1.1) advertises Achilles' otherworldly anger as the motivating force of the entire epic: Cairns (2003) 31–3.

we think in terms not of a direct intertext with (or allusion to) a specific moment or episode in the *Iliad*, but of the traditional referentiality of the ideas expressed here. Or to be more precise: the traditional referentiality of each phrase and motif as specifically exemplified by their implementation in the *Iliad*. I say this in part because the idea of abuse or dishonour (*ἀτιμία*) is not limited to any one single episode involving Achilles: it is the aggregative nature of the reference that brings to our mind Achilles.¹¹¹ In part, too, it is because these lexical items have a thematic charge in the *Iliad*, in which each new instance recalls previous applications, and invites comparison to Achilles. It is not irrelevant to our understanding of Achilles (and of the *Iliad*), for example, that Thersites abuses Agamemnon (aping Achilles), only to be abused himself (by Odysseus); or that Helen rains abuse down on herself and Paris.¹¹² And the same may be true for Herodotus and for this passage here: that is to say, being willing to listen out for the broader referentiality of these ideas allows us to hear other voices that may have a bearing on our understanding and interpretation of the scene. Intriguingly, the one figure in the *Iliad* other than Achilles on whom abuse and dishonour weight heavily is *Sarpedon*. In a famous passage in the middle of the *Iliad* he articulates the obligations of a leader with the opening line: Γλαῦκε τίη δὴ νῶϊ τετιμῆμεσθα μάλιστα; ('Glaukos, why is it you and I are *honoured* before others?', *Il.* 12.310).¹¹³ Later, as his dying breath leaves him, he calls out to his friend for one last time: 'I will be a thing of shame and a *reproach* (*ὄνειδος*) for you, if the Achaeans strip my armour' (*Il.* 16.498). Sarpedon's words are then repeated by Athena, as she warns Menelaos lest the Trojans strip Patroclus' armour

¹¹¹ Achilles *ἄτιμος* (held in dishonour by Agamemnon, as he sees it): *Il.* 1.171. Other instances only: *Il.* 1.516 (Thetis tells Zeus that she will be the most dishonoured of all the gods, should he not grant her appeal); 16.90 (Achilles warns Patroklos not to fight the Trojans and put him in dishonour); *Od.* 16.431 (Penelope accuses the suitors of dishonouring Odysseus' house); Hes. *Theog.* 395 (Zeus promises all those who had been without honour under Kronos will be honoured by him). Forms of *τιμή* in association with Achilles: 1.59, 278, 353, 356; 9.319, 498, 514, 605, 608, 616; 16.84; 17.92; 23.649 (out of a total of 25 instances in the *Iliad*, and a hexameter corpus total of 74). The verb *τιμάω*: 8 instances related to Achilles (out of a total of 21 in the *Iliad*, 43 in the whole corpus). Instances of *ὄνειδίζω/ὄνειδέα* used of Achilles: *Il.* 1.211, 291; 20.246 (out of a combined total of 13 instances in the *Iliad*, 21 in the whole corpus). In every case the first use is related to Achilles in his strife with Agamemnon.

¹¹² *Il.* 2.222, 251 (Thersites); 3.242 ~ 9.460 (Helen, Phoenix); 3.438 (Paris).

¹¹³ See, e.g., Griffin (1980) 73. For criticism that it provides the 'most lucid statement of the *hero's* role and task' (Redfield (1975) 99, my italics): Haubold (2000) 4–6.

(*Il.* 17.556). The battle over Patroclus' corpse, as we have seen, underpins the last movement of the Thermopylae narrative.

I will come back to these Sarpedon resonances shortly, but, in addition to these words and themes from the *Iliad* that Pelling has ascribed to the Spartans as a group, there is another set of epic terms that cluster around Aristodemos himself, as Herodotus imagines a scenario in which 'only he [Aristodemos] had been in pain and made it home' (μόνον ἀλγήσαντα ἀπονοστήσα, 7.229.2). These terms may again recall the Iliadic Achilles, for whom returning home is on his lips from the start (ἀπονοστήσειν, *Il.* 1.60); who complains about the many 'pains' (ἄλγεα) he has suffered in the war (*Il.* 9.321); and who describes how Agamemnon took a prize from him 'alone of the Achaeans' (ἐμεῦ δ' ἀπὸ μούνου Ἀχαιῶν, 9.335).¹¹⁴ Yet, this last example is a good indication of why it is arguably less helpful, perhaps even misleading, to always think of engagement with Homer in terms of an intertext or allusion to a particular passage in the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. I say this because the singularity that μόνος normally indicates refers to being 'alone' in battle, when one is exceptionally vulnerable: this is something that the singularly divine-like Achilles need not worry about.¹¹⁵ Similarly, ἄλγεα are not restricted to Achilles but refer more broadly to the pains a character in epic suffers,¹¹⁶ while ἀπονοστήσειν ironically only ever expresses the desirability of return, never its realisation—with one telling exception: *Odysseus*.¹¹⁷ It may also be the case, then, that Achilles' great (Homeric) epic rival lurks in the background here: Odysseus, the archetypal suffering (ἀλγέω) hero, who returns home (ἀπονοστήω), alone and vulnerable (μόνος). Again, I am not

¹¹⁴ In the same context (his rejection of Agamemnon's offer), he wonders sarcastically whether the Atreidae 'alone of mortals' love their women (ἢ μούνοι φιλέουσ' ἀλόχους μερόπων ἀνθρώπων, *Il.* 9.340).

