

CLIO AND THALIA: ATTIC COMEDY AND
HISTORIOGRAPHY

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HISTORIOGRAPHY



EDITED BY
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&
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PREFACE

This *Histos* Supplementary Volume, *Clio and Thalia: Attic Comedy and Historiography*, arose from panels we organised at the annual meetings of the American Association of Ancient Historians ('Greek Historiography and Attic Comedy', UNC-Chapel Hill and Duke Universities, May 2012) and the Classical Association of the Middle West and South ('Clio and Thalia: Reconsidering the Relation of Attic Old Comedy and Historiography', Iowa City, April 2013). Both panels sought to direct attention to the complex and under-appreciated relationship between two innovative and swiftly changing genres, and perhaps particularly to emphasise the connectedness of Herodotean and Thucydidean historiography with comic paradigms.

Subsequent to these conferences, our hard working panellists have thoroughly revised their papers. We would like to extend our great thanks to them, to the audiences on each occasion, and to the conference organisers. We would also like to thank Professor Jeffrey Rusten for his contribution to our panel in 2012, and the anonymous readers for *Histos*, who provided valuable criticism on each contribution. We thank Eduardo García-Molina, who compiled the Index Locorum. Above all we thank Professor John Marincola, Supervisory Editor of *Histos*' Supplementary Volumes, for his splendid combination of enthusiasm, sage advice, and practical *nous* that guided the volume from the very beginning through to publication. We are saddened that during the course of the project *Histos*' other key player, Professor John Moles (founder and editor of *Histos* and Professor of Latin at Newcastle University), passed away: we will miss his brilliance, his generosity, and his tremendous supportiveness of other and especially junior scholars.

Finally, we would like to thank our respective institutions for their support: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Case Western Reserve University, and The Institute for Advanced Studies at the University of Strasbourg.

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Strasbourg

E. B.
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March, 2017

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(Oxford, 2012), *Roman Literature, Gender, and Reception* (Festschrift Hallett, London and New York, 2013), and the *Ancient Emotion of Disgust* (New York and Oxford, 2017). He has introduced and annotated editions of translations of Herodotus and Thucydides for Barnes and Noble. He is Emeritus Professor of Humanities-Classics at Ohio Wesleyan University.

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INTRODUCTION: CLIO AND THALIA

Emily Baragwanath and Edith Foster

The sisters Clio and Thalia at first sight possess not family likeness, but starkly dissimilar features: the one serious-minded and noble, a worshipper at the altar of truth;¹ the other, a lewd mistress of distortions and falsification who peddles base laughter. Yet to the observer who lingers to take a closer look, their features disclose affinities that shed light on both genres. The papers collected in this supplementary volume of *Histos* move beyond our well-established practice of using Attic comedy and historiography to clarify each other, and set them side by side to reflect upon how they responded and related to each other in ancient times.²

Attic comedy and fifth-century historiography shared important themes and aims.³ Perhaps most conspicuously, comedy taught about historical individuals and contemporary issues—famous political leaders, such as Pericles or Cleon, the sophists, the new education, generation clash, the foibles of the democracy, the courts, of policy toward the war—that connected with Thucydides' account of, and

¹ Cf. Lucian's characterisation of the ideal historian.

² Strasburger (1961) reviews the presence of comic elements in Greek historiography from the Classical to Hellenistic periods, and remarks (16) on how little historiography owes to comedy. Cf. Will (2015) 109. The present volume is concerned not with 'influences' of one on the other, but with their relationships and affinities.

³ Tragic elements in the works of the ancient Greek historians have drawn a good deal more scholarly attention than comic ones, e.g. Chiasson (1982) and (2003), Macleod (1983), Pelling (1997), Saïd (2002), Griffin (2006), Rutherford (2007), and Baragwanath (2012a), 300–10. For the relation between tragedy and comedy, especially in respect to comedy's direct engagement with contemporary issues and figures, cf. e.g. Taplin (1986).

Herodotus' implicit commentary on, late-fifth century imperial Athens.⁴ Many other commonalities of theme, compositional mode, and subject matter were also important, however, and the following introduction offers a foundation for reading the papers included here. It looks first at some aspects of how the comic poets and historians in fifth- and early-fourth-century Athens related to their shared audiences. It addresses their high expectations of that audience in terms of its responsiveness, intelligence, and knowledge of previous literature, and then discusses the rivalry among comic poets or among historians by means of which authors in both genres appealed to their demanding audiences by claiming superior usefulness. It goes on to review the presence of humour and comic modes in historiography, including the use of aggressive humour, of jokes that memorialise excellence, and of grotesque details. The introduction concludes with brief remarks on the importance of comedy as a source for fourth-century historiography.

The Fifth-Century Audiences of Comedy and Historiography

As was just mentioned, Attic comedy and historiography developed analyses of important social and political topics for their fifth-century audiences. Moreover, both genres offered their audiences serious political suggestions. For instance, Herodotus advertises the perils of tyranny and imperialism. Thucydides and Aristophanes expose the danger to the democracy of demagoguery. Three of Aristophanes' plays (*Acharnians*, *Knights*, and *Lysistrata*) campaign at length for peace in the war and *Ecclesiazusae* goes to bat for those who had been involved with the

⁴ For politicians of the Peloponnesian war as treated in the Old Comedians, see *inter alia* Strasburger (1955), Rusten (2006), Henderson (2017), esp. 609–11, and 613–14. Herodotus' implicit commentary on imperial Athens: Strasburger (1955); Stadter (1992) and (2012); Moles (1996).

tyranny of the Thirty, pleading for their acceptance back into Athens.⁵ Aristophanes' political lessons and interventions appeal to an actively engaged audience, just as the audiences implied by our earliest fully extant historiographical text, the *Histories* of Herodotus, are responsive, critical, intellectual, feisty. Herodotus' listeners are not so unlike the audiences (which we know rather better) of Athens' assembly, with their highly vocal reactions,⁶ or those of the Athenian jury courts seated in the Heliaia, whose discernment, intelligence, and engagement the orators take care to imply; both groups overlapped with the audience that sat in Athens' theatre of Dionysus to watch Old Comedy.⁷ We may sense Herodotus' awareness of this challenging audience when he refers to the jealousy he may arouse by insisting that the Athenians (no longer popular in the later fifth century) were the saviours of Greece in the Persian Wars (7.139); or in his care in framing the contentious account of the Argives *inviting* Xerxes into Greece (7.150–2), so as to deflect possible aggravation on the part of some audience members.⁸ His admonishment of those who had registered disbelief at an earlier recitation of the Constitutional Debate (3.80.1)⁹ invites comparison to Aristophanes' critique of his own audience's response to an earlier performance of *Clouds* (*Clouds parabasis*, 518–62; *Wasps parabasis* 1015–20).¹⁰ Aristophanes' critique is more vehement than Herodotus'; however, the historian is also capable of taking a swing at the democracy, as when he has the last laugh on his Athenian readers in claiming that it was easier for Aristagoras to fool 30,000 Athenians (i.e. the

⁵ Konstan (2010); Henderson (2017), esp. 607–8.

⁶ Thomas (2011).

⁷ Biles (2016) 118, 128ff. develops the relation between the two audiences (that of the law courts and that of comedy).

⁸ It is preceded by two other versions, and by Herodotus' warning that his role is merely 'to say what is said' (7.152.3).

⁹ If the remark is fictional, rather than reflective of an actual audience response, it nonetheless constructs an audience of this sort.

¹⁰ See Platter (2007) 91–106; Biles (2016) 118–21.

Athenian assembly, at its late fifth-century size) than a single Spartan (5.97.2).

As even this brief description of the relationships between these writers and their audiences already shows, the comic poets and the historians had high expectations of their audiences' intelligence (and could become openly critical if they felt that the audience had not been intelligent enough).¹¹ They also had high expectations of their memories. Like Herodotus, who expected his audience to remember their Homer, Aristophanes expected his audience to have retentive memories for the rhythms of Aeschylus' tragedies or the speeches and costumes of Euripides' *Telephus*.¹² Both historians and comic poets also expected their audiences to have a grasp of historical development. Herodotus could refer forward to his own time, relating Peloponnesian War events;¹³ Aristophanes

¹¹ Cf. e.g. the *parabasis* of *Wasps*, where Aristophanes accuses his audience of having betrayed him because of its lack of appreciation for *Clouds*, a more difficult play that they had rated third out of three in the previous year (on which cf. Biles (2016) 118–20), or Aristophanes' consistent emphasis, in *Knights*, on the demos' stupidity in allowing itself to be led by Cleon. Likewise, Thucydides' archaeology suggests (among other things) that most people are careless in their search for the truth (1.20.1), drawn more to attractive stories than to true ones (1.21.1), and sunk in the glories of the past, always evaluating past wars as greater, rather than looking at actual events (1.21.2).

¹² Wright (2012) emphasises the very large number of literary quotations, especially of tragedy and other comedies, but also of epic, used by all comic poets, not just Aristophanes. See especially 141ff.

¹³ As has been argued elsewhere, Herodotus' text is also shaped in its structure and emphases for an audience for whom the Peloponnesian War looms: cf. e.g. Stadter (2012). Beyond the evocations of the Athenian empire (the mantle of which Athens is on the point of assuming as the work ends, and which Herodotus explicitly looks ahead to at 8.3), the anachronistic pairing of Athens and Sparta as the two powers approached by Croesus, directed by Delphi to ally with the strongest Greek state, supplies the occasion for Herodotus to outline the early history of each of these two cities (1.59–69). Herodotus' account of the assembly at Sparta, dominated by the long speech of Socles of Corinth arguing against Sparta's reinstatement of tyranny at Athens (5.92), irresistibly evokes a later crucial assembly on the eve of the Peloponnesian War: cf. Strasburger (1955); Grethlein (2013) 215–17.

could refer backward to the Persian Wars, or, as Rob Tordoff in this volume shows, to revolutions twenty years in the past. Focusing on *Assembly Women*, Tordoff argues that Aristophanes reactivated the vocabulary of *sôtéria*, conspicuous in Thucydides' description of the anti-democratic revolution of 411 BC, in 392 BC, a time when Athenians were once again fearing for the stability and well-being of Athens.

Thucydides shared Herodotus' and the comic poets' sense that the audience could be relied upon to remember Homer—and also to know Herodotus and the plays of Aristophanes (see Foster in this volume). Recent studies emphasise the consistency of Herodotus and Thucydides in terms of their description of the Greek past, and show how particular passages, narratives, or narrative practices in Thucydides respond closely to Herodotean paradigms.¹⁴ One implication of these studies is that just like his historiographical (and comic) contemporaries, Thucydides directed considerable effort toward connecting his narrative with works that were already well known to his audience, a strategy for negotiating a relationship with audiences that seems to have been important for comedy as well.¹⁵

Herodotus also refers explicitly to the Peloponnesian War, which at the time of completion of the text and its performances in final form was well underway: he describes the Theban attack on Plataea that began the war in 431 (7.233.2), as a well as a plan, fulfilled by the Athenians in 424, to invest Cythera (7.235.2–3), and finally, in thanks for their return of Helen to the Spartans after her abduction by Theseus, τοῖσι δὲ Δεκελεύσι ἐν Σπάρτῃ ἀπὸ τούτου τοῦ ἔργου ἀτελείη τε καὶ προεδρίη διατελέει ἐς τὸδε αἰεὶ ἔτι εὐδῶσα, οὕτω ὥστε καὶ ἐς τὸν πόλεμον τὸν ὕστερον πολλοῖσι ἔτεσι τούτων γενόμενον Ἀθηναίοισι τε καὶ Πελοποννησίοισι, σινομένων τὴν ἄλλην Ἀπτικὴν Λακεδαιμονίων, Δεκελέης ἀπέχεσθαι (9.73.3). The Spartans would indeed establish a base at Decelea in 413 BC, hence the passage provides the *terminus ante quem* for the *Histories*' composition. See Marincola (2001) 24–5.

¹⁴ Consistency of description of past: Hornblower (1996) 19–38 with Annex B (137–46); Rood (1999). Thucydidean narrative patterns responding to Herodotean paradigms: Stadter (2012) 40; Foster (2012); Lateiner (2012).

¹⁵ Wright (2012) 145.

But who was Thucydides' audience? Might it not be supposed that the audiences of the two genres were very different, one elite and learned, the other popular and passionate? This recreation of the division between comic and historiographic audiences is only partly satisfying. Tradition records that Herodotus recited from his *Histories* at various cities including Athens; Lucian describes a performance in front of a mass audience at the Olympia festival. While Olympic performances were perhaps not on the cards for Thucydides or Xenophon,¹⁶ in their case we may imagine oral recitation in the context of smaller groups, such as are depicted in Plato's dialogues, which would read and discuss various works of literature.¹⁷ This hypothesis encourages us to test whether they wrote in response to the challenging dynamic of oral recitation in a communal context, in which argumentative readers with a variety of views and experiences would discuss their work.¹⁸ Even the exiled Thucydides can be drawn out of isolation and into the oral culture of Athens: the examples provided in Morrison (2006a) seem to show that Athenian literature was read aloud in small groups whether the author was present or absent (one thinks of the long absences from

¹⁶ But perhaps they were: Hornblower (2004) 33 n. 118 raises this possibility.

¹⁷ See Rawlings (2017) 199: "Close reading" by Thucydides' elite audience meant group reading that no doubt led to discussion and enhanced appreciation of the form as well as of the meaning of the prose. For contemporary examples of such group reading, see Xen. *Mem.* 1.6.14; Plato, *Theaetetus*, opening passage; *Parmenides* 127b–d; *Phaedo*, 97b–98b; *Phaedrus*, 228a–b.

¹⁸ See Morrison (2006a) and (2006b). The argument made here is not new: see Momigliano (1978). Thucydides' numerous continuators, together with responses to Thucydides in the orators and other writers, indicate that he had become well known: cf. Hornblower (1995) 52–3. Rood (2004) shows Thucydides' continuators' close familiarity with his writing. Schepens (2007) has demonstrated that not only continuation, but also reflection upon Thucydides was a regular feature of fourth-century historiography. Some of this reflection famously takes the form of adopting opposing historiographic principles, but this implies that Thucydides was a, or perhaps even *the*, known benchmark against which to rebel. Cf. Grethlein (2011).

Athens of figures such as Plato, Thucydides, and Euripides). Some Thucydidean narratives would seem well suited even to a more flamboyant recitation context, perhaps at symposia (a performance context Hornblower has proposed): the description of civil war at Corcyra, or the night attack on Epipolai, among others.¹⁹ Later than the period with which we are concerned, but nonetheless intriguing in its implication of a shared culture of historical declamation and comedic performance, is the comedian Hegesias' recitation of Herodotus' *Histories* (τὰ Ἡροδότου) in the Great Theatre of Alexandria.²⁰

Thus, rather than separating the two genres, as we might assume, the context of oral performance in fact aligns them. In addition, Wright (2012) argues that we should take Aristophanes' readers at Athens more seriously, with the result that the audiences of the two genres begin to look even less dissimilar: the revision of *Clouds*, for instance, was never performed, but rather copied and read (63–4), much like historiographical or philosophical literature.

These possible consistencies between the audiences of the two genres encourage us to speculate about the shared ways in which they appealed to that audience by establishing characteristic authority, superiority, and impartiality in each case.

Rivalries and Association

We noted at the outset (above, p. 1) how the founding historians shared comedy's concern for contemporary history and personalities. In another important type of connection with their audiences' contemporary world, comic poets and historians alike set themselves in rivalrous dialogue with

¹⁹ Hornblower (2008) 31 (with a list of possible recitation units in 5.25–8.109). Hornblower even suggests (11) the possibility of a recitation of the whole Sicilian narrative, in approximately eight hours. For a less ambitious gathering, at forty-two chapters, Thucydides' Pylos narrative would be a good afternoon's work.

²⁰ Athenaeus 14.620d, citing the historian Jason as his source. See Priestley (2013) 40–1.

predecessors and contemporaries.²¹ Their mode of so doing ranges from explicit authorial comment to subtle intertextual connections. For example, Comic *parabaseis* frequently indulge in competitive mockery, as in that of Aristophanes *Clouds* (545–6, 551–62, tr. W. J. Hickie):²²

I, although so excellent a poet, do not give myself airs, nor do I seek to deceive you by twice and thrice bringing forward the same pieces ... But these scribblers, when once Hyperbolus has given them a handle, keep ever trampling on this wretched man and his mother. Eupolis, indeed, first of all craftily introduced his Maricas, having basely, base fellow, spoiled by altering my play of the *Knights*, having added to it, for the sake of the cordax [lascivious dance], a drunken old woman, whom Phrynichus long ago poetised, whom the whale was for devouring. Then again Hermippus made verses on Hyperbolus; and now all others press hard upon Hyperbolus, imitating my simile of the eels. Whoever, therefore, laughs at these, let him not take pleasure in my attempts; but if you are delighted with me and my inventions, in times to come you will seem to be wise.