¹¹⁵ As expressed by a number of heroes in battle: 'It will be chilling if I am caught | alone ...' τὸ δὲ ῥίγιον αἴ κεν ἄλώω | μόνος, 11.405–6. Cf. 11.467; 12.41; 17.94, 472; 20.188; 22.456. It is encapsulated by the *Iliad*'s night-time tale of the two against the one in the so-called Doloneia (*Il.* 10.224–6) and the Odyssean narrator's expressed wonder at how 'one man alone among many' (μόνος ἐνὶ πλεόνεσσι) could bring death to so many opponents (*Od.* 22.11–14). See Barker–Christensen (2020) 64–8.

¹¹⁶ ἄλγεα are headlined in the proems of both Homeric epics (*Il.* 1.2; *Od.* 1.4). For a discussion of the traditional referentiality of this word in the two epics, which demonstrate a subtle but important distinction in its application and meaning: Barker–Christensen (2008); (2020) ch.3.

¹¹⁷ *Il.* 8.499 (Hektor); 12.115 (on the Trojans); 17.406 (focalising Achilles); *Od.* 24.471 (on Eupheithes). The exception is *Od.* 13.6, where Alkinoos assures Odysseus that he *will* return: Barker (2009) 111 n. 84.

talking about a specific intertext or allusion—this constellation of concepts never occurs together in any passage of Homer— but rather of the general aggregative resonance of their traditional referentiality as exemplified by the *Odyssey*. Judging whether (or not) we hear the echoes of the Homeric Odysseus (and/or Achilles) in Aristodemos' return from war will inevitably impact on our interpretation of the passage as a whole, especially the Spartans' own ruling on him.¹¹⁸ In the judgement of the historian (*δοκέειν ἐμοί*), if it had been only Aristodemos who suffered pain and made it back home, then the Spartans *would not* have been angry with him.

But Aristodemos isn't alone, even if he is the only one of the two to return, and this brings us back to his former comrade-in-arms, Eurytos. It is because the responses of the two men differ that the Spartans couldn't fail to be angry (according to Herodotus or the unspecified source of the story, *λέγεται*). The epic *μῦθος* serves to bring to our attention the difference, not so much between a Homeric world of the individual and the Herodotean world of the collective,¹¹⁹ as between the ideal of (Spartan) unanimity and the reality on the ground (as Herodotus depicts it).¹²⁰ As we read on, the not-alone Aristodemos is further paired and compared with a nameless messenger¹²¹ (230), a Spartan called Pantites (232), and, finally, the Thebans (233). Each comparison is introduced by a subtle manipulation of *μέν ... δέ* clauses. The first *δέ* introduces a different account that 'others [say]' (*οἱ*, 230) about Aristodemos the messenger, which contrasts to the story of his suffering at Alpeni with Eurytos and subsequent salvation (*οἱ μὲν νυν οὕτω*, 230); heightening the difference is the fact that his co-messenger replays Eurytos, plunging back into the battle to die. The second *δέ* relates to a third story (*λέγεται δέ*, 232) that picks up on the narrator's concluding note on Aristodemos (*ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν*, 231) to introduce *another* messenger also said to have *survived* the battle—*περιγενέσθαι* (232) recalling the description of Aristodemos the messenger at 230. This other survivor of the (not quite)

¹¹⁸ Arguably, the return of an individual is a trope of particular interest to Herodotus: at 5.87, for example, the Athenians acknowledge that 'one *alone* of their men returned safely to Attica', *ἓνα μῶνον τὸν ἀποσωθέντα αὐτῶν ἐς τὴν Ἀττικὴν γενέσθαι*) after a battle with the Aeginetans. The precarity of being alone is even starker in this case: the wives of his comrades stab him to death with their brooches. I owe this reference to Scarlett Kingsley.

¹¹⁹ Even the *Iliad*, with its focus on war and battle, is no less interested in community: Barker–Christensen (2020) ch. 1; cf. Haubold (2000).

¹²⁰ 'His offence and his punishment only make sense in the context of Thermopylae, where the logic is that of the heroic world, not the real': Ducat (2006) 45.

¹²¹ Unless we're meant to think this is Eurytos again, as per Paradiso (2002) 164 n. 5.

three hundred returns home (*νοστήσαντα δὲ τοῦτον ἐς Σπάρτην*, 232) like Aristodemos before him (*ἀπονοστήσαι ἐς Σπάρτην*, 229); like Aristodemos, he also faces dishonour (*ὡς ἠτίμωτο*, 232; cf. Aristodemos *πάσχων δὲ τοιάδε ἠτίμωτο*, 231). Only this man who survived to return home kills himself.

Finally (for now), as a further point of comparison to these individual Spartans who somehow let the side down, Herodotus introduces his ultimate Hellenic counterpoints: *οἱ δὲ Θηβαῖοι* (233.1). The Thebans have already had their card marked in the initial preparations for battle. After learning about the hand-selected three hundred Spartiates, we are told that, because they were suspected of medising, Leonidas was eager to *single out* the Thebans *alone* of the Greeks for this mission impossible (*τούτους σπουδῆν ἐποιήσατο Λεωνίδης μούνοϋς Ἑλλήνωνι παραλαβεῖν*, 7.205.3)—that word *μόνος* again, indicating a different kind of singularity than Leonidas hopes for his Spartans (7.220.4). The Thebans come with their very own Leonidas to boot, *Leontiades* (7.205.2, 223.1). No lion this one—his men run to the Persians with hands held out, as soon as they see them having the best of it, and, Herodotus keenly notes, their leader is the first in line to be branded with the king's marks (*στίγματα βασιλήμα*, 233.2). Strikingly, Herodotus doesn't let it lie there but ploughs on: 'in a time afterwards' (*χρόνῳ μετέπειτα*) this man's son will be murdered by the Plataeans, after leading *four* hundred men to seize their town.¹²² The additional line brings us right up to the present day of the historian, to Plataea *again* (compare 231, *ἐν τῇ ἐν Πλαταιῆσι μάχῃ*), and to another comparison: the Persian War has given way to the Peloponnesian War, when Greeks fought each other, not the Persians, and when Thebans took a stand *alongside* Spartans.¹²³