Like the historians, then, the comic poets set themselves up against the careless, the ignorant, and other comic poets, claiming superior usefulness and intelligence. For, as we know, Herodotus positions himself in relation to Homer and Hecataeus, but also to a range of fifth-century thinkers including the sophists and natural scientists, Thucydides to Hellanicus (1.97.2) and also to Homer and the ‘ancient poets’ (e.g. 1.21.1).²³ Such competition seems to draw first-

²¹ Even as both in historians and comedians, tacit connections that spoke to an ancient audience must frequently elude us.

²² Comic poets mocking one another: Ruffell (2002); Biles (2011).

²³ Herodotus: Thomas (2000); Grethlein (2010); Kim (2010) 24–46; Baragwanath/de Bakker (2012) 29–31. The historians more generally: Marincola (1997).

person statements even from Thucydides,²⁴ which connects it to the direct address of the comic *parabaseis*.

The competitiveness between historians or between comic poets serves an important end. Like Aristophanes above, Thucydides observes that his account aspires to be useful not to those who want to be (merely) entertained, but to those who wish to be better informed: ‘whoever wish to know the truth’ (ὄσοι δὲ βουλήσονται ... τὸ σαφὲς σκοπεῖν) of events past and future (1.22.4). Both genres, then, have an underlying educative aim, and the rivalrousness stems in each case from the writer’s claim to be more ‘useful’ than particular contemporaries (Aristophanes, for example, more useful than rivals in the dramatic festivals, as we saw in the quotation above; Thucydides, more useful than those who prioritise delighting the ears (1.21.1) and recounting fabulous stories (1.22.4) over telling the truth).

Similar didactic aims as provoked rivalry may also have inspired the historians to associate themselves with important contemporary and past paradigms. Thucydides, for instance, adapted important structural and thematic elements from Homer, Herodotus, and the tragedians.²⁵ Revealing too is the opening of his work—an important place for establishing its character and credentials. Thus his first words follow closely the syntax of Herodotus’ opening words; he then presents his subject as encompassing (like Herodotus’) not only Greeks but also barbarians; only to trump Herodotus’ project with the claim that ‘the greatest part of mankind’ (1.1.2) was involved in his war.²⁶ Finally he

²⁴ ἔγραψα δὲ αὐτὰ καὶ τὴν ἐκβολὴν τοῦ λόγου ἐποιήσαμην διὰ τόδε, ὅτι τοῖς πρὸ ἐμοῦ ἅπασιν ἐκλιπέε τούτο ἦν τὸ χωρίον καὶ ἢ τὰ πρὸ τῶν Μηδικῶν Ἑλληνικὰ ξυνετίθεσαν ἢ αὐτὰ τὰ Μηδικὰ τούτων δὲ ὅσπερ καὶ ἦψατο ἐν τῇ Ἀττικῇ ξυγγραφῇ Ἑλλάνικος, βραχέως τε καὶ τοῖς χρόνοις οὐκ ἀκριβῶς ἐπεμνήσθη (1.97.2).

²⁵ As Rutherford (2012) and Stadter (2012) have demonstrated. See Rood (1999), Greenwood (2006) ch. 5, Foster and Lateiner (2012), Joho (2017).

²⁶ κίνησις γὰρ αὕτη μεγίστη δὴ τοῖς Ἕλλησιν ἐγένετο καὶ μέρει τινὶ τῶν βαρβάρων, ὡς δὲ εἶπεν καὶ ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ἀνθρώπων (1.1.2). See Rusten (2015) and Munson (2015) on *kinesis*; Stadter (2012).

builds the case for his war as the greatest yet—in the devastation it caused.²⁷ Xenophon likewise set himself in dialogue with his two historiographical predecessors and Homer, connecting but also competing.²⁸

Nor does either historian or comic poet shrink from claiming superior impartiality as one reason why he is superior to his colleagues. The individual ruminative process of reading may seem opposed to the theatregoer's immediate experience of rapid-fire comedic performance; and yet the comedians, similarly to the historians, laid claim to a permanent sort of objectivity. For although the comic poet is not afraid openly to take partisan positions,²⁹ key to Old Comedy's broad appeal is its overarching refusal to be categorised as moderate or radical, progressive or conservative, as favouring democrats or oligarchs; *all* parties are lampooned, and (in the words of Moggi) Aristophanes as poet and intellectual 'flies higher than the political personalities or publics of his day'.³⁰ The historian likewise bolsters his authority by remaining above the fray, impartial in his judgements, 'in his books' (as Lucian put it) 'a stranger and a man without a city'—who neither spares friends nor grudges enemies, and does not fear the powerful (*How to Write History*, 38–41). Cleon—negatively portrayed in Aristophanes and Thucydides—is one of Lucian's key examples: 'Neither will Cleon with his great power in the assembly and his mastery of the platform frighten him from saying that he was murderous and lunatic' (38, tr. A. M. Harmon). Thus Lucian—a forerunner to Foster in this volume—rather than explaining Thucydides' portrait of Cleon as a product of personal resentment, underscores the possibility that the historian may be expounding the character of a harmful politician. In similar vein, Aristophanes' characterisation of Cleon (so Ralph Rosen),

²⁷ For historians presenting their own war as the greatest and most worthy of narration, see Marincola (1997) 34–43; also Dillery (1995) 123–7.

²⁸ Rood (2004); Nicolai (2006); Baragwanath (2012b).

²⁹ Henderson (2017) 608; Foster in this volume.

³⁰ Moggi (2012) 47–8: 'vola più alto dei personaggi politici o pubblici del suo tempo'.

beyond or rather than being motivated by a real-life quarrel, exposes an essential truth about unscrupulous demagoguery.³¹

Historians and Comic Poets in Real Time

Like the historians, the Attic comic poets were bound into the historical events they so vividly lampooned—comic poets were charged alongside Alcibiades in connection with his alleged profanation of the mysteries, Aristophanes' *Babylonians* incited a prosecution by Cleon, against whom Aristophanes subsequently waged a long public campaign, and Plato regarded Aristophanes' *Clouds* as implicated in the trial of Socrates. In Herodotean vein, *Achamians* develops a critique of Pericles by depicting the Peloponnesian war as precipitated by reprisals for the abduction of slave-girls.³² Many, including the historian Duris (on whom see below), accepted the story about Alcibiades taking vengeance on the comic poet Eupolis by drowning him. Moreover, the comic poets were involved not only in making or breaking the reputations of aristocratic individuals. They inserted themselves into contemporary responses to the on-going war, frequently levying charges of cowardice, for instance, after military defeats,³³ or celebrating Athenian victories:

³¹ See Rosen (1988) ch. 4 on Aristophanes' portrait of Cleon as conventional and influenced by the tradition of Iambos, rather than a personal attack; cf. 79: '*Equites* gains political significance precisely when the audience can transcend the trivial pretence of a real-life quarrel between Aristophanes and Cleon, and approach the essence of what Cleon stands for—unscrupulous demagoguery'. The limits of criticism and attack of course differ across genres, and part of the particular character of the impartiality of comedy is that Aristophanes' insults are unrestricted; whereas the opposite kind of impartiality (restraint in immediate judgements) is more typical of historiography. And yet even in comedy there are *some* limits to laughter: Old Comedy cannot laugh about the plague, or about other disasters too close to home, such as the Sicilian Expedition.

³² See Mash, below, pp. 69–70;; cf. Lateiner, below, p. 56.

³³ Cf. van Wees (2004) 193–4, with n. 48: 'I suggest that every single play composed by Aristophanes—and conceivably by the other comic

Aristophanes' *Knights* (595ff.), for instance, celebrates a cavalry victory over the Corinthians (cf. Thuc. 4.42–4) and *Birds* both parodies and celebrates³⁴ Athens' claim to rule the sea (a Thucydidean theme) by showing Athenians who fulfil their aspiration to rule the sky.

The same embeddedness was characteristic of the historians. Thucydides and Xenophon both describe events in which they were intimately involved, and at times themselves become actors on the pages of history, Thucydides in the failed defence of Amphipolis (which caused his exile), Xenophon as commander of the Ten Thousand who marched in support of Cyrus the Younger.³⁵ Herodotus stands at a further temporal remove from the events he describes, and yet is implicated, or was imagined to be implicated by those who fashioned the traditions about his life:³⁶ for instance, there is a story that Artemisia's grandson, tyrant of Halicarnassus, put to death his kinsman Panyassis and prompted Herodotus' withdrawal to Samos. As a possible result Samos wins a major role in his *Histories* and perhaps inspired Herodotus' interest in themes that would become key to his future work.³⁷ Herodotus himself

poets, too—during this period made a point of mocking a notorious coward.⁷ For a single example: Aristophanes immortalised the cowardice of one particular member of the army at Delium, Cleonymus, who was said to have dropped his shield, mocking him in four successive plays: *Clouds*, *Wasps*, *Peace*, and *Birds*. In addition to mocking cowards, Aristophanes often excoriated his audience for its failing virtue. See Rosenbloom (2002) 326–7, who provides many examples.

³⁴ Henderson (2017) 608 suggests that *Birds* displays support for the Sicilian expedition at lines 186, 640, 813–6, 1360–9.

³⁵ Failed defence of Amphipolis: 4.102–8, cf. 5.25–6; march of the Ten Thousand: briefly at *Hell.* 3.1.2; at length in Xenophon's *Anabasis*, in which he himself is the central character.

³⁶ See Priestley (2014) 19–50 on these contested, at times improbable, biographical traditions, by means of which audiences sought to forge connections between Herodotus and their own *poleis*.

³⁷ A suggestion of Harvey (2014). If tradition is accurate, Herodotus also returned to Halicarnassus to put an end to its tyrant (*Suda*). But ancient biographical traditions were frequently built up on the basis of an author's works; see previous n.

also appears as a character more often than his successor historians, for instance in Book 2 on Egypt, where he depicts himself engaging in ethnographic enquiries. Moreover, the *Histories* contains a cast of figures that recent scholarship has found to serve metahistorical functions, especially in illuminating aspects of the Herodotean narrator.³⁸ In Old Comedy we might compare Aristophanes' stories of his own bravery in confronting Cleon, for instance, in the *parabasis* of *Acharnians*, or his self-characterisation via his comic heroes: thus how (so Biles argues) the Sausage-seller of *Knights* maps on to Aristophanes in his agonistic practices, or how (so Olson and Biles) the views of Bdelycleon in *Wasps* represent those of Aristophanes and his set.³⁹ Thus both comedians and historians were not only embedded in history, but also themselves wrote up their embeddedness, framing their historical roles with narrative self-representations.

Comic Modes of Writing in Historiography

A. Aggressive Humour

Another response to their historical situation and likewise an aspect of the competitiveness of both comedy and historiography is to showcase aggressive humour. One sure target of Aristophanes' biting humour is those with intellectual pretensions, whether the sophists or others—whose familiarity to his audience made the humour all the more powerful. Herodotus likewise expects his audience to relish the humorous mockery of people who claim knowledge they don't possess, whether Hecataeus in asserting divine ancestry at only sixteen generations' remove (2.143), or the contemporary mapmakers who are deluded about the shape of the world (4.36). A picture emerges,

³⁸ Christ (1994); see also Baragwanath (2008) 59–78, Grethlein (2009), Demont (2013), Branscome (2013).

³⁹ Sausage-seller/Aristophanes: Biles (2011) ch. 3; Bdelycleon/Aristophanes: Olson and Biles (2015). See also Mash, below, p. 90, on Dicaeopolis/Aristophanes.

then, of authors of both camps, historiographic and comedic, jousting and engaging with members of their intellectual community, a community either already familiar to their audiences, or soon made so by witty and stinging characterisations.

Aggressive, victimising humour involves outwitting and insulting one's opponent. It shares targets across both genres, such as the tyrannical individual or group who abuses its power; and its serious monitory lessons are part of the educative tendency of both genres.⁴⁰ Donald Lateiner focuses on premeditated insults, situating them in the context of the agonistic character of relations between Greek males in this period. Both genres reflect this aspect of Greek social relations, Aristophanes more intensively, the historians more rarely, and with the purpose of endowing certain characters and events with instructive vividness. Mark Mash in this volume analyses in detail a Herodotean staging of victimising humour and one-upmanship in the Ethiopian king's response to the messengers from Cambyses. As Mash shows, the historian's representation of this character's use of competitive, victimising humour contributes to the *Histories*' serious critique of imperialism.⁴¹ Humour serves to deflate intellectual presumptions or arrogant ethnocentrism or—even more arrogant—the drive to conquer others. For while Herodotus is in general terms a cultural relativist, there is a problem for him with the *nomos* of Persian imperialism (as with the drive for conquest that Herodotus reveals to be a key motivation of most human communities): in depriving others of political freedom, it negates their *nomoi*. The display of the Ethiopian king's dexterous use of victimising humour is, then, a *mise-en-abyme* of the historian's own use of a favourite tool of the Old Comedian.

⁴⁰ On victimising humour in comedy see *inter alia* Rosen (1988), Storey (1998).

⁴¹ See also Dewald (2006) 12–13 on ethnic humour in the *Histories*; Mash (2016) on Herodotus' use of tales of humorous deception to explode ethnic stereotypes.

A humorous trick can also be the means of provoking someone to reveal his character; and another historiographical narrative which exposes imperialism and greed, where the apparently weaker party triumphs, and a foreigner criticises the Persian king, is the humorous trick (*ἀπάτην*, 1.187.1) played by Herodotus' Babylonian Queen Nitocris. To display—and memorialise (see next section)—the greed of some future conqueror of Babylon, and to take comeuppance on him, she sets her tomb high atop the main city gate, with an inscription inviting a future king to open it, should he need the money; but warning him otherwise to leave it alone. Undisturbed until Darius' time, the tomb is opened, but Darius finds only a corpse and an inscription with the rebuke: 'If you were not greedy of money and sordidly greedy of gain, you would not have opened the coffins of the dead' (1.187.5). Triumph of the underdog—in this case, of a representative of victims of future imperialism—is a favourite scenario of comedy. Biting personal humour thus again becomes a serious means of resisting empire.

(B) Jokes as Memorials of Individuals and of Excellence

On the other hand, it is clear that the historians use not only aggressive humour, but a wide variety of types of humour. Xenophon's historiographical works attach humour to portraits of individuals who keep their sense of humour even under the most difficult circumstances. Thus Theramenes' witticism as he faces hasty execution at the hands of the Thirty is a testament to his character that stands in contrast to the craven silence of the Council (*ἡ δὲ βουλή ἡσυχίαν εἶχεν*, *Hellenica* 2.3.55):

And being compelled to die by drinking the hemlock, they said that he cast the dregs out of the cup as if he were playing the *kottabos*, and he said as he threw it, 'Here's to the beautiful Kritias.'⁴²

⁴² *Hell.* 2.3.56; discussed by Lateiner, below, pp. 52–3.

Xenophon defends the inclusion of this remark in his history as a tribute to the man's character, to how, even with death close at hand, Theramenes' mind lost 'neither its sense nor its playfulness' (or 'sense of humour') (*μήτε τὸ φρόνιμον μήτε τὸ παιγνιώδες*, 2.3.56). In this way humour may in itself be a historical event worthy of record. The verb of speaking ('they say') highlights the fact that this story was already being recalled and remembered: which brings us to the potential of humour to serve the purpose of historiography's memorialising function.

For instance, Herodotus' memorialising of the dead at Thermopylae includes a less tangible memorial to one of the Spartan fighters alongside the concrete epitaphs: Dieneces' witty and brave response to the Trachinian man's observation that the enemy are so many that their arrows will hide the sun (7.226.2–227.1):

He, not frightened by these words, but making light of the number of the Medes, said that 'the Trachinian friend brings us entirely good news, for if the Medes hide the sun, we shall fight them in the shade, and not in the sunshine.' This saying and others like it, they say, Dieneces the Lacedaemonian left behind as a memorial.

The verb of speaking again highlights the fact that tradition has already memorialised the courageous saying, and with it, Dieneces' bravery.⁴³ Herodotus lays emphasis on the memorialising function (the sayings were 'left behind as a memorial', *λιπέσθαι μνημόσυνα*). In the narratives of both Theramenes and Dieneces, the respective historian employs a polarised depiction of character (another typical resource of comedy): the courage of one individual is illuminated through the foil of another's or others' trepidation.

⁴³ The verb of speaking is also emphasised in Herodotus' introduction of the anecdote: 'They say that he uttered this saying before they joined battle with the Medes' (7.226.1).

It may be that humour most easily finds a home in historiography in biographical contexts; as Plutarch centuries later would observe, ‘a slight thing like a phrase or a jest’ (πρᾶγμα βραχὺ ... καὶ ῥῆμα καὶ παιδιὰ τις) may be more revelatory of character than great battles, armaments, or sieges (*Alex.* 1.2). It is of Thucydides’ anecdotal, biographical narrative of Cylon that an ancient scholiast remarked, ‘here the lion laughed’.⁴⁴ Humour punctuates Xenophon’s biographical works about Socrates, especially the *Symposium*, where it serves as a means of engaging readers in contemplating serious truths.⁴⁵ In that work the philosopher indeed jokes about his own physical appearance (satyr-like with bulging eyes and squashed-down nose: *Symp.* 5.5–6), a variety of burlesque that is kept well out of the picture when he makes his appearance in Xenophon’s historiographical works.⁴⁶ But in *Anabasis* Xenophon reports a joke that is revelatory of character, made by the Greeks to their foreign audience of Paphlagonians after a slave girl has performed a splendid pyrrhic dance. The foreigners have asked whether the Greeks’ women not only dance but also fight at their side, and the Greeks reply: ‘these (the courtesans) were the women (αὐταί) who had chased the Great King out of the camp!’ (i.e. at Cunaxa; cf. 6.1.13). The joke reflects a serious power-dynamic; and a treaty with the Paphlagonians follows the next day, since the Greeks have adequately demonstrated their martial worth (6.1.14).⁴⁷ Thus even as his

⁴⁴ Thuc. 1.126; Patterson (1993) extends the saying to refer to the narratives of Themistocles and Pausanias as well.

⁴⁵ See (on the *Symposium*) Huss (1999a) and (1999b); thus e.g. Socrates uses a joke to invite his listeners to reassess their assumptions about female abilities: *Symp.* 2.9 with Baragwanath (2012c): 636–8. Cf. Lateiner, below, pp. 52–3, on the biographical aspect of Xenophonic humour.

⁴⁶ In *Hellenica* at the Arginusae trial, in *Anabasis* in advising Xenophon.

⁴⁷ Note too Xenophon’s own grim repartee to the man who has attempted to bury alive the invalid he had been instructed to assist, and justified this on the grounds that the man was going to die anyhow (5.8.11): “καὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς,” ἔφη ὁ Ξενοφῶν, “πάντες ἀποθανούμεθα· τούτου οὖν ἔνεκα ζῶντας ἡμᾶς δεῖ κατορυχθῆναι;” (“‘Why’, said Xenophon, ‘all

non-historiographical, biographical works more frequently adopt a humorous tone and deliberate mixture of the playful and serious,⁴⁸ such comic elements do surface also in Xenophon's historiography. In its avoidance of the personal and anecdotal, Thucydides' work has less comic potential.⁴⁹ And yet we gain a glimpse of how events themselves may take a shape that is comic: both Thucydides and Aristophanes, for instance, show how Cleon is trapped by his own machinations: a comic plot that might happen also to have been true.

C. Irony, the Grotesque, the Frightful, the Incongruous

Rob Tordoff's paper suggests the serious side of Aristophanic comedy. Old Comedy dealt with hard political issues, and while the humour of Old Comedy is in many respects out of keeping with the serious register of historiography, as Christopher Pelling has well emphasised,⁵⁰ certain—more serious—types of humour do appear

of us are likewise going to die; but should we on that account be buried alive?").

⁴⁸ The funniest/most fully-fledged joke in the *Cyropaedia* (though perhaps not to modern tastes) may be that at 2.2.11–16, which bears affinities to Old Comedy's occasionally absurd brand of humour. One of Cyrus' captains tells a tall story about the extraordinary obedience of his men: how he once instructed them always to advance as a unit, each taking care to 'follow the man in front'. A rider was about to set off for Persia, so the captain had ordered his lieutenant to run and fetch a letter for the man to take with him, with the upshot that the entire company of soldiers 'followed the man in front', and the letter was given a military escort. The audience laughs (*ἐγέλων ἐπὶ τῇ δορυφορίᾳ τῆς ἐπιστολῆς*, 'they were laughing at the military escort of the letter'), with the exception of one earnest listener; Cyrus laughs, but also uses the joke to initiate genuine praise (*ἄμα γελῶν οὕτως ἐπήνεσε τοὺς στρατιώτας*, 2.2.7–11).

⁴⁹ For what (grim) humour there is in Thucydides, see Rusten (2006) 547–8.

⁵⁰ Pelling (1999) 337–8: 'When elements of the comic are found in Greco-Roman historiography ... the settings are always too serious, usually indeed too deadly, for the comic intrusion to be anything but chilling. The flavour is less that of comedy itself, more of the comic

across both genres (for example the aggressive humour found in Herodotus' *Histories*: see above), as do certain targets of humour (especially the tyrannical individual or group which abuses its power). Nor does Old Comedy inevitably follow the happy, 'comic plot' of disruption resolved: witness *Clouds*'s grim ending. The tone here is perhaps not so far removed from the deeply unsettling incongruity Dan Tompkins (in this volume) finds in Thucydides' final judgment of Nicias. History more generally capitalises on the multiple valences of appearance and reality, double meanings, and lexical ambiguities, on which one strand of comedic humour also thrives. Indeed at some level the writing of history may be inherently ironic; irony may be history's preferred rhetorical mode.⁵¹

Across both genres the biting humour of one-liners or puns (including speaking names) may similarly carry a serious commentary: these are ubiquitous in Aristophanes; in Herodotus we might think of Themistocles' retort to Timodemus (8.125: 'This is how it stands: if I had been a man of Belbina I would not have been honoured in this way by the Spartans; nor would you, sir, even though you are Athenian'), or Cleomenes' grim joke about his adversary 'Krios' as a ram about to be sacrificed (6.50).⁵²

In Herodotus' story of the thief of Rhampsinitus' treasury, black humour—in the man's evasion of capture by first decapitating his own brother and then extending a

elements which intrude into tragedy or epic. ... Historiography is simply too high and serious a tradition, and (like epic) too concerned with death and suffering, for the humorous to be anything other than an occasional and intrusive visitor.'

⁵¹ Cp. White (1973) 37–8, 375–425; *pace* Strasburger (1961) 13 ('ein durchgehend ironischer oder satirischer Zug eignet allenfalls dem historischen Teil eines politischen Pamphletes, nicht aber einem Geschichtswerk von höherem Anspruch').

⁵² 'Now is the time to plate your horns with bronze, Mr. Ram [= Krios], for great calamity will confront you.' A similar (but gentler) pun on the same Krios' name occurs in Aristophanes (*Clouds* 1356): see Podlecki (1984) 184–5. On Aristophanic one-liners, see Storey 1998 (§II i), with (in Part Two) a helpful overview of the manifold scholarship on the question of Aristophanes' seriousness.

severed limb to the prostituted royal daughter—combines with the triumph of the underdog: the King acknowledges his superior intelligence, and thus gives his former builder's son the hand in marriage of his daughter the princess (2.121).⁵³ We have then a comedic happy ending, accompanied by a reversal in social stature from lowly to high. Amasis (2.162, 172–82)⁵⁴ is another in the *Histories* who transforms in status. Amasis also brings a measure of scatological humour into the historical text in farting his message to King Apries, a comic gesture aimed at deflating the recipient's royal pretensions. His communication is of a piece with Hippocleides' vulgar display as he dances upside down on his aristocratic host's table, legs in the air.⁵⁵ Moreover, Amasis himself possesses a comedic nature. As king, after conducting serious business in the morning, 'he would drink and make jokes about his drinking companions, and was irreverent and fond of games/jokes' (ἔπινέ τε καὶ κατέσκωπτε τοὺς συμπότας καὶ ἦν μάταιός τε καὶ παιγνιήμων, 2.173.1); previously too, as a commoner, he was said to have been 'fond of drink and of joking and not at all an earnest person' (φιλοπότης ἦν καὶ φιλοσκώμων καὶ οὐδαμῶς κατεσπουδασμένος ἀνὴρ, 2.174.1). In keeping with this bodily, comedic characterisation is the mention of his sex problems. Amasis justifies his way of life on the (serious) grounds that just like a bow that is ruined by being kept ever taut, a human being who is always at work will snap under the strain.

Elsewhere a single word injects vividness by sounding a vulgar, comic note: as in the imagery of sausage-making and meat preparation Herodotus applies to the wounds that Cleomenes inflicts upon himself, and those the heroic

⁵³ On this story see Dewald (2006); West (2007) on its possible provenance.

⁵⁴ On Amasis see Kurke (1999) 89–100; Baragwanath (2015) 31–4; Mash (2016) 161–5.

⁵⁵ Discussed in detail by Lateiner, below, pp. 45–7; see also Will (2015) 111–12.

Pythes endures at the hands of Persian marines.⁵⁶ As Tompkins in this volume emphasises, a single word can change the tone of an historical account in crucial ways.

Fifth-Century Comedy and Fourth-Century Historiography

The shared connection of comedy and historiography to the political life and events of the fifth century, noted above, had an important effect on their subsequent reception. As Jeffrey Rusten has observed, since both genres illuminate aspects of fifth-century political, social and cultural reality, Old Comedy (with its philological and prosopographical density) was called upon throughout its ancient reception to illuminate serious history, *rather* than to entertain through re-performance, so that *historical* interest in Old Comedy kept its texts alive through the Alexandrian age and beyond.⁵⁷ Thus, despite its distortions, Old Comedy has been regarded by historians since the fourth century as a source for historical information: the two genres have been used in concert as evidence in constructing accounts of classical Greek history from Duris, through Plutarch, to

⁵⁶ Ps.-Longinus draws attention to these examples (*Subl.* 31.2): ὁδὲ πως ἔχει καὶ τὰ Ἡροδότεια: “ὁ Κλεομένης” φησὶ “μανεῖς τὰς ἑαυτοῦ σάρκας ξιφιδίῳ κατέτεμεν εἰς λεπτά, ἕως ὅλον καταχορδεύων ἑαυτὸν διέφθειρεν.” καὶ “ὁ Πύθης ἕως τοῦδε ἐπὶ τῆς νεῶς ἐμάχετο, ἕως ἅπας κατεκρεουργήθη.” ταῦτα γὰρ ἐγγὺς παραξύνει τὸν ἰδιώτην, ἀλλ οὐκ ἰδιωτεύει τῷ σημαντικῶς. (‘The same may be observed of two passages in Herodotus: “Cleomenes having lost his wits, cut his own flesh into pieces with a short sword, until by gradually *mincing up like a sausage* his whole body he destroyed himself”; and “Pythes continued fighting on his ship until he was entirely *hacked to pieces/cut up as by a butcher*.” Such terms come home at once to the vulgar reader, but their own vulgarity is redeemed by their expressiveness.’ H. L. Havell, trs.)

⁵⁷ Rusten (2006) 556–7 and an unpublished paper ‘Historical Interests in the Ancient Commentaries on Old Comedy’ presented at the ‘Greek Historiography and Attic Comedy’ panel at the Association of Ancient Historians meeting, Durham, North Carolina, May 2012.

modern historians.⁵⁸ In this volume, Chris Baron charts Duris' use of poetry as evidence in historical narratives, situating Duris' practices in the context of early third-century debates about the nature of historiography. After describing Duris' use of Aristophanes, noting that Duris' practices seem similar to those found in Ephorus, and mentioning Aristophanes' influence on Theopompus, Baron unpacks a passage in which Duris quotes Heraclides (a poet of Middle Comedy) for the sake, he argues, of fulfilling his own historiographical aim to present a vivid account. Baron's evidence shows the lasting impact upon historiography of comedy's historicity.

Conclusions

Clio and Thalia flourished in a rich context of competing and interconnected genres. To cite one more historiographic example, the resemblance especially of Thucydides' speeches to those of Euripidean drama (so often the target of Aristophanic parody!) has long been a focus of interest.⁵⁹ Beyond historiography, readers have often noted the connections between Euripides, Aristophanes, and Plato.⁶⁰ In this context, inter-connections between historiography and Attic comedy are inevitably complex, as this introduction has tried to show. Much remains to be understood, and the papers in this volume necessarily address particular aspects of the relation.

In this introduction, we have elucidated some connections between comedy and historiography, connections that relate to their shared engagement with the issues and personalities of contemporary political life at Athens, and

⁵⁸ Comedy's potential as a source for history: Pelling (2000) chs. 7, 8 and 10; Perusino and Colantonio (2012). On Plutarch's use of comedy as a historical source: Lenfant (2003); cf. Athenaeus' use of comedy and history: Lenfant (2007).

⁵⁹ Finley (1938). On the competition of genres see *inter alia* Grethlein (2010); Kurke (2011).

⁶⁰ Sansone (1996), who points out (41) that Plato cites Euripides more often than any authors except for Homer and Simonides.

likewise to their means of reaching their audiences: emerging together with the emerging practices of writing and reading books, both genres appear to have been transmitted through the various practices both of oral performance and of group and individual reading. The comic poets and historians, unlike the tragedians, appealed directly to their listening and reading audiences, claiming to be more useful than their careless, less talented, or unimaginative colleagues, and offering important statements and analyses in their own voices. Likewise, both genres integrated previous literature, with the views and reputations of which they also often competed, and which they expected their audiences to know and remember. Did historiography occasionally imitate comedy's literariness, its 'extensive use of other texts as a way of negotiating a relationship with its audience'?⁶¹

Finally, both genres integrated humour. This point is obvious for the comic poets; here we have tried to introduce some of the ways in which the papers of this volume examine the use of humour in historiography. The papers here collected point to humour's numerous uses for the historian. Humour may serve to create vividness (Baron), to challenge the audience with depictions of stated or subtly suggested put-downs (Mash and Lateiner), to memorialise bravery or contribute to an argument (as in Xenophon, above), to awaken memory (Tordoff), or to contribute to characterisation and the deepening of themes (Tompkins). In both comedy and the historians, humour can be reformative, destabilising assumptions and prejudices and promoting ignorant audiences to think more critically. But far more often in the historians humour is consequential (to employ the terminology of Stephen Halliwell).⁶² Thus the Herodotean humour that Mash describes undercuts notions of *alterité*: it does *not* license Greeks to laugh at the Other, but illustrates the power of cross-cultural interaction and understanding. This example shows once again how the

⁶¹ Wright (2012) 145.

⁶² Halliwell (1991) 282–3; id. (2008) *passim*.

didactic intentions of humour cross genre lines: beyond its value for understanding particular comedies or particular narratives of the historians, studying the connections between comedy and historiography helps us to understand the didactic drive that was central to both genres and is an important aspect of their lasting value.

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INSULTS AND HUMILIATIONS IN FIFTH-CENTURY HISTORIOGRAPHY AND COMEDY

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Abstract: Herodotos, Thoukydides, and Xenophon, in that descending order, include anecdotal descriptions of systematic humiliation through verbal and nonverbal digs and insults. Examples include Hippokleides' symposiastic behaviour at Agariste's wedding competition, Peisistratid insult to the sexual purity of Harmodios' sister, Athenian mockery of a Spartan POW held in Athens after capture on Sphakteria, and Theramenes' witty toast of his executioner Kritias (τὸ παιγνιῶδες). Aristophanes and other Attic Old Comedy poets traditionally and pervasively present characters who deride politicians, pretentious poets and other public figures. They animalise, infantilise, and feminise targets with political, social, and especially sexual insults. Aristophanes mocked objectionable (to him) habits, views, and actions of prominent individuals and groups throughout the Peloponnesian War. He demeaned their patriotism and justifications for war with (pseudo-) historical reasoning in *Akhaians* (425) and elsewhere (*Peace*, *Frogs*). This paper explores the genres' mutual derivation and overlapping depictions of incidents from the pushful and derisory poetics of Attic (and Lakonic) manhood.

1. Introduction

Insults pervaded the rough-and-tumble confrontations of ancient Athenian street-life, one aspect of daily interaction among males for which substantial data (however biased) survive from comedy, historiography, oratory, and pottery images of everyday life. Verbal assaults, genealogical taunts, obscene allegations, physiological caricature, and witty puns on names replaced, accompanied, preceded, or followed physical assaults. The

vicious speech and acts of Attic Old Comedy reflect this inculcated intemperate behaviour and responses.¹

Aggressive humour, a form of communication prior to all literary genres, surfaces in epic, lyric, tragedy, biography, and philosophy. Early historians, especially when nasty acts have historical consequences, will likewise record moments of social friction and inflictions of humiliation. Moreover, the humour that constructs Old Comedy's plots often grows out of familiar personalities such as Perikles and Aiskhylos, as well as important contemporary public issues, and so can enrich historical understanding. Herodotos finds humour most congenial to his historiographical project featuring many sorts of private personal and public political confrontations. Thoukydides and his 'continuator' Xenophon feature examples of biting wit that emerge in moments of tense political and military competition.² All three exhibit elements of the ecology of insult in fifth-century Greece (v. *infra*).

The comic poets delight in reporting their competitors' fiascos, but eschew murders on stage as well as communal catastrophes. Historians approach certain topics that the

¹ David Cohen (1995) and Gabriel Herman (1994, 2006) disagree strongly about how vile and violent were Athenian individuals in the Classical period, but the data and standards of behaviour are hard to determine. Similarly, intensity of feelings—measuring happiness or other emotions—eludes historians. The data collected here tilt towards Cohen's less polite society, and no evidence suggests that other contemporary Hellenic communities were more civil than the better known and more publicly recorded Athenian. Dover (1974: 30–3) discusses continuity of Athenian 'vilification and ridicule', citing congruities between Aristophanes' staged abuse and Demosthenes' attacks on Aiskhines and his family a century later (Dem. 19. 199 ff., 287; 18.129ff.). Athenian distinctiveness from their contemporaries' practice or ours may mainly lie in state-financed comedy's airing of prominent citizens' alleged foibles.