Thus we have a series of doublets embroiling Aristodemos—Aristodemos and Eurytos, and a nameless messenger, and Pantites, and (collectively) the Thebans—which make singling out the man who returned home as the 'runaway' difficult. It is all the more problematic if we consider the extent to which language and ideas recur during the passage. Attuned as we now are by this point in the narrative to its dense echoes with the *Iliad*, such repetitions may even be felt to operate like epic resonance.¹²⁴ When we read,

¹²² The episode is recounted at Thuc. 2.2.

¹²³ As Lateiner (2002) 370 astutely observes, the 'semi-conclusion (*οἱ μὲν νυν οὕτω σωθῆναι λέγουσι*, 7.230) offers one closure, but no conclusions stop the stream of history, and, furthermore, closures in Herodotus generally open into a new picture or conflict'.

¹²⁴ While an exhaustive study of *μόνος* in the *Histories* is beyond the scope of this chapter (it occurs over 160 times in its different declensions), judging from its use in the Thermopylae narrative, it not only retains the sense that we see in Homer—to single out the subject, often

for example, about Eurytos and Aristodemos being ‘divided in opinion’ (*γνώμη διενειχθέντας*, 7.229), we may recall the similar division among the allies when they learn of the Persian encirclement (*ἔσχιζοντο αἱ γνώμαι*, 219), particularly as it is constituted in the eyes of Leonidas (*γνώμη διενειχθέντας*, 220.4).¹²⁵ It is because of the alliance’s precarity that Leonidas sends the allies home—caring for them lest they die, ‘it is said’ (*λέγεται δὲ καὶ ὡς αὐτός σφεας ἀπέπεμψε Λεωνίδης, μὴ ἀπόλωνται κηδόμενος*, 220.1), though Herodotus himself thinks otherwise (*ταύτη καὶ μᾶλλον τὴν γνώμην πλεῖστος εἰμί*, 220.2): it was because Leonidas deemed they were ‘unwilling’ to share in the risk (*οὐκ ἐθέλοντας συνδιακινδυνεύειν*). That perceived unwillingness and what it means might be in our minds when we read that Eurytos and Aristodemos had been similarly ‘unwilling’ to agree (*οὐκ ἐθελῆσαι ὁμοφρονεῖν*, 229). The Spartan pair, whom (after all) Leonidas had ‘let go’ (*μεμετιμένοι*, 229), represent some kind of rerun or mirror image of that moment when Leonidas ‘sends away’ (*ἀπέπεμψε*, 220.1; *ἀποπέμψαι*, 220.4) the allies.

With every repeated phrase or motif, the lion stele set up for Leonidas (225.2) is slowly chipped away at. Though apparently some allies had been preparing ‘to remain there’ with Leonidas (*οἱ δὲ αὐτῶν ἅμα Λεωνίδη μένειν αὐτοῦ παρεσκευάδατο*, 219.2), Leonidas dismisses them anyway, so that (according to Herodotus) ‘by him remaining there, great glory would be left behind’ (*μένοντι δὲ αὐτοῦ κλέος μέγα ἐλείπετο*, 220.2). Herodotus doesn’t tell us precisely for whom: for the Greeks, the Spartans, or Leonidas himself?¹²⁶ Moreover, though I have just translated this line as passive, as if *kleos* could be something that is left behind simply by virtue of a deed being done, it could equally (or more likely) be a middle construction indicating Leonidas’ voice and agency—‘he would leave behind great glory’.¹²⁷ A further middle (/passive) form swiftly follows: ‘he wished to set down glory for the Spartans alone’ (*καὶ βουλόμενον κλέος καταθέσθαι μούνων Σπαρτιητέων*, 220.4). If it’s Leonidas’ agency in the creation of *kleos* that is being subtly exposed, perhaps

to emphasise vulnerability—but also functions to provide resonant soundings through the narrative, as in Homer.

¹²⁵ Macan (1908) *ad loc.*

¹²⁶ Pelling (2006) 93 specifies Leonidas: ‘great glory would be left for him’. The other translators I have consulted (see above, p. 162 with n. 2) leave the referent ambiguous. de Sélincourt (1954) translates the line indicatively as if a statement of fact: ‘And indeed by remaining at his post he left great glory behind him, and Sparta did not lose her prosperity, as might otherwise have happened.’

¹²⁷ See above, n. 89.

the manuscript reading of *μῶνον* (to agree with Leonidas), though jarring, has value after all, as if he *alone* considered himself able to provide glory for his Spartans.¹²⁸ Be that as it may, the repetition of *μῶνος* so soon afterwards makes for uncomfortable reading. The man who ultimately isn't *μῶνος* (229.2), the man left behind (*λειφθῆναι*, 229.1), Aristodemos, depicts an alternative scenario to the vision (and manufacture) of *kleos* left behind by Leonidas (*ἐλείπετο*, 220.2), one where a warrior returns home from battle unscathed and untested.