² Kurke concludes a monograph (2011) 426–31 with a meditation on 'Aesopic', i.e. discreditable and dubious, elements and popular traditions in the Herodotean historiographical project—unprecedented and hardly imitated. See also Darbo-Peschanski (2000), Halliwell (2008), and Griffiths (1995) on the place of laughter in Greek historiography, especially Herodotos'.

evidence proves to have been under taboo on the comic stage: Herodotos recounts Phrynikhos' *Fall of Miletos* fiasco (6.21), and Thoukydides details the terrible Athenian plague (2.48–54). Mutilations, murders, mass deportations, and massacres are fodder for the historians, writers unbound by judges of the polis and popular acclaim (recall Thoukydides' disdain for *ἀγωνίσματα*, 1.22.4). Both these historians, revisionist in inclination, pause their main narratives to controvert popular misconceptions about Hipparkhos' initiatives to seduce and embarrass his amour, the sexually uncooperative Harmodios (Hdt. 5.55–7, 6.123; Thouk. 6.54–9). The comic poets never satirise the heroic liberators from tyranny, and, indeed, law prohibited speaking or singing ill of them.³ Xenophon's account of The Thirty reports various criminal acts of thuggery, thievery, and murder, although many acts were later amnestied (*Hell.* 2.3.2–22).⁴ Comic poets, producing a publicly financed event, understood and observed certain constraints, apart from the legal restrictions applicable to any citizen. Sommerstein specifies, e.g., naming names of current magistrates in accusations of military cowardice, shield abandoning, or parent-beating—*ἀπόρρητα*.⁵ On the other hand, the comic

³ Sommerstein (1996) on Hyp. *Phil.* col. ii (Kenyon). Such a law implies someone had already thus maltreated the liberators. Debate continues over Athenian libel and slander laws. See Halliwell (1991), Todd (1993) 258–62, Sommerstein (2004), and others. Herodotos reports anecdotes and narratives of *logoi kai erga* long after any litigable date, but Thoukydides' restraint towards competitors, even Kleon, once he came back from exile, might anticipate contemporaries' censure or actual litigation resulting from the amnesty of 403 BCE.

⁴ Many forms of insult and abuse were legal in Athens, such as law-court innuendo and explicit sexual insult, but others in Athens and elsewhere were tragic rather than comic, for example the tortures and punitive mutilations of Libyan Pheretima (4.202.1) and those of the Persian authorities. The Behistun inscription records Dareios' boasts of such punishments (e.g., DB 32–3, 50). Herodotos records the autocratic calques inflicted by Queen Amestris' live burials and mistaken revenge on the wife of Masistes (7.114.2, 9.112). Zopyros' willing and serious self-mutilation feigned imitation of actual Persian penal practices (3.154).

⁵ Sommerstein 2004: 211–12, 214, 216. This enlightening essay identifies all measures limiting freedom of Athenian speech, nine possibly

poets claimed legal protection⁶ and an educative function for their insults, slapstick obscenities, and bizarre caricatures of one-time cowardice or permanent appearance.

Herodotos includes comic, insult-laden moments—gossip, rumour, slander, even shameless buttock-baring. He often presents humiliating defamations as others' *logoi*—uncertified, but *erga* or *logoi* worthy of preservation (2.123; 7.152; cf. the Proem). One recalls Peisistratos' variant sexual practices with Megakles' daughter, Periander's necrophily with wife Melissa's cold 'oven', Gorgo's innuendo about Aristagoras' bribery, and even verbal *parachreseis*, more ominous to the ancients than the English dismissive label of 'pun' suggests (e.g., 1.61, 5.92γ, 5.41, 5.51; or 6.50.3, where the name of Krios is a *κλεηδών*, a presaging verbal omen of whose significance the speaker is unaware). Thukydides excludes most such material, especially details of the bawdy body, as *infra dignitatem historiae*.

2. The Ecology of Insult in Fifth-Century Greece

Men jockey for distinction in competitive, face-to-face sub-cultures and larger societies with essential 'expression games'.⁷ The vocabulary of manly insult features already in

relevant provisions penalizing utterances (206–8). Sommerstein shows that in extraordinary situations, and with particular parameters of indictability, comic *parrhêsia* encountered limits. Hyperbolos and Kleophon remained 'fair game' never holding office, and Kleon served as *stratêgos* only briefly. Kleon's *parrhêsia* indicted Aristophanes for his production of *Babylonians* for 'slandering the city' (426 BCE; see *Akhamians* for rebuttal). But, it is hard to determine which forms of vituperation were verboten since they were generally avoided. See Lys. 10.6–9. Even here, truth was a defence. Like crimes of *hybris*, pursuing complaints of victimisation forced the plaintiff to publicise his suffering and unmanliness (Dem. *Against Meidas*, for example).

⁶ Halliwell (1991) and Sommerstein (2004) survey the subject's critical literature.

⁷ One angry Athenian bit off his interlocutor's nose (in jail: Dem. *Against Aristag.* 25.61). Most (1989) dissects epic hero Odysseus' strategies to conceal or reveal himself to hostile and friendly publics. Narducci

Homer's hexameters. Many words describe gradations from jokes and joshing to unforgivable offences.⁸ Narrative historiography and staged comedy offer graded, strategically delivered insults: abusive words, insulting gestures, and humiliating deeds. Helping friends may be considered good clean 'ego enhancement', but it implies a flip-side, the need to affront and ridicule others: harming enemies. The perceived need to boast about oneself and friends, and conversely, to insult and ridicule opponents and competitors, reveals both personal and social facets and reflects the ecology of insult in fifth-century Greece.

Three observations undergird this comparative survey:

(1) Spartans and Athenians inhabited communities where men contended for social dominance in constructive and destructive ways.

(2) The 'poetics of masculinity' (Michael Herzfeld's resonant title), honour and infliction of DIS-honour, required pre-emptive aggression and retaliatory words, gestures, and sometimes physical assault—even murder.⁹ Lucid examples outnumber coded and ephemeral personal critiques.¹⁰

(1984) compares Roman scripts for comporting oneself in public life in Cicero's day.

⁸ E.g., αἰκίζω, ἀνα-καγχάζω, ἀτιμάζω, ἐφ-υβρίζω, κατα-γελάω, κερτομέω, κλώζω, λαιδορέω, μαστιγῶ, προπηλακίζω, ῥάβδῳ κοσμῶ, σκώπτω, συρίττω, τωθάζω, τύπτω, χλευάζω, κτλ. Compounds abound, especially those beginning with the derogating preverb κατα-. Lateiner (2004) discusses Homeric heroes and villains.

⁹ Even Sokrates acknowledges that, while scoffing words suffice for retaliation to verbal insult, punches must answer punches (Pl. *Chrm.* 155b–c, *Cr.* 50e–51a; cf. *Nub.* 1409ff.). Gleason (1990) explores the semiotics of gender, including gait, gestures, and postures. This topic frequently appears on images of Attic black-and red-figured pottery, e.g., Schauenberg's essay (1975) or more broadly, Mitchell (2009). Miller (1993) explores humiliation across cultures and literatures, including Icelandic. As for murder, see the cases of the Athenians Kylon, Kimon, Ephialtes, Hyperbolos, Theramenes, and the Spartans Kleomenes and Pausanias.

¹⁰ Cf. van Wees (1986), Fisher (1992), and Sommerstein (2004) on the nearly unlimited free speech permitted in Attic Old Comedy. Homeric

(3) Nonverbal dark looks, abusive gestures, postural abuse, verbal taunts, threats, physical humiliation, and attack constituted daily Hellenic modes of informal social policing and order. Sometimes such acts contributed to formal or state social cohesion and regulation, e.g., the verbally, physically, and gesturally brutal Spartan educational system, later denominated as the ‘training’, or *agôgê*.¹¹ Athenian conflicts produced ritualised courtroom dramas of law, public jury verdicts handed down by the People’s courts, and fines or executions.

Contentious honour-seeking among equals regulates ‘status-warrior’ competitors onwards from the Homeric epics and Hesiodic divine displacements.¹² Presentation and maintenance of a firm ‘face’ and ‘front’, that is, the cool and steady composure praised as *sôphrosynê*, constitutes a desirable item in every polis-age, manly Spartan and Athenian’s toolbox. Demaratos and many other Spartans, also Kimon, Perikles, and some few Athenians are noted, in both genres, for dignified ‘impression management skills’, but every person’s image rests in the hands and mouths of others to mutilate or destroy. Spartan kings like Kleomenes and Demaratos jostle for regal priority. Alkibiades in the

taunts, phony smiles, names, and condescending arm-stroking modulate personal honour and dishonour. Insult and humiliation, public and private, on the human and divine level, fuel the *Iliad*. No one escapes these social comedies, reading from Zeus to Agamemnon, from Thersites to Melanthios. Akhilleus insults Agamemnon: ‘greediest of men’ and ‘shameless profiteer’. Then he escalates his attack to aggravated, ritualised name-calling such as (158–9): ‘Shameless Deer-Heart’, ‘Big Goon’, and ‘Dogface’. Akhilleus describes anger, unexpectedly but incisively, as ‘sweeter than honey’, although even Akhilleus tires of heroic competitiveness. Cf. Lateiner (2004). The *Odyssey*’s suitors laugh as they threaten to mutilate and castrate Iros, Odysseus’ pathetic beggar-rival (*Od.* 18.87, cf. 22.476). Odysseus himself by kernelled insults cuts Eurymakhos and teasing Ktesippos down to size, and elevates his own position before executing the numerous and imposing imposters.

¹¹ Plato’s Athenian speaker in *Leges* was first to apply the word *agôgê* to the Spartan educational system (645a, 659d, 819d).

¹² Cf. van Wees (1992).

ekklésia and Sokrates in the agora and gymnasia practised democratic one-upmanship in public venues of status competition. Deference acknowledges superiors; therefore, Spartan *homoioi* and Athenian *zeugite* hoplites only reluctantly grant it.

The poetics of Hellenic abuse, like other verbal and non-verbal insult traditions, developed local and class-based vocabularies and styles. Athenian ‘gentlemen’ and Spartan officers and kings regularly carried so-called ‘walking sticks’—*baktérion*, *rhabdos*.¹³ These staffs also could knock heads (e.g., Hdt. 6.75) and stab bodies, when deemed necessary. The Athenians before others prohibited the carrying of ordinary weapons on Athenian streets: *ἐν τοῖς πρῶτοι δὲ Ἀθηναῖοι τὸν τε σίδηρον κατέθεντο καὶ ἀνεμμένη τῇ διαίτῃ ἐς τὸ τρυφερώτερον μετέστησαν*.¹⁴ But assault or battery needs no military equipment.

Knowledge of Persian customs also contributed to the ecology of Greek insult and abuse. The Achaemenid practice of mutilating defeated enemies, foreign and domestic, provided walking bill-boards that advertised the dreadful consequences of resistance (cf. the younger Kyros’ praised regime: Xen. *Anab.* 1.9). Two notable royal indignities were the brands burnt onto the heads of the hapless Boiotians who had deserted Leonidas’ camp at Thermopylai, and Amestris’ terrible mutilation of Masistes’ innocent wife (7.233 and 9.112 [tongue, nose, lips, ears, and breasts cut off]; cf. 2.162: *lumê*). Herodotos reports a serious Persian lesson: the authorities impaled three thousand prominent Babylonian rebels through the anus as a capital punishment (3.159). Herodotos is not exaggerating for effect or from the hyperbole of oral sources: Dareios’ Behistun

¹³ Hornblower (1998). D. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 20.13: Spartan custom charged the elders with an *obligation* to strike undisciplined men and boys with their staffs. Spartan officers struck even non-Spartans but with negative results, e.g., Thouk. 8.84; cf. Hornblower (2000).

¹⁴ Thouk. 1.6 observes how ancient practices changed, as life, law, and customs modified totally unpoliced country behaviour in the city. Hornblower (2000) and van Wees (1998) discuss weapons-displays, ‘open-carry’, as Americans now say.

Inscription repeatedly glories in such lethal punishments inflicted on ‘rebel’ victims to humiliate them, their families, and their clans—verbal insults, blinding, castration, executions, and public display of (rotting) corpses.¹⁵

In Sparta and Athens, public, non-contact insults may wreak more damage and cause more permanent outrage and grudge than actual blood-letting. Attic law-court procedures formalised permissible verbal combats over status and property. Attic law considered unprovoked assault, intentional humiliation, and public degradation, harming a citizen’s honour, worse than an unprovoked attack on an unknown party.¹⁶

Severely humiliating another Athenian citizen, from the epoch of the visitor Herodotos through Demosthenes, constituted *hybris* or *aikia*, infliction of dishonour. *Hybris* here is not a state of mind, a tragic ‘flaw’, or a moral judgement of ‘excessive pride’, but systematic, intentional affront, shaming public words, ‘looks’, and deeds directed at a fellow-citizen. Verbal or physical dishonour in Athens permitted criminal prosecution in the law courts, another venue for spectated and regulated status competition.¹⁷ *Hybris* lawsuits¹⁸ were public *graphai*, while *aikia* cases—easier to prosecute—were private *dikai*. Many court cases discuss but do not clearly define these two offenses, for example, Meidias’ premeditated, dishonouring smack on Demosthenes’ ‘chops’ at the Theatre of Dionysos. Demos-

¹⁵ Cf. Lateiner (2012) 141–3. Punishments of the Hebrew and Christian Bible, and those reported in Assyrian and other Near Eastern documents, brag about similar practices.

¹⁶ Cf. Todd 268–71.

¹⁷ Precedents from big-man conflicts, chieftain competitions, in Ionic Homer to polis-financed Attic comedy (and tragedy) illustrate status warriors’ careful choice of targets.

¹⁸ Just what *hybris* entails in an Athenian courtroom is a contentious issue. See MacDowell’s commentary on *Against Meidias* (1990), Fisher’s (1992) exhaustive study of honour and shame in ancient Greece, and Hunter (1994). State of mind seems paramount in Greek literature, but in Attic law, an action that caused another to lose face ranked higher (and would be easier to prove).

thenes' prosecution speech injects *hybris*-words more than 125 times.¹⁹

Full 'ritualised Hellenic masculinity' required stylised 'trash talk'. Vilifying repartee elegantly suggesting revolting sexual and excremental obsessions, the two disgusting elements mixed together, if possible. The goal was to erase your opponent from the list of *respectable* warriors and citizens.²⁰ When one reduces others' honour by bad-mouthing, flustering, and intimidation, one inflicts loss of face on young and old males, forces them to 'leak' embarrassing clues to disturbed emotions. Associating rivals with polluting excretions and their relevant organs is the crude first step in the Art of Dissing: Aristophanes supplies explicit and metaphorical vocabulary for defecate, urinate, crepitate, and expectorate (spit or vomit).²¹ To *animalise*, *feminise*, *infantilise*, and/or *barbarise* (after Mykale) your opponent, diminishes his standing. Actual sexual penetration (rape or its analogues) ultimately degrades domestic and foreign opponents, short of delimiting or murder.

If one turns to Peloponnesian materials, methods of humiliation through insult were ubiquitous, above all in Sparta, but the historical sources are scattered in time, genres, and intent. A typically ethnocentric Spartan proverb runs: 'In Athens, anything goes.' The Spartans occupied themselves, of course, in preparing for beautiful deaths, dressing and combing their long hair. When not grooming

¹⁹ Meidias caused him *atimia*, serious 'loss of public standing' (Dem. 21.72—this speech appears as a *probolē*, for legal reasons; Ar. *Rhet.* 1374a13–15). Demosthenes accuses his opponent of committing *hybris* 74 times with the verb and another 46 times with the noun or adjective. The previous note provides bibliography for Demosthenes' impressive range of Attic insult. No extant speech claims it brings a *graphē hybreōs* (cf. Todd (1993) 270 n. 13).

²⁰ Demosthenes and Aischines' mutual slanders and defamations aim to inflict de facto if not de iure *atimia*, disenfranchisement. Aristophanes hoped his abuse of Kleon would produce public disregard and social shunning of the Assembly's leading demagogue.

²¹ See Henderson (1991).

and exercising, they were whipping and wittily taunting the next age-class of youths drafted (from the age of seven) into the educational assembly-line, the grim socialisation (*agôgê*: Xen. *Lak. Pol.* 2.1–14; Plut. *Lyk.* 12.4,²² 14.5, 25.2–3). The Spartans institutionalised and ceremonialised insults and abuse, verbal (*skômmata*) and physical. The *paidonomos* or Educator-in-Chief had whip-bearing assistants, and the *Eirens*, his adolescent assistants, bit the thumbs of those providing insufficiently ‘laconic’ responses.²³ Such mandated punishments in no way decreased off-the-cuff chastisements, administered to advance the state, to make them better Spartans. They trained their teenagers for silent endurance of verbal (*skômmatos anekhesthai*) and physical humiliation. Insult infliction and retort extended throughout the hierarchy and even across sexes, as Plutarch’s compendium of Spartan exceptionalism, *The Customs of the Spartans*, makes clear.