The effect is particularly jarring because we have been set up to read what happens at Thermopylae in terms that appeared to brook no disagreement. As mentioned above, preparations for battle are focalised from the perspective of the Persian king, Xerxes, in a continuation of the re-telling of the Trojan War from the perspective of the other.¹²⁹ Crucially, we see Xerxes struggling to make sense of his other, the new 'long-haired Achaeans', with the help of the exiled Spartan king Demaratos to guide him. When Xerxes balks at the idea that the Greeks would dare stand up to his vastly superior numbers, Demaratos replies with reference only to his Spartans, and it is a Spartan reference: Tyrtaios, Demaratos explains, 'doesn't allow them to flee from the battle before any number of men, but **remaining** at their post they must conquer or die (*οὐκ ἔων φεύγειν οὐδὲν πλῆθος ἀνθρώπων ἐκ μάχης, ἀλλὰ μένοντας ἐν τῇ τάξει ἐπικρατέειν ἢ ἀπόλλυσθαι*, 7.104.5).¹³⁰ Xerxes, still bemused, laughs at the very idea; he's no longer laughing when his men meet the fierce and resolute resistance.¹³¹ Under Leonidas' leadership, the Spartans perform Tyrtaios' 'fight or die' maxim to the man, a point all the more sharpened when Leonidas sends away the allies—staying to fight (and die) before insurmountable odds will be the privilege of the Spartans and them *alone* (*μῶνοι*).¹³² Then along comes the story of Aristodemos, where disagreement between a pair of Spartans threatens the 'monolithic and monochromatic views of the Spartan mentality and their hoplites' fearsome and fearless repute'.¹³³ His no-show at Thermopylae strikes at the very heart

¹²⁸ See above, n. 91.

¹²⁹ On the Persian focus in Book 7, including the resonances with the *Iliad*, see above, pp. 180–1.

¹³⁰ How–Wells (1912) *ad loc.* note the resonance with Tyrtaios fr. 11.3 *IEG*². See above, p. 165 with nn. 17, 19.

¹³¹ Pelling (2006a) 94.

¹³² Leaving to one side the Thespians (and Thebans): see above, p. 184 with nn. 99–100.

¹³³ Lateiner (2002) 367.

of the Spartan ‘fight or die’ ideology, as established by Tyrtaios, explained by Demaratos, coordinated by Leonidas, and enacted by his comrades. No wonder the Spartans felt compelled to be so angry with him (*ἀναγκάλως σφι ἔχειν μὴνῆσαι*, 229.2).¹³⁴

Within this framework, the story of Aristodemos functions as not only a counterpoint to Spartan ‘fight or die’ ideology, but also a variant on a Homeric type-scene: the ‘fight or flight’ episode, in which our protagonists each represent a different choice, Eurytos for the fight, Aristodemos for flight.¹³⁵ Even in Homer, the choice between fighting or fleeing is rarely binary; being in the midst of battle is far more complicated.¹³⁶ So in Herodotus, with the added twist that the roles are reversed: Eurytos doesn’t so much fight as leave (Alpeni); by the same token, Aristodemos doesn’t so much flee as remain left behind. For complicating Demaratos’ ‘fight or die’ message, or its monumentalisation in the battle at Thermopylae, is the fact that Leonidas (according to the first story) sent Eurytos and Aristodemos away from the battle. As Donald Lateiner puts it: ‘One can argue, oppositely [to the received view], that Eurytos’ courage was disobedient to Leonidas’ rational military command and royal order, while Aristodamos’ soldierly obedience met outrageous social ostracism in a community of the obedient’.¹³⁷ By contrast, the second story of the two messengers who take starkly diverging paths—one into battle, one back home—is far more straightforwardly a depiction of fight and flight, and far easier to read in terms that support the Spartan assessment of Aristodemos as ‘the runaway’. Who’s telling the story, as ever in Herodotus, matters to our interpretation of it.¹³⁸

The complex structuring of this passage (especially 7.229); the interplay with Homer (as viewed through the lens of traditional referentiality); the

¹³⁴ Ducat (2006) 36: ‘Why “anger”? I would say that it was basically because Aristodemos reduced the number of the heroes from 300 to 299, which is a much less satisfactory figure since it spoiled Sparta’s claim to uniqueness: here, as elsewhere, the ideal of “zero default” had not been attained. ... It called into question the whole system ... One might also ask whether his conduct did not implicitly pose another question for the Spartans, one that was much more disturbing and which could not be voiced openly: that of knowing whether the strategic choice made by Leonidas was really the best one for the city and for the Greeks’. Once you start asking why...

¹³⁵ Lateiner (2002) 365.

¹³⁶ Barker–Christensen (2006) 17–36.

¹³⁷ Lateiner (2002) 366 n. 13.

¹³⁸ Dewald (1987).

intratextual echoes with the wider Thermopylae narrative; the issue of focalisation—all of these aspects of my analysis bring me back to the problem of the single word with which this inquiry began: *λιποψυχέοντα*. The first point to reconsider is the alternative reading *φιλοψυχέοντα*, whose value for interpreting this passage we are now in a much better position to assess. This emendation has been proposed, we may recall, because of its fit with Spartan ideology. Perhaps it fits rather too well. The reception of Aristodemos back in Sparta (7.231) functions not only to condemn the individual who made it back home but to reaffirm the ‘fight or die’ ideology as expressed by Demaratos and enacted by Aristodemos’ comrades at Thermopylae. Because he failed to abide by this *nomos*, the Spartans rage against him and abuse and dishonour him as ‘a runaway’. The echo of Tyrtaios here is very deliberate, since we are viewing—and judging—Aristodemos through Spartan eyes. Yet, as I have suggested, of the two accounts describing Aristodemos’ absence from battle, it is the *second* of the two (introduced by *οὐδέ*, 230) that condemns him. Considerably shorter and simpler, this story labels Aristodemos as ‘not willing to fight’ (*ἐξεὸν αὐτῷ καταλαβεῖν τὴν μάχην γινομένην οὐκ ἐθέλησαι*). No nuance here: this version of Aristodemos’ non-appearance clearly justifies Spartan anger with him. By contrast, however, in the first account Aristodemos is said to be ‘not willing to die’ (*οὐκ ἐθέλησαντος δὲ ἀποθνήσκειν*, 229.2). It is but a slight difference, a small slip from not willing to die to not willing to fight, when the Spartan maxim is ‘fight or die’, but critical nonetheless. As we have seen, the first story is not only considerably longer but far more convoluted. For this reason alone, that initial version sits more awkwardly with the brutally stark treatment of Aristodemos that follows the second. But it is also far less likely to be Spartan focalisation, since in this version we are told of Leonidas’ judgement that the two men—and presumably his fighting force of Spartiates at Thermopylae—would be better off if they stayed away.