The dehumanised and defenceless helots provided their lords with easy target-practice for jibes. The Spartans, after they forced Helots into drunkenness, made them dance on tables wearing ugly masks and funny clothes (Plut. *Lyk.* 28). This ugly ‘funning’ was the least of their scary problems and daily fears, since the Spartiate *krypteia* could assassinate them at will (Thouk. 4.80; Arist. F 538 Rose).

But even surviving to Spartiate adulthood never guaranteed successful continuing incorporation into the

²² Here (12), Plutarch praises Spartan ability to endure a joke at one’s expense: *σφόδρα γὰρ ἔδοκει καὶ τοῦτο Λακωνικὸν εἶναι, σκώμματος ἀνέχεσθαι· μὴ φέροντα δὲ ἐξῆν παραιτεῖσθαι, καὶ ὁ σκώπτων ἐπέπαντο*. In the next passage (25), moreover, Plutarch downplays the damage done by mockery and correction. Plut. *Inst. Lak.* 237C alleges that the Spartans deem resentment a weakness. By contrast, the story of Aristodamos the ‘trembler’ shows (Hdt. 7.229–31, 9.71) that Spartan insults drove comrades in arms to suicide.

²³ Xen. *Lak. Pol.* 2.1, Plut. *Lyk.* 18.3, the rare word for thumb: *δῆγμα* ... *εἰς τὴν ἀντίχειρα*. The most famous form of Lakonian sadism and masochism were the competitions of the boys in their endurance of whipping at the shrine of Artemis Orthia, Disney-like re-creations of which Plutarch himself and his friends witnessed long after as a tourist attraction (*Lyk.* 18; cf. *Arist.* 17).

Männerbund, unless one conformed to all approved procedures at all times. Adult male *homoioi* who remained bachelors (*agamoi*), contributing no children, had to parade naked in winter around the agora while singing a song that insulted themselves—a double degradation (Plut. *Lyk.* 15). The Spartan *Tresantes*, or ‘Tremblers’, men who had not met Spartan fighting standards, endured a spectrum of punishments to promote fellow warriors’ military morale. They were beaten, if they looked cheerful; they were denied verbal communication with their fellow Spartans; and no one would give them light for their fires at home (Hdt. 7.231; cf. on Spartans showing themselves as less than brave, Xen. *Hell.* 3.1.9, *kêlis*, ‘a blemish’; *Lak. Pol.* 9, *kakos*, a coward). As Xenophon later observed, death is far preferable to such an existence (*ibid.*). These shunning institutions were enforced to promote the traditional values of the alleged founding-father, Lykourgos (further, Plut. *Lyk.* 15.1–3). The widely admired (if rarely emulated) Dorian police state of the Lakedaimonians thus employed mockery and isolation as pedagogy and used young citizens and helpless chattel as the polis’s instruments to inculcate brutal social policies.

Hellenic comic and historical texts re-present private and public conflicts or imagine tense competitions in this culture (or sub-cultures). Contexts of success and failure, momentary honour and shame, extended fame and infamy offer exciting, instructive, and sometimes humorous opportunities. The two genres, unlike epic and tragedy’s mythic and legendary populations, convey stories describing ‘real’ men and women as they were and are (social conventions changed slowly), or were perceived to be, in historical accounts, and as fantasised exaggerations or as foolish stereotypes in comic scripts. Collections and comparisons of historiographical and comedic examples of Hellenic one-downmanship are yet to be published, a fact that invites us to offer examples.

3. Early Greek Historiography: Herodotos, Thoukydides, and Xenophon

A. 'Father of History, Father of Historical Insults'

Historians of events feature personal enmities as much as civic and inter-state conflicts. This is true for Herodotos and his successors. Insults raise the ante in many Herodotean *logoi*. Many stories allow barbarians (Egyptians, Persians, Babylonians, Skyths) to one-up each other or Greeks in cleverness or wisdom.²⁴ Whether true, or not, they apparently entertained Herodotos' Hellenic audiences, and the following section of this paper provides examples of Herodotos' treatment of insult in anecdote and story.

When Pharaoh Apries' plenipotentiary demanded that the Egyptian rebel Amasis surrender (2.162), the insolent commander raised himself in his saddle and farted for his reply.²⁵ Herodotos' folktale trickster-thief insults Pharaoh Rhampsinitos right and left. He allegedly penetrates this ruler's safeguarded bank's gold-heap, and incapacitates and half-shaves the guards keeping watch over his brother's desecrated, headless corpse (hanging in public). The anonymous thief steals the headless body for his mother, and deceives Pharaoh's prostituted daughter once she agrees to have sex with him. He escapes her grasp leaving her with only a conveniently bespoke corpse's arm. Eventually he comes in from the cold and happily marries her, and he presumably inherits the kingdom (2.121).²⁶ Kambyzes, the Persian master of sadistic humiliation, scourges one royal Egyptian corpse and forces the defeated Egyptian king Psammenitos to watch friends and family

²⁴ Their alien wisdom often resembles another Hellenic view, allowing Greeks both to laugh at a countryman bested by a barbarian and to feel superior to his folly.

²⁵ See material on 'Farting' in *RE*, s.v. *Porde*, 22.235-40 (L. Radermacher). Another rebel Egyptian points to his penis (2.30), indicating where he will find a family, when he rejects a pharaonic appeal to return to duty and wife and children.

²⁶ Cf. Munson (1993). Lateiner (2015) surveys obscene moments in Herodotos' text.

walk to their execution so as to double royally his humbling (3.14, 16).²⁷ The Babylonians, having revolted from their Persian conquerors, dance derisively on their city-walls, cavorting with obscene gestures and contemptuous words—safe from Dareios’ impotent Persian troops besieging them (3.151: *κατωρχέοντο καὶ κατέσκωπτον Δαρεῖον καὶ τὴν στρατιήν ...*).²⁸ Xerxes feminises his men, a favourite patriarchal ploy, allegedly asserting that they have become women, and his women men (8.88): *οἱ μὲν ἄνδρες γεγόνασί μοι γυναῖκες, αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες ἄνδρες*.²⁹ Commonalities bind these examples together: they are obscene, they are demeaning to the interlocutor(s) (Lateiner 2015). They feminise opponents or infantilise them. As we see below, Kleisthenes of Sikyon’s tribal names animalised his subjects (5.68: ‘Swine-ites, Pig-ites, Ass-ites’), another key category of insult. Along with Aristophanes’ barbarising many of his targets, and often with sexual or excremental ornaments, these are the four favourite modes of diminishing your peers and enemies in Hellenic literary genres as well as everyday life.

Herodotos (5.68) reports that the Sikyonian tyrant Kleisthenes, after dishonouring the local hero Adrastos, insulted, subjected to ridicule [*kategelase*], his entire populace by removing their traditional Dorian tribal names and supplying new barnyard animal substitutes: ‘Pig-ites, Swine-ites’, and ‘Ass-ites’. The confused onomastic legend of the revised names suited Attic prejudices (and forms of humour) directed against backwards Dorians and *their* tyrants:

²⁷ Kambyses laughs at the wrong time and place, for Herodotos a marker of insanity (3.35, 37–8; cf. Lateiner 1977).

²⁸ Note the contempt in the use and iteration of *kata-* preverbs, cf. above, p. 35 and n. 8.

²⁹ Other examples: the African Atarantians hurl insults at the Sun itself (Hdt. 4.184: *καταρῶνται ... πάντα τὰ αἰσχρὰ λοιδορέονται*) when the heat oppresses them. This extremely childish expression of a pointless insult (from a Greek viewpoint) fed Athenian and Hellenic sentiments of superiority. The report of Xerxes’ unlikely whipping of the Hellespont (7.35) similarly offers a pleasant shock to Greek piety and worldliness.

μετέβαλε ἐς ἄλλα οὐνόματα. ἔνθα καὶ πλεῖστον κατεγέλασε τῶν Σικυωνίων· ἐπὶ γὰρ ὑός τε καὶ ὄνου <καὶ χοίρου> τὰς ἐπωνυμίας μετατιθεὶς αὐτὰ τὰ τελευταῖα ἐπέθηκε, πλὴν τῆς ἑωυτοῦ φυλῆς· ταύτη δὲ τὸ οὐνομα ἀπὸ τῆς ἑωυτοῦ ἀρχῆς ἔθετο. οὗτοι μὲν δὴ Ἀρχέλαοι ἐκαλέοντο, ἕτεροι δὲ Ὑᾶται, ἄλλοι δὲ Ὀνεᾶται, ἕτεροι δὲ Χοιρεᾶται.

He changed the Sikyonian tribal names. In this he severely mocked them. Replacing the endings, he gave them names taken from swine and ass and pig—except for his own tribe which he named from his own rule. This tribe, then, was called ‘Rulers of the People’, **while the others were called ‘Swine-ites’, ‘Ass-ites’, and ‘Pig-ites’**.³⁰

To animalise your fellow-citizens expresses your dominance and domestication of inferiors, part of this tyrant’s confirmation of his superiority. But from any Athenian source’s point of view, the Dorian’s derision of his own citizenry has also insulted himself.

The severely traumatic Spartan social policing, summarised above, extends to king insulting king in Herodotus’ descriptions and narratives of their extreme social organisation. The unexpectedly elevated King Leotykhidas mocked and gleefully insulted (*epi gelōti te kai lasthēi*, in the hendiadys of Hdt. 6.67) Demaratos, the king recently deposed from his throne. Leotykhidas eventually made it impossible for his rival to reply. Once goaded to humiliated but wordless fury by his dubiously elected replacement, Demaratos left behind forever Spartan public spaces and society. He chose Persian exile as a lesser punishment than continual humiliation at home (6.70).

³⁰ Forsdyke (2011) and (2012) reconstructs a possible historical basis for this offensive, comic nomenclature. Formally relevant to Aristophanes’ choral scurrility in ritual contexts (cf. *Wasps* 1362) is Epidaurian practice: the males revile with jests women celebrating their fertility goddesses (Hdt. 5.83.3; cf. 2.60 for Egyptian analogues).

Demaratos' enemy in all these machinations (6.50–1), King Kleomenes, later responded to Aiginetan verbal *propêlakismos* (6.73), mud-slinging humiliation. Kleomenes, in Herodotos' telling, stymied as 'diplomat' by Aeginetan recalcitrance, puns on and animalises his opponent's speaking-name, Krios (Ram). The Spartan tells him to armour his horns for the coming troubles that Kleomenes can bring (Hdt. 6.50). The animalisation mocks his opponent. He threatens physical revenge and disaster on the Peloponnesians' uncooperative island allies who had verbally insulted him. He tries to bully them, implying that he will captain an armed force to coerce the Aiginetans (see below for Aristophanes' parallel *paronomasia*).

Herodotos' Spartans talk back to their enemies. The Spartan wit Dienekes allegedly shared a dialogue in Doric with a Trachinian enemy scout before battle at Thermopylai. The Persian collaborator tried to frighten him with the number of Persian troops and their arrows (as King Alexander later tries to frighten the Athenians, Hdt. 8.140). The reported interchange culminates in the laconic sentry's indirectly reported put-down of the scout, sardonically called 'friend' for his 'good news'. After the Trachinian indicates the enemy's coming, overwhelming numbers (of launched arrows), Dienekes responds, 'Then we shall fight in the [launched missiles'] shade' (7.226: πάντα σφι ἀγαθά ... εἰ ὑπὸ σκιῇ ἔσοιτο πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἢ μάχη καὶ οὐκ ἐν ἡλίῳ).

Several Herodotean scenes of *symposia* dispute, test, and prove proper masculine comportment. Social advance in that competitive drinking culture expected teasing, joshing, bad-mouthing, and fast come-backs, image-risking, and image-tarnishing. That same Sikyonian status-enhancing Kleisthenes held a Hellenic worldwide bride-contest for his daughter Agariste's 'hand' and consequently his hard-won domain. The tyrant host celebrates a concluding, eristic symposium to announce the winner. At the climax of excitement, however, a free-choice dance-contest occurred (καὶ κως ἔωυτῶ μὲν ἀρεστῶς ὀρχέετο ...). The somewhat inebriated and exhibition-fond Athenian finalist Hip-

pokleides danced a third set on a serving table (Λακονικὰ σχημάτια, μετὰ δὲ ἄλλα Ἀττικά), but then gesticulated³¹ with his legs—upside-down. Given the absence of any crotch-covering pants or underpants, the gravity-drawn chiton covered Hippokleides' face, and the necessarily bobbling genital display—with concomitant buttock-baring—constitutes a serious breach of etiquette. The aggressive, obscene act, understood by Kleisthenes as an insult to his Bride Contest, concludes Herodotos' inserted but extended suitor drama with an under-appreciated Insult Contest.³²

The angry and offended social-climbing Father of the Bride tartly informs the aristocratic Athenian³³ that 'You've danced away your marriage.' The unique verb 'αφ-*ôrch-êsaô*', here in the aorist, probably puns on *orchis*, testicle, so the suitors also heard: 'You've balled up your marriage.' The Athenian's famous (yet not proverbial) verbal retort, 'Hippokleides doesn't care', must contain a responding (*hypolabôn*) pun—'Horse-Bolt [= 'Big-Prick'] does not care.'³⁴ The high-stakes exchange of derisive verbal malice characterises competitive symposiastic effrontery. Echoing the hoplites' manoeuvre of pushing back opponents' lines in hand-to-hand combat, called *ôthismos*, Herodotos in his own

³¹ *Hapax* here in Herodotos: χειρονομέω. Pellizer (1990) discusses the protocols of Archaic symposia, and cf. Murray (1990).

³² The lewd incident unpleasantly explains the unlikely rise of the upstart aristocratic Alkmaionids. Its placement registers it as one deflationary or anticlimactic conclusion to the glorious Athenian victory at Marathon (6.126–31). Even-handed Herodotos likes to humble objects of adulation, whether cities, institutions, families, or individuals.

³³ Hippokleides the son of Athenian Tisander was related to the Korinthian Kypselids (6.128).

³⁴ Hdt. 6.129: οὐκέτι κατέχειν δυνάμενος εἶπε· “ὦ παῖ Τεισάνδρου, ἀπορχήσαό γε μὲντὸν γάμον.” ὁ δὲ Ἴπποκλείδης ὑπολαβὼν εἶπε· “οὐ φροντὶς Ἴπποκλείδῃ.” ἀπὸ τούτου μὲν τοῦτο ὀνομάζεται. Κλεισθένης δὲ σιγὴν ποιησάμενος ἔλεξε ... Ogden (1997) 117; *h. Herm.* 55–6. Aparicio (2006) notes this pun and tries to determine the second catachresis, although his suggestions for it seem obscure. Babylonian insult-dancers (3.151.1): καταρχέοντο. A referee thought the five previous appearances of *orch*-stems for dance 'blunts [rather than sets up] the impact of any pun'.

voice elsewhere (describing Greek allies' pre-battle contentions at Plataiai) refers metaphorically—and perhaps comically—to a major *ôthismos* of words, rivals pushing back rivals in verbal exchanges for a position of honour in the battle line before combat begins.³⁵ *ἐνθαῦτα ἐν τῇ διατάξει ἐγένετο λόγων πολλὸς ὠθισμὸς Τεγεητέων τε καὶ Ἀθηναίων*. Herodotos' text, then, through folktale-like humorous anecdotes (e.g., Pharaoh Rhampsinitos' repeated setbacks with the thief) and ludicrous incidents (e.g., Hippokleides' acrobatic but abortive suit of a rich maiden), comfortably incorporates comic narratives (cf. 4.30.1)—only anachronistically described as 'intrusions'.

B. Humorous Insults in Thoukydides' *Ἐυγγραφή*

Thoukydides more narrowly allows insulting words and low deeds into his glum record of diplomacy, *stasis*, and war. He eschews *bômolochia*, comedy's coarse abuse, and even crowd-pleasing *μυθῶδες ἐς ἀκρόασιν* (1.22.4), but he includes more significant *oneidos* and *loidoria* spoken by his characters than one would predict.³⁶ In the sea battle off Naupaktos, the trireme crews were abusing their enemies so loudly that their own commanders could not be heard above the din of battle (2.84).

The Thebans complain to the impatient Spartan judges that the Plataians on trial for their lives have unfairly abused them for their (blatant) Persian War medising (3.62). Kleon feminises and taunts Nikias with an insult ('his enemy and victim of his [feminising] jeer', *epitimôn*) in the Pylos debate (4.27.5, emphatically repeated in 4.28). He said

³⁵ Cf. at Thermopylai, Salamis, and Plataia: 9.26 and 62; 7.225; 8.64, 78; cf. 3.76: the Persian 'Seven' conspirators.

³⁶ Rusten discusses Thoukydides' claims to disregard narratological *terpsis* and anecdotes, but his narrative encompasses grimly humorous incidents ((2006) 547 on 2.52.4, pyre-thefts during the plague). Rusten (2011) 552 points out that the historian and the comic poets disagree about Perikles but unsurprisingly agree in condemning Kleon.