This *prophasis*, shared by both men,¹³⁹ is their eye condition, which is so severe that they are at their very limits (*ἐς τὸ ἔσχατον*, 7.229.1). As we have seen, Herodotus explains that, had they both chosen to return home they would have had good cause: the problem is that they chose different paths. One path takes six clauses, the other only four words. In one way, this

¹³⁹ His *prophasis* (229.2): an explanatory claim or justification (whether true or false), a triggering cause—Pelling (2019) 8–10 (on Herodotus), 82–4 (on the Hippocratic corpus). Translations which emphasise that Aristodemos makes an ‘excuse’ miss the point that this also applies to Eurytos: they both have the same cause (the ophthalmia).

disparity is a reflection that the former course of action *requires* explanation: how would a blind man make it back to battle anyway? It also has the effect of casting into relief the pathetic outcome: led back into the fighting, Eurytos falls into the crowd—and immediately perishes (τὸν δὲ ἐσπεσόντα ἐς τὸν ὄμιλον διαφθαρῆναι, 7.229.1). Whether this account signifies a display of heroism, or alternatively questions the kind of heroism that would necessitate/encourage an act like this, is hard to say.¹⁴⁰ What is clear is that it is a passive act—a rushing into battle *to be killed*—which compares, somehow, to Aristodemos similarly being left behind.¹⁴¹

Two important conclusions follow. First, we may note the physicality of the experience. As Paradiso had also remarked, the semantic charge of *λιποψυχέω* describes a physical condition and has no ethical or moral implications. The same is true of this account: it is only when Aristodemos gets back home that moral assessment of his condition is imported by the Spartans. Second, the impression created is that it was less important to fight than to be seen to die, as one group, a nice neat and complete three hundred. From this perspective, Pantites killing himself is also his parallel, another useless death in practical terms, but one that serves Spartan ideology.¹⁴² One could say that, simply by not being *φιλοψυχέω*, *λιποψυχέω* is a helpfully more ambiguous word in context.¹⁴³

But I think we can do better. If we hear the epic undertones of *λείπω* + *ψυχή* and understand its traditional referentiality as signifying death, it would further underline the close-to-deathness of this protagonist. Additionally, given the rich and dense interplay with the *Iliad*, there is, I suggest, a case here for specific intertextuality with the moment when Sarpedon's *ψυχή*

¹⁴⁰ Recall the description of Boedeker (2003) (cited above, p. 163). Lateiner (2002) 368 reads the imbalance differently: 'Eurytos receives six clauses occupying five full lines that describe his heroism; wretched Aristodamos, however, obtains only the four final, ponderous words ("imbalanced balance"). One of those leaden words is the *hapax legomenon* *λιποψυχέοντα* ("swooning", or "half-conscious")'. This for me is the one misstep of Lateiner's refreshingly detailed close analysis, and one that jars with his own conclusions.

¹⁴¹ Lateiner (2002) 368 notes how 'their actions even receive homoioteleuton, final rhyme: *διαφθαρῆναι* and *λειφθῆναι*', even though he translates the latter actively.

¹⁴² See below, n. 147 on *μῶνος*.

¹⁴³ *φιλοψυχία* occurs on one other occasion in Herodotus, at 6.29, where Histaios 'showed that he loved his life too well' (*φιλοψυχίην τοιήνδε τινὰ ἀναιρέεται*) by crying out in Persian when he was about to be killed. Ironically, however, this only delays his death by a paragraph, since in the very next section Artaphrenes, fearing lest his rival might escape and again win power at the court, impales his body and sends his head to Darius (6.30). So much for loving life.

leaves him, only for the hero to breathe again. If this is right, then the detail that the two Spartans suffer with a terrible eye infliction gains significance.¹⁴⁴ Hearing in the epic-like conjunction *λιποψυχέω* the moment when Sarpedon suffers the loss of *ψυχή*, we might also recall the description of mist being poured over his eyes, another formula that usually signifies death. The condition of ophthalmia suffered by both Spartans could be seen as an instantiation of this epic death formula. They are that close to death (*ἐς τὸ ἔσχατον*); Eurytos will soon be going blindly to his.

The most interesting aspect is the extent to which *λιποψυχέω* may also bring to mind the thematic trajectory of Sarpedon in the *Iliad*. Immediately after showing the hostile environment that greets Aristodemos on his return to Sparta, Herodotus comments (7.232):

ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ἐν τῇ ἐν Πλαταιῆσι μάχῃ ἀνέλαβε πᾶσαν τὴν ἐπενειχθείσαν αἰτίην.

But he made good on the whole charge that was brought against him in the battle at Plataea.

I noted above that the second, simpler and more damning, account of Aristodemos' no-show (7.230) prepares the ground for, and smooths the path to, his absolute denunciation by his fellow Spartans at home. That ground is suddenly cut away from under our feet by Herodotus' judgement.¹⁴⁵ It stands as a bald statement, simply part of the narrative; it's not even expressed as a narratorial comment—a point that, paradoxically, reveals it to be an even greater intervention on the part of the author of this inquiry. Where the Spartan judgement insists on a simple binary image of heroism, Herodotus demands we think again. That more complicated picture is already anticipated by the complex structuring of this account and by the description of Aristodemos as 'losing his spirit' (*λιποψυχέω*)—a compound

¹⁴⁴ I owe this point to Ingela Nilsson. Similarly in his account of Marathon, Herodotus highlights the case of the Athenian Epizelos, fighting bravely when he is suddenly deprived of his sight (*ἄνδρα γινόμενον ἀγαθὸν τῶν ὀμμάτων στερηθῆναι*, 6.117.2). Epizelos tells his own story what happened: a phantom passed him by and killed the man next to him (117.3)—underlining the associations of blindness with death. I owe this reference to Tom Harrison. On the meaning (or not) of ἄιδης as 'unseen' (*ἀειδές*): Plat. *Crat.* 404b.

¹⁴⁵ Lateiner (2002) 370: '7.231 points to a different outcome in the future. His open architecture and forward marker promise a follow-up at Plataiai (7.231; see 9.71)'.

with its roots in epic which recalls the figure of Sarpedon in the *Iliad*, a hero, like Aristodemos, who lives to fight and die another day.

4. You Only Live Twice: Plataea

After his account of Plataea, Herodotus goes through the now familiar accounting of deeds done. A familiar name is accorded pride of place (9.71.2–4):

The best was by far (ἄριστος ἐγένετο μακρῶ) Aristodemos, in my opinion (κατὰ γνώμας τὰς ἡμετέρας), he who being the only man of the three hundred who survived Thermopylae was held in abuse and dishonour (ὃς ἐκ Θερμοπυλέων μούνος τῶν τριηκοσίων σωθεὶς εἶχε ὄνειδος καὶ ἀτιμίην). The next after him who were best were Posidonios, Philokyon, and Amompharetos, Spartiates. And yet, in the discussion who was the best of these men, the Spartiates who were present judged that Aristodemos, who wished to die openly (φανερῶς ἀποθανεῖν) because of the blame attaching to him, and in a frenzy left his post (λυσσῶντά τε καὶ ἐκλείποντα τὴν τάξιν), had displayed great deeds (ἔργα ἀποδέξασθαι μεγάλα), whereas Posidonios who did not wish to die (οὐ βουλόμενον ἀποθνήσκειν) was a good man: in this way he was the better (ἄνδρα γενέσθαι ἀγαθόν· τοσοῦτω τοῦτον εἶναι ἀμείνω). But these things they may have said also in jealousy. Anyway, these men I've just mentioned, who died in that battle, all of them, except Aristodemos, were honoured. But Aristodemos, who wished to die because of the cause mentioned before, was not honoured (οὐκ ἐτιμήθη).

Even the fact that Aristodemos was fighting at Plataea should make us question how absolute his social exclusion had been.¹⁴⁶ Herodotus explicitly recalls that earlier judgement here: Aristodemos, the only man—μούνος again—of the three hundred who survived Thermopylae and who was held in abuse and dishonour for his pains. It is again his singularity that will be at issue,¹⁴⁷ a running sore to the Spartans, whose self-projection of a society

¹⁴⁶ Ducat (2006) 36.

¹⁴⁷ As Flower and Marincola (2002) *ad loc.* point out, labelling Aristodemos the 'sole' survivor of Thermopylae sits awkwardly with the story of Pantites (7.232); cf. Marincola (2016) 229.

ruled by *nomos* leaves no room for individual action in battle.¹⁴⁸

In part this is what makes using epic models problematic. Heroic endeavour, such as we see in Homer, may be grounded in collective action,¹⁴⁹ but it is the individual hero who features. While the Spartans concede that Aristodemos had a claim to be one of the best, they complain that he fought in a frenzy (*λυσσῶντα*).¹⁵⁰ What is an expression of a warrior's terrifying prowess on the battlefield at Troy¹⁵¹ becomes another stick with which the Spartans beat the one who steps out of line. Where before Aristodemos had been left behind (*λειφθῆναι*), here he (over) asserts his agency and leaves his post (*ἐκλείποντα τὴν τάξιν*), as if he's still fighting the battle at Thermopylae, when the Spartans step outside their fortifications in their final glorious fight to the death (7.223.3).¹⁵² When Demaratos had promised that the Spartans will stay in their posts (*μένοντας ἐν τῇ τάξει*, 7.104.5; cf. Leonidas at 220.2), it was with 'winning or dying' (*ἐπικρατέειν ἢ ἀπόλλυσθαι*) in mind. Aristodemos finally accomplishes both: leaving his post is now the sticking point.

It is all the more striking after a battle in which the two Spartan commanders, Pausanias and Amompharetos, fall out on this very issue. In disbelief that a (Spartan) general could ever countenance retreat, Amompharetos **remains** at his post (*περιείχετο αὐτοῦ μένοντας μὴ ἐκλιπεῖν τὴν τάξιν*, 9.57.1). The division in Spartan ranks throws the Greeks' strategic withdrawal into disarray; sensing their chance the Persians attack—and the Greeks win a famous victory. The picture that the Spartans present in their judgement of Aristodemos is again wide of the mark, and not only in their insistence on an ideology that the events on the ground hardly bear out. The Spartans rank a certain Posidonios more worthy than Aristodemos because this man 'didn't wish to die' (*οὐ βουλόμενον ἀποθνήσκειν*). This made him a 'good man' and 'in this way he was the better' (*ἄνδρα γενέσθαι ἀγαθόν*·

¹⁴⁸ Hdt. 7.104.4. A few paragraphs prior, Demaratos explicitly sets the Spartans apart: he will speak about them *alone* of all Greeks (*ἀλλὰ περὶ Λακεδαιμονίων μόνων*, 7.102.2), just before he asserts their commitment to fighting no matter the odds.