(reported in *oratio obliqua*), ‘if the generals were *men*’,³⁷ they would have captured the island already and he himself would have done this, had he been in command. Kleon and, later, Alkibiades intuit Nikias’ personal insecurities and political weaknesses.

This barb climaxes an account that notes nearly unique laughter, a response of allegedly ‘prudent’ assemblymen to Kleon’s fatuity.³⁸ It briefly anticipates the solitary one-line ‘joke’ in the *History*. An unnamed Spartan POW, captured while defending Messenian Sphakteria, later replied to an Ionian ally of the Athenians who taunted him (δι’ ἀχθηδόνα) for surrendering rather than dying ‘like a Spartan’ with the hardened *homoioi*. ‘It would be a smart arrow [*atraktos* = spindle; *hapax*], if it could distinguish brave men [from cowards]’ (πολλοῦ ἂν ἄξιον εἶναι τὸν ἄτρακτον ..., εἰ τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς διεγίγνωσκε, 4.40).³⁹ As mentioned, Lakonians trained their youth by institutionalised and personal suffering to produce retorts and brusque badinage insulting competitors. Thουκυδίδης is characterizing the ethnos as well as reporting a presumably historical wisecrack.

Alkibiades, responding to slanders (*diabolai*) and explaining his behaviour as an Athenian citizen and general to the Spartans’ assembly, paradoxically complains (in the Attic dialect, at least in Thουκυδίδης’ Attic) of Athenian slander weaponised against himself. He seems to say (the text is contested) that he could insult democracy as well as anyone.⁴⁰ He speaks of this ‘most free’ Athenian political system as a tired topic about which nothing new can be said, since it is an ‘acknowledged folly’ (6.89: ὁμολογουμένη

³⁷ εἰ ἄνδρες εἶεν ... Kleon echoes Xerxes’ feminisation of his troops at Salamis, doubled by his praise of Artemisia ‘my women have become men’ (8.88).

³⁸ 4.28.5: τοῖς δὲ Ἀθηναίοις ἐνέπεσε μὲν τι καὶ γέλωτος τῇ κουφολογίᾳ αὐτοῦ, ἀσμένους δ’ ὅμως ἐγίγνετο τοῖς σώφροσι ...

³⁹ The wisecrack also feminises the wielder of the ‘spindle’.

⁴⁰ 6.89.6: ἐγινώσκωμεν οἱ φρονοῦντές τι, καὶ αὐτὸς οὐδενὸς ἂν χεῖρον, ὅσῳ καὶ λαιδορήσαιμι. ἀλλὰ περὶ ὁμολογουμένης ἀνοίας οὐδὲν ἂν καινὸν λέγοιτο.

ἄνοια). The final example in Thoukydides of the ‘L’ word, *loidoria*, again interestingly concerns Alkibiades. The returned exile and reformed traitor gains small praise for abusing/rebuking the unruly troops at Samos and constraining their impulse to sail home against the Peiraieus, the harbour now under the control of a new Athenian oligarchy. The censorious historian quite pointedly characterises this effective, apotreptic *loidoria* as the *first* time that Alkibiades had ever benefitted Athens.⁴¹

More pointed and notably Herodotean (cf. Hdt. 5.55, 62) is Thoukydides’ unique and analeptic digression refuting popular accounts of a long-past ἐρωτικὴ συντυχία. A handsome youth named Harmodios spurned his erotic admirer, the Peisistratid Hipparkhos.⁴² This son and brother of Athenian tyrants planned a nasty public vengeance (Thouk. 6.53–60) for his rejected sexual advances. He orchestrated an elaborate insult perpetrated on Harmodios’ aristocratic Gephyrean clan. That mortal offence depended on a sexual innuendo (*propélakiôn*) directed against the little sister of the prospective but unresponsive male lover. The sexually rejected younger brother of the tyrant Hippias invited this sister to participate as a basket-bearer in an Athenian religious procession. But then he publicly rejected the girl (*korê*), after she showed up, ‘as somehow unworthy’ (μὴ ἀξίαν εἶναι). The oblique if slanderous rejection of her service, dedicated to the eponymous Virgin Goddess, suggested serious sexual impropriety on her part and produced spectacular political consequences.⁴³ The ‘ostracism’ on grounds of religious

⁴¹ 8.86.4: δοκεῖ πρῶτον τότε καὶ οὐδενὸς ἔλασσον τὴν πόλιν ὠφελῆσαι. Hornblower (2008) ad loc. defends well the caustic interpretation.

⁴² The fact of the excursus itself (a severe correction of earlier accounts of a distant event), the role of a woman, the presence of (homo-) sexuality in Thoukydides’ narrative—explain its different tone and breadth.

⁴³ Τὸν δ’ οὖν Ἀρμόδιον ἀπαρνηθέντα τὴν πείρασιν, ὥσπερ διανοεῖτο, **προπηλάκισεν**· ἀδελφὴν γὰρ αὐτοῦ κόρην ἐπαγγείλαντες ἤκειν κανοῦν οἴσουσαν ἐν πομπῇ τινί, ἀπήλασαν λέγοντες οὐδὲ ἐπαγγεῖλαι τὴν ἀρχὴν

purity of a high-born maiden—but really the retributory fury of a lover scorned—produced the assassination of an Athenian tyrant-to-be. *Παρά λόγον* confutes more than military and political designs.

Perhaps the most sweeping and significant authorial reference to insulting behaviour comes in Thoukydides' account of Kerkyrean *stasis*, where the historian reports that *to euêthês*, 'traditional, decent character', was mocked, literally 'was laughed down' (3.83: *katagelasthai*) and disappeared.⁴⁴ The Syracusan *demos* belittles the likelihood of an Athenian fleet attacking Sicily. Democrats made a hostile, dismissive joke of it, laughing abusively at their political foe, the anti-democratic politician Hermokrates, whom they treat as an untrustworthy *Kassandra*-figure (6.35: *καταφρονοῦτες ἐς γέλωτα ἔτρεπον*).

Thoukydides rarely insults in his authorial voice, preserving his vaunted neutrality and objectivity (1.21–2). With perhaps a sense of justified superiority to the man who may have proposed the author's exile in the *ekklêsia*, he introduces Kleon as most violent, *biaiotatos* (3.36), and his presumptive proxy Diodotos implies he is *aksynetos*, 'unintelligent, inept, an imprudent rogue', a derisive word saved for ten occasions.⁴⁵ Kleon serves as his poster-child for

διὰ τὸ μὴ ἀξίαν εἶναι. χαλεπῶς δὲ ἐνεγκόντος τοῦ Ἄρμοδιου πολλῶ δὴ μᾶλλον δι' ἐκεῖνον καὶ ὁ Ἀριστογείτων παρωξύνετο. Her family was outraged, as expected, at the *hybris* of the tyrant's brother (6.57.3; cf. Hornblower (2008) ad loc.).

⁴⁴ The insecure and uncomfortable Nikias, for example, worries that his potential Athenian allies in the assembly will be shamed in public, both by the fear of being feminised—thought 'unmanly' (6.13: *μαλακός*)—and by meeting public description as such. Although these prudent citizens also wish to vote against the proposed expedition, they fear slurs and comic, even obscene *eurypróktos* caricatures such as the one on the Eurymedon vase.

⁴⁵ The noun appears thrice. Diodotos twice asserts such lack of intelligent prudence in his unnamed opponent Kleon in the debate over Mytilene's fate (3.42). Kleon's Syracusan analogue, Athenagoras (6.36; cf. 39, 76.4 (Hermokrates)), accuses his unnamed oligarchic opponent Hermokrates of the same folly. The Spartans fail to pre-empt any Athenian aversion to be lectured to—as if 'fools' (4.17.3). Themistokles,

imprudent over-confidence in this *History of the Unexpected*, τὸ ἀπροσδόκητον. Kleon's vow (4.28), to take the Spartans on the island in twenty days or less, is uniquely called 'fatuous babble', *kouphologia*, and the 'real time' dismissive verdict of his prediction was seconded immediately by the Athenian *ekklēsia*'s contemptuous laughter (the only other laugh reported in Thoukydides). His death is described as that of a turn-tail coward who never planned to stand and fight (5.10)—a parallel to Aristophanes' *rhipsaspis* (shield-thrower) charge repeatedly flung against Kleonymos (*Vesp.* 19, 822, et alibi).

Perikles in Thoukydides' *Epitaphios* praises Athenian imperial power and Athens' men. The eulogy, as one would expect, never refers to Athenian cowards, cheats, draft-dodgers, and bullies.⁴⁶ Perikles' epideictic also praises Athenian tolerance in private life by notably contrasting it to the nasty and dirty looks that men encounter in other Greek communities. The 'Olympian' *stratēgos*, widely mocked on stage by the Attic comic poets,⁴⁷ here shows sensitivity to looks, words, and deeds. He focuses on slurs that convey derision or contempt.⁴⁸ Thoukydides' evidence paints a different picture. The narratives of *erga* and independent evidence suggest a more stressed community—e.g., the socially disruptive plague narrated immediately after the rosy community of the *Epitaphios*, the *Hermokopidai*, the assassination of Hyperbolos and other citizens (8.73), derisive *logoi* in assemblies. In addition, the images of brawling partiers available on contemporary red-figured

Perikles, and Phrynikhos are not *aksynetos*—an important litotes (1.122, 2.34.6, 8.27).

⁴⁶ Cf. Christ (2006).

⁴⁷ See n. 58.

⁴⁸ Thouk. 2.37.2–3, Perikles on 'dirty' looks: ἐλευθέρας δὲ τὰ τε πρὸς τὸ κοινὸν πολιτεύομεν καὶ ἐς τὴν πρὸς ἀλλήλους τῶν καθ' ἡμέραν ἐπιτηδευμάτων ὑποψίαν, οὐ δι' ὀργῆς τὸν πέλας, εἰ καθ' ἡδονὴν τι δρᾶ, ἔχοντες, οὐδὲ ἀζημίους μὲν, **λυπηρὰς δὲ τῇ ὄψει ἀχθηδόνας προστιθέμενοι.** ἀνεπαχθῶς δὲ τὰ ἴδια προσομιλοῦντες τὰ δημόσια διὰ δέος μάλιστα οὐ **παρανομοῦμεν** ...

sympotic pottery, nearly contemporary dicanic oratory, and especially Attic Old Comedy suggest that Perikles' idealised portrait of Athens and Athenians⁴⁹ hardly resembled the bustling and belligerent imperial city where everything could be sold and bought, indictments as well as figs and turnips (Eubulus, *PCG* F 74, *Olbia*).

C. Theramenes' Savage Quips in Xenophon's *Hellenika*

Xenophon admired Theramenes, the allegedly moderate thinker and politician among the Thirty's tight oligarchy and perhaps his own political patron. When Kritias seized control of the government and induced the Thirty to put on trial and quickly condemn Theramenes to death, in a kangaroo court ringed with thugs, Xenophon gives the defendant a persuasive defence and a dramatic death (*Hell.* 2.3.35–56). Satyros, Kritias' henchman, after this, threatened Theramenes with something to cry out about, if he did not keep quiet. The wit replied ironically, 'And if I do keep quiet, will I not find something to cry about?' When forced to take the poison, hemlock like Sokrates, he quipped about it, toasting his *de facto* executioner Kritias: *Κριτία τοῦτ' ἔστω τῷ καλῷ* ('Let this toast be for the noble/handsome Kritias').⁵⁰

Xenophon, continuing Thoukydides' *History* from the summer halt of 411 BCE, realised that these anecdotal last words deviated from his master's parameters. He therefore apologises for preserving such 'inappropriate quips' (*ἀποφθέγματα οὐκ ἀξιόλογα*). His prescient inclinations towards hero-worship and anecdotal biography (Kyros II,

⁴⁹ The 'education of Hellas' (Thouk. 2.41.1), an insult-free and slap-free Cloud-Cuckooland of the sort that Aristophanes' Euelpides (wrongly) thought he would prefer.

⁵⁰ While this mock toast differs from the more savage sallies tallied earlier here and later, it corresponds to Thukydidēs' Laconic prisoner of war—another defeated 'loser' of limited options (2.41, see above). Theramenes' last words also pre-echo Xenophon's hero, steady Sokrates, who—ironist to the end—queries his jailer about the propriety of pouring a poisonous libation for the gods (*Phaed.* 117b).

Sokrates, Agesilaos)—two developments with futures in subsequent historiography—defend the inclusion of humorous incidents and insolent quips. He says/observes that neither Theramenes' presence of mind nor ability to jest left him as he faced death (*μήτε τὸ φρόνιμον μήτε τὸ παιγνιώδες*).⁵¹ Since even tragedy contains irony and parody, and comic interchanges (e.g., Euripides' mockery of Orestes' tokens of identity in *Elektra*, old man Pheres' caustic rejection of self-sacrifice in *Alkestis*), so comic passages in historiography, such as Hippokleides' retort and Theramenes' repartee, ironise and lend tragic depth to political squabbles.

4. Old Comedy

The early fifth-century Sicilian comic poet Epikharmos (Ath. 2.36c–d, *PCG* F 146) summarised 'Saturday Night' in town: 'Sacrifice, feasts of food, wine—then mockery, swinish insult (*hyania*), trial and verdict—followed by shackles, stocks, and monetary fine'. Euboulos, the mid-fourth century Attic poet standing between Old and Middle Comedy, famously describes the symposion's ten kraters of wine, starting with three for good-fellowship, advancing to five for *hybris*, and winding up with ten undiluted kraters to produce jail, fines, and mania—craziness (Ath. 2.36b, *PCG* F 93).⁵²

The face-to-face, unrestrained assaults of comedy occur before a large public audience, greater than those real or imagined brawls preserved in accounts of drunken brawls at

⁵¹ Gray (2003) discusses this and other editorial interventions of Xenophon in the *Hellenika*. As she notes, Books 1–2, the first part of the work most strongly influenced by Thoukydides, produce no apologetic flourish by first-person intervention before this one (for others, see 2.4.27, 4.8.1, 5.1.4, 7.2.1). The Spartan cavalry commander Pasimakhos produced an analogously clever and courageous remark before death (4.4.10).

⁵² Cf. Rusten (2011) 75 on Epikharmos; on Euboulos, 469–86.

private party venues.⁵³ At the Attic dramatic festivals, abuse carried greater offense to victims' persons and personalities because of its more public nature.⁵⁴ The god Dionysos and the polis licensed and protected an astonishing degree of savage mimetic and verbal mockery. The comic world furnished unlimited *euryprōktoi*, 'gaping assholes'.⁵⁵ The *Clouds*' dialogue between 'Better Thinker' and 'Worse Thinker' clarifies this abuse: this word suggesting frequent homosexual passivity suffering anal penetrations describes six times in sixteen verses adulterous Casanovas, political speakers, lawyers, and finally, Aristophanes' own Attic audience, the not-always-so-good citizens.⁵⁶

⁵³ Cf. pottery scenes such as the brawling komasts on St. Petersburg Hermitage 651, or lawsuits such as Lysias 3.11–15, Demosthenes 54. The latter conflicts had an openly agonistic form of legal resolution, and large juries by our standards, while they were chastising or redressing physical and verbal insults.

⁵⁴ Rusten (2011) 743–54 lists Attic *Komoidoumenoi*; Sommerstein (1996) also 'registers' the 'comedised'.

⁵⁵ Aristophanes employs the *polite* euphemism for genitals, *aidoia*, as rarely as Thoukydides, exactly twice (*Nub.* 978, *Vesp.* 578; *Thouk.* 1.6.5, 2.49.8). The former presents impolite words to provoke laughter, and the latter eschews bodily descriptions and bawdy functions.

⁵⁶ Aristoph. *Clouds* 1083–1100:

Δίκαιος/Κρείττων Λόγος. τί δ' ἦν ῥαφανιδωθῆ πιθόμενός σοι
τέφρα τε τιλθῆ
ἔξει τινὰ γνώμην λέγειν τὸ μὴ εὐρύπρωκτος εἶναι;
Ἄδικος/Ἥττων Λόγος. ἦν δ' εὐρύπρωκτος ἦ, τί πείσεται κακόν;
Δίκαιος Λόγος. τί μὲν οὖν ἂν ἔτι μεῖζον πάθοι τούτου ποτέ;
Ἄδικος Λόγος. τί δῆτ' ἔρεῖς, ἦν τοῦτο νικηθῆς ἐμοῦ;
Δίκαιος Λόγος. σιγήσομαι. τί δ' ἄλλο;
Ἄδικος Λόγος. φέρε δὴ μοι φράσον·
συνηγοροῦσιν ἐκ τίνων;
Δίκαιος Λόγος. ἐξ εὐρυπρώκτων.
Ἄδικος Λόγος. πείθομαι.
τί δαί; τραγωδοῦσ' ἐκ τίνων;
Δίκαιος Λόγος. ἐξ εὐρυπρώκτων.
Ἄδικος Λόγος. εὖ λέγεις.
δημηγοροῦσι δ' ἐκ τίνων;
Δίκαιος Λόγος. ἐξ εὐρυπρώκτων.
Ἄδικος Λόγος. ἄρα δῆτ'
ἔγνωκας ὡς οὐδὲν λέγεις;

Aristophanes satirises every kind of Athenian eccentricity and insults all the famous names—the laughs depend on immediately recognisable persons and types (like *Birds*' Decree-Seller). He caricatures Perikles and Kleon, Alkibiades, Nicias and Hyperbolos, the pillars and darlings of democracy and its institutions.⁵⁷ He presents Persian ambassadors and Olympian gods as buffoonish churls—clumsy barbarians. Perikles' pointy skull provided a ludicrous, non-obscene object of mockery for many poets of Old Comedy.⁵⁸ Kratinos never tired of abusing his Zeus-like pretensions.

Aristophanes' fifth-century Attic comedies, written while Thoukydides wrote, also suggest that the unpoliced towns of ancient Greece were unpredictable, sometimes dangerous places. The masculine person was legally warranted as inviolable but—shit happened. For example, Antimakhos, an Athenian poet in Aristophanes' *Akharnians* (1168–73), at night looks for a rock to retaliate against a drunken assailant who has assaulted him. Antimakhos unwittingly grabs a

καὶ τῶν θεατῶν ὀπότεροι
 πλείους σκόπει.
 Δίκαιος Λόγος. καὶ δὴ σκοπῶ.
 Ἄδικος Λόγος. τί δῆθ' ὄρᾳς;
 Δίκαιος Λόγος. πολὺ πλείονας νῆ τοὺς θεοὺς,
 τοὺς εὐρυπράκτους· τουτονὶ
 γοῦν οἶδ' ἐγὼ κάκεινονί.

⁵⁷ While Pelling (2000a) asks how useful Aristophanes can be for the historian, he eschews a pessimistic answer. One can laugh at Kleon and then elect him to office (134). Ercolani (2002) and Edwards (1991) explore offensive words and comic acts. Moorton (1988) and Sidwell (2009) look specifically at Aristophanes' treatment of Alkibiades. Müller (1913) provides a handy, if incomplete, list of abusive terms in Attic comedy.

⁵⁸ Plut. *Per.* 3 mentions and quotes Kratinos', Telekleides', and Eupolis' mockery of Perikles' cranium: 'squill-head'. Vickers (1997) finds Perikles everywhere in Aristophanes' texts. For mockery of Perikles, cf. e.g., Aristoph. *Akh.* 530–1, Kratinos F 118, Eupolis F 115, Telekleides F 17, Hermippos F 45; Thuk. 2.37.2–3; cf. Plut. *Per.* 3 and 33, *σκόμματα ἐφθυβρίζοντες*: Stadter (1989) with Schwarz (1971). Thoukydides observes that Phrynikhos claimed that expected *loidoria* (reproachful abuse) would *not* intimidate him (8.27).

fresh, still warm human turd. Aristophanes' chorus hopes that he will miss his target and might hit instead—surprise, *para prosdokian!*—his rival, the poet Kratinos. The excrement motif strikes again!⁵⁹

This poet's genital and excremental attacks mock poets, ordinary imaginary citizens (like Trygaios, Bdelukleon), politicians, the Spartan or Athenian people, and their gods (cf. *Nub.* 1084–99). Like any form of volatile, contemporary caricature, comedy provides a historical source, historical but not quite historiography, although historiography itself need not be solemn always.⁶⁰ To be made into comic fodder, to be 'comedised', as the poets' varied victims were *komoidoumenoi* (cf. Sommerstein (1996)), is to be ridiculed, insulted as a rogue, a sexual pervert, a disgusting substance, or worse. In Aristophanes' *Birds* alone, forty-five individuals are named—and none flattered. Some scholars have read Dikaiopolis' aetiology of the war that he has lived through—an explanation in the *Akharnians* (510–56), based on reciprocal whore-theft—as a parody mocking Herodotos' recently published proem and opening book.⁶¹ That false start itself quickly rejects an aetiology of the Persian War based on woman-taking. The reciprocal woman stealing in *both* works, regardless of literary priority, as Pelling ((2000) 151–5) argued, may parody popular explanations on the street of how this war arose. While the historian Herodotos mocks the concept suggesting that men would sacrifice their city for the lovely ladies of myth, as if

⁵⁹ Four references to feces occur in *Vespae*, two to farts, and one to urine (19, 23, 233, 626; 1177, 1305; 807). Miller (1997) explores the spectrum of substances and acts that disgust humankind, among which human odours, excrement, and signs of disease and bodily corruption feature prominently.

⁶⁰ Cf. Rusten (2006) 557.

⁶¹ Moggi (2012) examines the different motives for Aristophanes and Herodotos to recall (*inter alia*) the Persian Wars. The former exalts the earlier generation at the present's expense; the latter author also implies subtly negative comparisons for his own epoch.

women were sufficient to provoke or endure a war,⁶² the comic poets reduce goddesses, women, and little girls to sexual merchandise: the starving Megarian farmer's daughters called 'piglets', aka vaginettes, Simaetha, and Aspasia's stable in *Acharnians*, Basileia in *Birds*, and Diallagê in *Lysistrata*.⁶³

Animals—for example, snakes, insects, dogs, and fish—are favourite forms of abuse in Aristophanes' visual and verbal armoury. Kleon, often down-labeled by his stinky occupation or business of hide tanner, in *one* passage of *Wasps* is described as a monstrous bitch, a snake, a smelly seal, a camel's ass-hole—and, worst of all, and more incongruously, he has the dirty balls of Lamia, a monster Bogey-Woman (1031–5).

Old Philokleon, Aristophanes' rejuvenated and wily wasp, has been cured of *dikastêriomania*, but he has become Athens' drunkest and nastiest fellow. He snarls and farts at his foes, two forceful and noisy nonverbal expressions of contempt. The quarrelsome old man attacks casual passers-by for malicious fun (*hybris* gone berserk). According to his slave's narration of his post-sympotic hijinks, he mocks and threatens—intentionally insults and strikes everyone he meets (*Vesp.* 1300–23).⁶⁴ Laughter in the audience arises from his unrestrained and unpunished word and deed violence against all comers on the street. Further, the attribution of youth's dangerous and destructive male-bonding roughhouse and rivalrous games to a decrepit geezer is pleasantly incongruous, as well as a wish-fulfilment for the elderly theatre-goers.

⁶² E.g., Hdt. 1.1–5, 2.118–20. Aristophanic denigrations: *Av.* 1253–6 (*Iris*), *Lys.* 155. The entire play derides female lechery and bibulousness.

⁶³ Simaitha and Aspasia perhaps were active in the many-shaded sex industry, but the hungry Megarian farmer's little daughters represent a *reductio ad esuritionem* and a good pun when described as *χοιρίδια* (*Akh.* 524–2, 764–835).

⁶⁴ E.g., ἀτηρότατον κακόν, ... πολὺ παροινικώτατος, ... ὑβριστότατος μακρῶ, ἐσκίρτα, ἐπεπόρδει, κατεγέλα, ... περιύβριζεν ... σκώπτων ἀγροίκως, ... ἐμέθυσεν, ... τύπτων ἅπαντας, ... σφαλλόμενος ...

Sokrates in the *Clouds* describes his learning-disabled super-annuated student Strepsiades as a moron stinking of the age of Kronos. More coarsely, in the *Clouds*, traditional Mr. Right calls Mr. Wrong a ‘Shameless Butt-Fucker’ (909, 1023). This last word, *katapugôn*, is also an Attic name for the middle-finger gesture (Pollux 2.184). Strepsiades threatens to stab a creditor’s anus (1300). ‘Anus Surveillance’ (Jack Winkler’s (1990b) 54 memorable phrase) trapped the unwary citizen-soldier in the minefields of Attic public discourse. Strepsiades and Sokrates discuss name-calling street-attack strategies and legal revenge as if they were necessary, if not every-day, Athenian events.

Evidence of symposion, household, and assembly mayhem, sprinkled in the comic poets, historians, philosophers, and orators, confirms images of maladroit, road-rage confrontations and ambushing street encounters (of indeterminable frequency), such as paradigmatic Konon’s gang stomping spree on Ariston and their crowing victory over his prostrate body (Dem. 54).

4. Conclusions

Male status-enhancement was a zero-sum game. A man gained local credit when he creatively degraded those who presumed themselves to be his peers.⁶⁵ The recent historic exemplars of peak status (for Attic potters) had been the hoplite class of Marathon from whom descended rough-partying playboys of the awkwardly democratic Athenian polis. Who else would have purchased Athenian produced, fancy black- and red-figured pots that celebrated their symposiastic antics? Aristophanes and Herodotos simul-

⁶⁵ The *mythic* masters of humiliation and intimidation were the god Zeus and the hyper-masculine, blue-collar hero-brawler, impulsive Herakles. The legendary status warriors struggling for respect and restored honour were Homer’s Akhilleus and Odysseus, on campaign at Troy and back home on Ithaka. No one can out-talk or out-manoeuvre Peleus’ son, while the homeless vagrant insults and humiliates his ‘betters’ before redeeming his status and house with lethal metal weapons.

taneously lauded those brave Athenian *Marathonomachoi*, because they provided a useful foil to contemporaries at whom they jabbed. The heroes of yore threatened and penetrated (with weapons or sexually in metaphors) the feminised, butt-presenting, weak, and pants-wearing Persian soldiers. Their sons, the next generation, are portrayed thus, striding right on the Eurymedon red-figured *oinochoë* (in Hamburg). There the Hellene has weaponised his erection for buggering, anally penetrating, the effete and stationary, bent-over, ass-flourishing barbarian. The Persian looks at us and says: ‘I am EURY-MEDON,⁶⁶ I stand bent-over.’⁶⁷ The gestural dialogue conveys local pride, patriotic boast, ethnic and Athenocentric stereotyping. Meanwhile the image parodies the only easily available sexual relief and release while soldiers served on Athens’ imperial Eastern campaigns.⁶⁸ These ‘dissing’ strategies, shared by figures on-stage, images on pots, and narratives in texts, illuminate the theatrical nature and rough pleasantries (sometimes quite unpleasant) of everyday Athenian venues.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ That is, a gaping [-anused] Mede, eponymous with the site of Kimon’s Athenian triumph on the western Anatolian coast (ca. 466 BCE, Thouk. 1.100) over a Persian army and navy.

⁶⁷ Hamburg Inv. 1981.173: ΕΥΡΥΜΕΔΑΟΝ ΕΙΜ[Ι], ΚΥΒΑ[---] ΕΣΤΕΚΑ ... ; cf. Schauenberg (1975), McNiven (2000), Mitchell (2011), with Schauenberg (1975) and Mitchell (2009) 84–6.

⁶⁸ Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata* fantastically portrays a sex strike by women, a teasing and humiliating embargo on sexual intercourse even with husbands, and other ludicrous solutions proposed for curing recurrent male war-mongering.

⁶⁹ *Raphanidosis*, the alleged punishment of adulterers by the pressing of radishes up their anuses, however rare or possibly hypothetical, served as at least a potential deterrent to Lotharios. Dover (1968) ad *Nub.* 1083 (τί δ’ ἦν ραφανιδωθῆ πιθόμενός σοι τέφρα τε τιλθῆ), and schol. *Plut.* 168. Three women relatives were charged with raping by cucumber a convicted male child-molester in 1997, presumably extorting revenge in family-friendly Delaware, Ohio. The child-molester’s wife and mother-in-law, after the cucumber, shaved his pubic hair and rubbed down his genitals with ‘Icy Hot’ an externally applied topical aches and pain relieving medicament. Mr. Rodney Hosler’s sad story persists on the Internet (search ‘Cucumber Incident’, e.g., <http://lubbockonline.com/news/080897/wife.htm>, confirmed 11 Feb-

Herodotos' anthropological bent allows him to include more kinds of comic materials than Thoukydides' more circumscribed subjects. But, even the Lion could smile, as the scholiast (on Thuc. 1.126.3) admitted, acknowledging a different tone and style.

A century later, after Meidias swatted Demosthenes' cheek during Dionysos' theatre festival, the humiliated politician realised that better arguments existed for forgetting and suppressing the story than for publicising it at trial. He faced a lose–lose situation. Community disesteem and dishonour—and the likelihood of being 'laughed out of court' (Dem. 21.222; 54.20)—silenced many wronged parties. Ridicule and insulting laughter surface regularly in ancient Greek contexts as a safer and surer alternative road to revenge. Disrespecting humour was a powerful punishing mechanism of social control in Sparta, Athens,⁷⁰ indeed, all over the Aegean and Mediterranean, as far as meagre evidence allows us to judge.

Such one-upmanship persists in every culture, probably because police forces cannot be everywhere, and choose not to be. Nevertheless, men and women everywhere must address threats and challenges to their face and hierarchical place in their sub-cultures and the dominant culture.

Formal and informal methods regulate differences, status disputes, and annoying deviance. Gossip, public opinion, Athenian legal procedures, Lakonian shaming ceremonies, and violence in every polis assisted premeditated and spontaneous insult for raising and depressing status—one's

ruary 2016). A documentary film of the same title starts from the front page of the *Delaware Gazette*, 16 October 1997. The police wondered whether the crime was talionic revenge or a message to men in general. The women were convicted of sex offenses and kidnapping.

⁷⁰ Hunter (1994) explores formal and informal social controls discoverable in the Attic orators. The *dokimasia* scrutiny of *rhetores* dug deeper than the ordinary citizens' exam, *hoi idiôteuontes* (Aes. *Tim.* 195; Winkler (1990b) 59). MacDowell (1990), Wilson (1991), and Rowe (1993) explore the notorious case of Meidias' public slap and Demosthenes' response(s). Paoli (1947) examines the more brutal assault and battery recorded in Dem. 54. The alleged predator Konon bullied in the street and beat up an alleged law-abiding citizen, Ariston.

own and others'. Aristotle the ever-sane observer insightfully recognised the gut-deep pleasure one may get in committing *hybris* offenses, affirming oneself by *disconfirming* others. As Aristotle says of the motives for such acts, 'for instance, to bring disrepute upon his enemy and/or to please himself' (οἷον τοῦ ἀτιμῆσαι ἐκέλευον ἢ αὐτὸς ἡσθῆναι, *Rhet.* 1374a). Aristotle's acute observation conveniently bridges the no-holds-barred insults of Attic Old Comedy and the claimed historicity of early Greek historians. While a gulf exists between the genres' methods of delivering insults and contents of those humiliating aggressions, the strategies of self-realisation and the materials that they employ overlap. Old Comedy is intensely political, however funny; Classical Historiography is intensely enjoyable (not excluding funny), however political. Both genres flourished amidst a culture of insult in fifth-century Hellas, not least in Athens, an innovating city negotiating unprecedented relationships within the city and beyond Attika. What sort of power differentials separated birth-right aristocrats and birth-right native-born citizens, *hoi polloi* who populated the *ekklésia* and commanded the majority vote? The two genres, both based on narratives, record examples actual and fictional. Comedy, a popular genre that seated every viewer equally for the day and at state expense, and historiography, an elite genre that required many days' attention mostly for a literate audience reading at their own expense,⁷¹ share an infinite curiosity about men (and some women) pushed to their limits, fighting for status or life itself with weapons of steel and tongue—insults to body and person.⁷²

⁷¹ We set aside arguments for live performances that Herodotos may have given in Athens and elsewhere.

⁷² My thanks to Edith Foster and Emily Baragwanath, the organisers of the Association of Ancient Historians panel (2012, Chapel Hill/Durham) for which this paper was written. Both became editors of the present paper and provided clarifications and improvements of all types. If errors remain, they are, as you can easily imagine, entirely my responsibility.

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HUMOUR, ETHNOGRAPHY, AND
EMBASSY: HERODOTUS, *HISTORIES*
3.17–25 AND ARISTOPHANES,
ACHARNIANS 61–133*

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Abstract: This paper explores connections between historiography and Old Comedy by analysing two prominent embassy scenes: first, Herodotus’ depiction of the visit of the ‘Fish Eaters’, chosen emissaries of the Persians, to the court of the Ethiopian king (3.17–25), and second, the scene from Aristophanes, *Acharnians* (61–133) in which Dicaeopolis meets the Athenian ambassadors who have returned from Persia, bringing a Persian ambassador with them. Both the historian and the comic poet employ ethnic humour, the manipulation of stereotypes, deceptive ambassadors, and the theme of food and wine to create the themes and characters of these meetings, and the paper argues that the two scenes evince significant affinities.

In his account of the Fish Eaters’ embassy to the Ethiopian King (3.17–25), Herodotus presents one of the most memorable scenes in the *Histories*. As Mabel Lang has noted, the Fish Eaters’ scene is unique for its length and multitude of speeches—fourteen indirectly quoted and two directly quoted—that signal its importance in the larger work.¹ Indeed, Herodotus not only dramatises the

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¹ Lang (1984) 143. For a recent treatment devoted to the Fish Eaters’ episode from the perspective of its connection to Hippocratic writers and Homer, see Irwin (2014).

interaction between the Persians—through their intermediaries the Fish Eaters—and the Ethiopian king, but also provides narrative motivation for Cambyses' ill-fated march to Ethiopia and subsequent madness. Moreover, the scene has larger thematic significance, for Herodotus offers one of the most prominent negative portrayals of the Persian *nomos* of imperial expansion, a central theme of his work. Thus, on these grounds alone, this scene deserves closer examination.