¹⁴⁹ See above, n. 119.

¹⁵⁰ Flower–Marincola (2002) *ad loc.* note, 'Such behaviour cannot be tolerated in Sparta, where discipline and order are necessary for victory'. Boedeker (2003) 26 glosses Aristodemos here as 'madman', which misses the Homeric resonance.

¹⁵¹ Both Hector (*Il.* 9.239, 305) and Achilles (21.542) are described as 'raging' (*λύσσα*)—the only instances in the extant hexameter corpus. Ducat (2006) 37 suggestively compares Aristodemos to 'a Diomedes or a Tydeus'.

¹⁵² Pelling (2006a) 96.

τοσοῦτω τοῦτον εἶναι ἀμείνω). No disagreement is brooked again. And yet ‘not willing to die’ is the exact charge that was levelled at Aristodemos for surviving Thermopylae.¹⁵³ The Spartan assumption of what makes a good man is made a question in Herodotus’ account. Only Aristodemos wasn’t honoured, Herodotus sharply notes.¹⁵⁴ Yet in his eyes,¹⁵⁵ Aristodemos was the best (ἄριστος), displaying great deeds (ἔργα ἀποδέξασθαι μεγάλα)¹⁵⁶ to rank alongside Achilles (or Odysseus) in the final reckoning.

*

The subject of this chapter has been a single contested word. I have explored its semantic range and used it to think about broader questions of Herodotus’ interplay with Homer. Where many of the Homeric touches in Herodotus can be put down to, and more productively used, as examples of traditional referentiality or, at least, non-specific resonances with the *Iliad*, the presence of the *hapax* λιποψυχέω¹⁵⁷ in our manuscripts suggests a prosaic reworking of the poetic formula ‘his spirit left him’, and a specific intertext with the moment when this utterance is applied to Sarpedon’s spirit leaving him as he loses consciousness.

¹⁵³ Similarly, the Spartan complaint that Aristodemos ‘wished to die openly’ (*φανερῶς*) recalls the proof that Herodotus cites for Leonidas stage managing *kleos*: he sent away the seer Megistes *φανερῶς* (7.221).

¹⁵⁴ Lateiner (2002) 369: ‘the Spartan ideological mind-set cannot accommodate or comprehend either his alleged cowardice at Thermopylai or his later, stellar valor at Plataiai’.

¹⁵⁵ Paul Cartledge reminds me that Herodotus uses the ‘royal we’—‘in our opinion’ (*κατὰ γνώμας τὰς ἡμετέρας*)—to emphasise his judgement. On the differences in judgement between the historian and the Spartans: Ducat (2006) 36.

¹⁵⁶ An echo of Herodotus’ opening statement, μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, τὰ μὲν Ἕλλησι τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα, ἀκλεῖα γένηται (1.praef.): Lateiner (2002) 372.

¹⁵⁷ Intriguingly, a manuscript variant at Hdt. 1.86.3, where Croesus is on the pyre, reads λιποψυχήη: Wilson (2015) 11–12. All editions of the text use ἡσυχίης: Croesus, remembering Solon’s wise words on human fortune, ‘heaved a deep sigh, groaned aloud *after a long silence* (ἐκ πολλῆς ἡσυχίης) three times the name “Solon”’. Whether we prefer ἡσυχίης or λιποψυχίης doesn’t affect my argument in this chapter: what is important is the fact that the application of λιποψυχήη here would work in a similar way to the case of Aristodemos (and Sarpedon): a figure on the point of death seems to breathe his last—but is spared to play an important role in the narrative, as Cyrus’ (ahistorical) wise advisor. Pelling (2006c) 156–7 poses the question what end for Croesus the reader of Herodotus might have been expecting.

This is important because so much of the preceding battle narrative had appeared to be working to a Spartan script, as Christopher Pelling has suggested, in which Homeric resonances bear out Leonidas' hopes for Spartan *kleos*. In the aftermath, as Herodotus brings to the fore the memorialisation of the battle, he also turns the focus on the act of memorialisation itself. In many ways, his account of Aristodemus is typical, incorporating different *logoi* and providing narratorial judgement: that's the job of a historian as he is defining it. At the same time, however, this passage makes for a particularly challenging read: his careful framing draws attention to the difficulty of judgement, even as the Spartans issue their extreme judgement on Aristodemus. And yet the narrator's sting-in-the-tale punchline, that this man proved himself at Plataea, is an invitation, a demand even, to read more carefully, and to read to the end.¹⁵⁸ Hearing an intertextual resonance with Sarpedon helps prepare for this shift, and in turn shows how difficult it is (for the Spartans) to control the poetics of memorialisation or live up to the straitjacket of ideology.¹⁵⁹ In short, this passage helps educate us as historians to be alert not only to what happened, but why it's important.

Thinking with a single world has also helped to shed light on Herodotus' engagement with Homer. It has shown that being more precise about what we mean helps us appreciate the nature of that engagement. Using the idea of traditional referentiality, even if limited by the extant hexameter corpus, can help us better understand the customary meaning of a unit of utterance and be alert to its application in Homer's epics. More often than not, this chapter has found that Herodotus' Homeric turns draw on the cumulative nature of a phrase or motif's traditional referentiality in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and not a specific citation of any particular instance. In turn, such an approach throws into relief those moments when a specific moment in a specific text *is* targeted: these cases can be better described and understood as intertextuality, in which the semantics of the target text continue to reverberate in the host text. As a narrative on the cusp of the medial shift

¹⁵⁸ Reading to the end: Cartledge and Greenwood (2002) 351; Greenwood (2007) 145; cf. Barker (2006).

¹⁵⁹ Such attempts to control memorialisation aren't limited to the Spartans: in claiming the right to hold the prestigious rank in the battle of Plataea, the Athenians refer to Marathon, in which, they claim, they *alone* fought off the Persian forces (*μῶνοι Ἑλλήνων δὴ μουνόμαχῆσαντες τῷ Πέρσῃ*, 9.27.5). The narrative had suggested a different scenario (Hdt. 6.108.1). 'The Athenians clearly look to epicise the battle of Marathon:' Haywood (above, p. 80).

from performance poetry to a written text, it is perhaps no surprise that both ways of ‘reading’ are present in the *Histories*, working together to provide nuance and depth to Herodotus’ reworking of epic in prose.

As a final indication of the presence, and importance, of *λιποψυχέω* in Herodotus, it is worthwhile briefly reflecting on the tradition that Herodotus establishes. For it can hardly be coincidental that *λιποψυχέω* keeps reoccurring as a *hapax* in later historians, in the same context (a Spartan or military setting), with the same connotations *mutatis mutandis*. Xenophon, for example, recounts how the Spartan leader Agesilaos ‘lost his spirit’ (*ἐλιποψύχησε*) after a Syracusan surgeon operated on his ankle. Though not a fatal wound, he is out of action for the rest of the summer and throughout the winter.¹⁶⁰ Pausanias narrates the story of the Messenian king Euphaes, who in battle with the Spartans lost consciousness (*λιποψυχήσαντα*) due to his wounds, and died not many days later (*ἡμέραις δὲ οὐ πολλαῖς ἀποθνήσκει*).¹⁶¹ In Arrian, Alexander loses consciousness twice, so badly wounded (and so great a hero) is he.¹⁶² Arguably most striking of all is Thucydides (4.11.4, 12.1, 14.2):

Brasidas was most conspicuous of all (*πάντων δὲ φανερότατος*) ... In trying to land he was knocked back by the Athenians, and after receiving many wounds **fainted away** (*ἐλιποψύχησε*), and, as he fell into the forward part of the ship, his shield slipped off into the sea. ... At the sight of [their ships being hauled away] and **suffering in pain** (*περιαλοῦντες τῷ πάθει*) since their comrades were being cut off on the island, the Lacedaemonians on the shore rushed to help.¹⁶³

In this passage there is no doubting the heroic credentials of the Spartan warrior.¹⁶⁴ Brasidas is accorded full Homeric honours, with an epic sounding

¹⁶⁰ ‘Then however [flow of blood] stopped’, Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.58. The emphasis here on an immediate limit to the extent of the loss of consciousness owes much to the ‘Hippocratic’ context of an operation. Even so, Agesilaos’ recovery is lengthy.

¹⁶¹ Paus. 4.10.3–4.

¹⁶² Arr. *Anab.* 6.10.2 (*λειποψυχία*), 11.2 (*ὥστε λειποψυχῆσαι αὐθις, λειποψυχία*). After describing Alexander’s recovery from the second loss of consciousness, Arrian launches into a tirade against those who have falsely reported on this event. This narratorial intervention, coupled with the repetition of *λειποψυχία*, serves to mark out Alexander as the greatest of heroes in this tradition, and Arrian himself as the best historian.

¹⁶³ A passage famous in antiquity: cf. D.S. 12.62.4; Plut. *De glor. Ath.* 347B.

¹⁶⁴ Hornblower (1996) ad loc. 4.12 notes that Brasidas is not your average Spartan.

superlative (‘the most conspicuous—*φανερώτατος*—of all’), while his men collectively suffer like an Achilles or Odysseus (*περιαλοῦντες τῷ πάθει*).¹⁶⁵ It is all the more interesting, then, that Brasidas is described as ‘losing his spirit’ (*ἐλιποψύχησε*), as he falls down into the prow of the ship and his shield slips into the sea. That shield is taken by the Athenians and set up as a trophy to mark their victory. As for Brasidas: nothing more is said; to all intents and purposes, he appears to have suffered a fatal loss of consciousness.¹⁶⁶ Until, that is, some fifty-eight chapters later, when all of a sudden we hear of him preparing an army for Thrace (4.70). Ultimately, he dies after storming Thracian Amphipolis (Thuc. 5.10) in an action that will condemn his Athenian rival to a life of writing history in exile. Like Aristodemos and Sarpedon before him, Brasidas is saved to die another day.¹⁶⁷ If my analysis of *λιποψυχέω* is right, then the irony of using a word that had described the shameful Aristodemos to describe the new Leonidas at (Thermo)Pylos appears to have been too great an opportunity for Thucydides to miss.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ Brasidas’ *aristeia*: Howie (1992) 438; cf. Hornblower (1996) 38–61; Rhodes (1998) 215.

¹⁶⁶ Hornblower (1996) 46: ‘The word for “faints” is found here only in Thucydides. The word is *ἐλιποψύχησε*: and this is a Homeric expression and notion for swooning, though more normally if your psyche leaves you, you are dead. But it is certainly the expression for a Homeric swoon’—citing the example of Sarpedon.

¹⁶⁷ Brasidas is wounded (again), rescued from the battle by his comrades, and taken back to the city ‘barely still breathing’ (*ἔτι ἔμπνονν*, 5.10.11)—a distant echo of Sarpedon, again? His final breath comes after learning of his victory.

¹⁶⁸ (Thermo)Pylos: Stadter (2012) 46–8; cf. Foster (2012).

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