Yet the style of the passage is as interesting as its substance. To be sure, humour, through the voice of the Ethiopian king directed at Cambyses and the Persians, adds another layer to the text. In his perceptive remarks on this scene, James Romm rightly notes the parallels between the outcome of the larger story and those of tragic drama, but argues that the Ethiopian king's diatribe lies 'at its center' and 'partakes more of satire than of tragedy'. Romm further acknowledges the central role of ethnography in the scene when he qualifies the Ethiopian king's diatribe as '*ethnologic* satire, in that its point is to show the master races of the world humbled in the eyes of indifferent aliens'.² As we will see, Herodotus incorporates purposeful derision of the Persian *nomos* of imperial expansion, the manipulation of stereotypes, deceptive ambassadors, the theme of food and wine, and even a punchline joke.

The variety of comic devices found in the Fish Eaters' embassy scene is indicative of the *Histories* at large. In addition to the opening tongue-in-cheek women-snatching explanation for the conflict between the East and West that sets the tone for the work (1.1–5.2),³ we find such types of humour as derision and witty retorts that highlight speakers' *sophiê* (e.g., 1.153, 3.46, 4.36.2, 6.50, 6.67.1–3, 8.111.2–3, 8.125.1–26.1); humorous deception, where humour and danger are often linked (e.g., 1.60, 2.121, 2.172–3, 3.17–25,

² Romm (1992) 59.

³ To be sure, Herodotus signals that the truths he is interested in are not always what we might expect. Cf. Marincola (2007) 60–7 and Baragwanath (2008) 55–81.

5.18–22);⁴ didactic humour, a type of oblique humour wise advisors use to make their advice more palatable to monarchs (e.g., 1.27.1–5, 1.30–3, 1.71.2–4, 1.88–9, 3.29.1–2, 5.49–51, 7.101–5); and memorialising humour associated with monuments, battles, and political conflicts (e.g., 1.187, 6.126–9, 7.208–10, 7.226, 8.24–5).⁵ Of course the formal comedies of the fifth century also exploited many types of humour, and this suggests a question about the relationship between historiography and Old Comedy.

Scholars have long detected Aristophanic parodies of Herodotus, most notably *Acharnians* 524–9 ~ *Histories* 1.1–5.2, and *Birds* 1124–62 ~ *Histories* 1.179.⁶ The similar patterning in the explanations presented for the start of wars has drawn most scholars to regard *Acharnians* 524–9 as a parody of Herodotus.⁷ Christopher Pelling has argued from a different perspective that Herodotus in *Histories* 1.1–5.2 and Aristophanes in *Acharnians* 524–9 were working in parallel:

... we should see not so much Aristophanes parodying Herodotus, but rather Herodotus and Aristophanes as *doing the same thing* here. Both are ‘parodying’ popular mentality—provided, once again, we do not take ‘parody’ too crudely as a sheer deflating technique, but rather as a provision of a model to build on and refer to.⁸

While I agree with the majority view that Aristophanes is parodying Herodotus’ opening,⁹ Pelling’s formulation that

⁴ See Lateiner (1977) and Dewald (2006), who discuss this variety of humour.

⁵ See Mash (2010) for further discussion.

⁶ In the case of *Birds* 1124–62, scholars tend to agree that Aristophanes’ parody displays specific Herodotean verbal echoes. See Nesselrath (2014) 59–60 for a helpful explication.

⁷ A few scholars are not convinced of this parody, including Fornara (1971) 28 and (1981) 153–5, and MacDowell (1983) 151.

⁸ Pelling (2000) 155.

⁹ While the mention of parody often goes unexplained, Nesselrath (2014) 56, following Perrotta (1926) 108, clarifies: ‘Herodotus strips his

both authors are ‘doing the same thing’ adds a helpful framework for discussing the complexity of the intertextual echoes. *Both* authors have incorporated humour into their accounts with their flippant explanations for the beginnings of major wars; it is not a case of the comic playwright Aristophanes transforming serious historical musings from Herodotus.

In a recent treatment of the passages in *Acharnians* and *Birds* noted above, Heinz-Günther Nesselrath convincingly argues that Aristophanes draws on lectures he attended in alluding in *Acharnians* to *Histories* 1.1–5.2, and then on a written version of the *Histories* later in *Birds*. Yet while Nesselrath regards the connection to the *Histories* of the *Acharnians* passage as less certain than that of the passage from *Birds*, this opinion is grounded mainly on the issue of parody and overstates the case.¹⁰ For the few objectors to the possibility of any such allusion to Herodotus, it seems that *Acharnians*’ lack of explicit verbal signalling, in contrast to its treatment of Euripides,¹¹ indicates either no parody or no connection to the *Histories* at all. This paper considers the affinities between the works of the comic poet and historian, and in this regard the lines from *Acharnians* evince more noteworthy parallels than those from *Birds*. Nesselrath himself hypothesises that the ‘theme of [Herodotus] opening chapters [was] well-suited to a public lecture’ and that ‘[s]uch a lecture might well be remembered for its humorous but also provocative content, and might therefore have been regarded by Aristophanes as well as something suitable to be reworked and integrated into a comedy’.¹² But we can say more than this. In a work as long as the *Histories*, four times the length of the *Iliad*,¹³ what

heroines of their mythical aura and debases them into more or less passive objects of their male abductors: Aristophanes tops this by replacing the princesses with prostitutes’.

¹⁰ Nesselrath (2014) 58.

¹¹ For further discussion of the *Telephus* parody, see Pelling (2000) 139–58.

¹² Nesselrath (2014) 58.

¹³ Baragwanath and Bakker (2010) 3.

section would be more memorable or likely to be recited than its very opening that establishes the historian's authority?

If such a strong connection exists between *Acharnians* 524–9 and *Histories* 1.1–5.2, it should not be surprising to find additional affinities. I do not here emphasise other scattered connections scholars have identified, including *Acharnians* 85–7 (the Persians baking whole oxen in ovens; cf. *Histories* 1.133.1), or *Acharnians* 92 (the King's Eye; cf. *Histories* 1.114.2).¹⁴ Rather I will focus on the Fish Eaters' embassy scene in *Histories* 3.17–25 and the opening embassy scene in *Acharnians* 61–133. Like the Fish Eaters' scene, the *Acharnians* embassy scene stands out for its larger significance. As Margaret Miller has noted, *Acharnians* 61–133 is 'one important and generally untapped fifth-century source' for the evidence it offers about the social context of a Persian embassy. What is more, Miller goes on to assert that the scene includes 'references to cultural oddities (travelling by carriage; unmixed wine; drinking and eating to excess as a test of manhood) [which] may satirise contemporary travel-writers like Herodotos'.¹⁵ Although Miller's only clarification is a footnote reference to Perrotta (1926), who identified a number of scattered 'parodies', not including the Fish Eaters' scene, I hope to show that her declaration is more true than she perhaps expected.

Before we turn to the texts, let us note one specific type of humour that appears in both Herodotus and Aristophanes. Humour that highlights ethnic or political identities is especially prevalent in each author's work. This variety of humour, commonly referred to as 'ethnic humour', makes use of stereotyping, mockery, and ethnocentrism:

¹⁴ See Nesselrath (2014) 54 n. 8 on other scattered parallels between the *Histories* and *Acharnians*.

¹⁵ Miller (1997) 109.

Ethnic humor mocks, caricatures, and generally makes fun of a specific group or its members by the virtue of their ethnic identity; or it portrays the superiority of one ethnic group over others. In addition, its thematic development must be based on factors that are the consequences of ethnicity, such as ethnocentrism, prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination.¹⁶

The appearance of ethnic humour in Herodotus and Aristophanes is not surprising given the historical period in which they were composing their works, for it is an expected anthropological phenomenon during times of war and massive social upheaval¹⁷—precisely the situation in which the Athens of Herodotus’ and Aristophanes’ day found itself due to the earlier Persian Wars, the intellectual revolution and rise of sophistry, and the ongoing Peloponnesian War. We should expect stereotyping of Persians to have intensified as a result of the extensive contact with Persians during the Persian Wars; stereotypes related to peoples from various city-states, especially Athens and Sparta, were already a well-established part of the culture in which both Herodotus and Aristophanes were composing their works.¹⁸

Given the prevalence of ethnic humour during wartime, it is no surprise that it often has an aggressive quality that mimics, in language, the conflicts between people and the differences between their *nomoi*. At the same time that ethnic humour draws attention to the identities of various peoples, it also often disparages, ridicules, and mocks.¹⁹ As

¹⁶ Apte (1985) 139–40. In addition to Apte (1985), see also Raskin (1985), MacHovec (1988), and Davies (1990) on the concept of ethnic humour.

¹⁷ Apte (1985) 132.

¹⁸ On the Greeks’ conception of themselves and others, see Pelling (1997), Harrison (2002), Isaac (2004), Shapiro (2009), and Skinner (2012).

¹⁹ In his comprehensive study on Greek laughter, Halliwell (2008) 12 n. 31 offers an important reminder that this agonistic type of humour was a natural part of Greek culture more generally. See also Halliwell (1991) 283 on the complementary concept of ‘consequential laughter’. Cf. Bergson (1911) and other aggression theorists, whose views of

we will see in the embassy scenes from the *Histories* and *Acharnians*, the concept of ethnic humour helps contextualise important characteristics of each.

I. Herodotus, *Histories* 3.17–25

The Fish Eaters, a tribe of Egyptians from Elephantine, make their sole appearance in the *Histories* as representatives of Cambyses and the Persians at the court of the Ethiopian king. They are sent to spy on the Ethiopians, their so-called Table of the Sun, and the current state of Ethiopian affairs. Cambyses uses these Fish Eaters instead of his own men, as Herodotus tells us, because they know the Ethiopian language.²⁰ Since the Fish Eaters represent the Persian king Cambyses, the Ethiopian king's reactions to them represent his responses to the imperial designs of the Persians and their king. The narrative tells us that Cambyses 'ordered them to say what was needed' (ἐντειλάμενός τε τὰ λέγειν χρῆν, 3.20.1) and to present five gifts to the Ethiopian king: a purple cloak, a golden collar worn around the neck, armlets, an alabaster of perfume, and a jar of palm wine (πορφύρεόν τε εἶμα καὶ χρύσεον στρεπτὸν περιαιχένιον καὶ ψέλια καὶ μύρου ἀλάβαστρον καὶ φοινικηίου οἴνου κάδον, 3.20.1).²¹ By itemising these gifts, Herodotus calls special attention to them and suggests their importance in the engagement that will follow.

While the Fish Eaters proclaim that Cambyses wants to be a guest-friend and ally, and that their purpose is to hold talks with the Ethiopians and to present gifts that the Persian king particularly enjoys using (3.21.1), the Ethiopian

humour often align well with ancient humour. For an overview of the major theories on aggression, release, and incongruity and their various proponents, see Raskin (1985), Parkin (1997), and Ritchie (2004).

²⁰ For more on interpreters in Herodotus, see Harrison (1998) 9–14. Munson (2005) 73–4 notes the rarity of interpreters in the *Histories*, all of whom, like the Fish Eaters, appear in connection with the Persian court.

²¹ See Flory (1987) 97–8 for parallels between this episode and the descriptions of Cyrus and Tomyris.

king immediately recognises that they are spies (*μαθῶν ὅτι κατόπται ἤκοιεν*, 3.21.2) and therefore concludes that their largesse is false. Herodotus gives further weight to the Ethiopian king's response not only by telling us in his authorial voice that the king knew the Fish Eaters were spies, but also by having the king declare so in direct speech. In his speech, the Ethiopian king makes three emphatic points: (1) the Persian king did not send gifts to win his friendship; (2) the Fish Eaters are lying and are really spies; and (3) the Persian king is not a just man (*οὔτε ἐκεῖνος ἀνὴρ ἐστὶ δίκαιος*, 3.21.2).

In his explanation for why the Persian king is not just (*δίκαιος*), the Ethiopian king reiterates his characterisation by saying 'if he were just, he would not desire a land other than his own, and he would not have led people who had done him no wrong into enslavement' (*εἰ γὰρ ἦν δίκαιος, οὔτ' ἂν ἐπεθύμησε χώρας ἄλλης ἢ τῆς ἑωυτοῦ, οὔτ' ἂν ἐς δουλοσύνην ἀνθρώπους ἤγε ὑπ' ὧν μηδὲν ἠδίκηται*, 3.21.2). With these words, the Ethiopian king reveals the Persian *nomoi* that he finds offensive and exposes the deceptions Cambyses had intended to keep hidden.

The Ethiopian king rejects not only the Persian gifts, but also the underlying attempt they represent to appropriate his empire. Yet unlike with the Fish Eaters' gifts, which are presented without explanation, he tells them to make explicit to Cambyses the meaning of his own gift. In this way, the Ethiopian king suggests that Cambyses is unable to understand the intended message of his present, an unstrung bow (3.21.2–3):

And now when you give this bow to Cambyses, say these words: 'The king of the Ethiopians gives advice to the king of the Persians. Whenever the Persians so readily draw this bow, so great in size, he should then march against the long-lived Ethiopians with a larger army than theirs. But until this time, he should thank the gods, who do not put it into the minds of the sons of the Ethiopians to take possession of a land other than their own!'

The Ethiopian king demonstrates his strong position in respect to Cambyses by using the ambassadors he had sent as if they were his own. He also mocks Cambyses by exchanging a single openly warlike gift, an unstrung bow, for Cambyses' train of deceptive and obsequious gifts.²² Just as Cambyses' gifts present a hidden truth, the Ethiopian king's gift also reveals a truth, for the bow suggests that the Persians are weak.²³ Moreover, the Ethiopian king uses the Fish Eaters' responses to his questions about the Persian items as an opportunity to mock Persian *nomoi* and the 'gifts' that embody the deceptive intent of the Fish Eaters' mission (3.22):

After he said these things and unstrung the bow, he handed it to those men who had come. Taking the purple cloak, he asked what it was and how it had been made. When the Fish Eaters said the truth about the dye of the purple fish, he said that the men were deceitful and their cloaks were deceitful. Second, he asked about the gold, the collar worn around the neck, and the armlets. When the Fish Eaters explained the decoration of it, the king, laughing and thinking they were shackles, said they had stronger shackles than these among his own people. Third, he asked about the perfume. When they spoke about its production and the custom of anointing, he said the same thing as he had about the cloak. But when he came to the wine and asked how it was made, he was delighted by the drink and asked what the king ate and how long a Persian man lived. They said he ate bread, explaining the growing of wheat, and that the longest span of life for a man was set at eighty years or less. In response to

²² Lateiner (1989) 29: 'The king of Ethiopia rejected Cambyses' gifts and returned to him a meaningful object, a stiff bow; only when the Persians could easily bend and string it, should they try to subdue independent Ethiopia'.

²³ At the same time, as Flory (1987) 98 argues, the bow 'symbolizes the Ethiopians' warlike strength'.

these things, the Ethiopian said he was not at all amazed that they live few years since they eat manure! For they would not be able to live even this many years if they had not recovered themselves with the drink, indicating the wine to the Fish Eaters. For in this respect, they themselves were beaten by the Persians.

The Ethiopian king methodically examines, asks about, and comments on each gift in the order Herodotus presented earlier in his narrative: the purple cloak, the golden neckband and armlets, the perfume, and the wine. In the Ethiopian king's questions and follow-up comments on the first four Persian gifts, we discover how obvious he finds the Persian trick. Every gift that is Persian in origin has a deceptive nature that reinforces the deceptive nature of the Persian mission via the Fish Eaters. The purple dye disguises the true colour of the fabric, the golden armlets and fetters feebly hide the connection between acceptance of Persian wealth and slavery, and the perfume disguises a person's natural scent.²⁴

The fifth and last item, the wine, shows most clearly the humorous delight the king feels in the *apodexis* of his own *sophiê*²⁵ as he has discovered the Persian deception and found a way to prove it symbolically through the very gifts that were meant to flatter him. Only the wine delights the king and, in turn, encourages him to inquire further about Cambyses' diet and Persian life expectancies.²⁶ The

²⁴ Flory (1987) 98 remarks that '[w]ith a mixture of naïveté, disdain, and shrewdness, the savage king calls the Persian jewellery 'fetters' (*πέδαλι*, 3.22.2), a doubly clever perception since the Persians are enslaved by luxury and the gifts are intended to lure the Ethiopians into slavery to Persia'. Dewald (1993) 58 suggests further that all the objects signify to the Ethiopian king enslavement to Persia, for he 'correctly interprets these tokens as marks of a Persian intent to enslave the Ethiopians'.

²⁵ Cf. Herodotus' *apodexis* of his own *sophiê* when he laughs at other mapmakers in 4.36.2.

²⁶ Romm (1992) 57 notes that Herodotus here follows a tradition, going back to Homer's *Odyssey*, where "'primitive" peoples are unable to resist the effects of wine, that most sublime of advancements wrought by

explanation for the Ethiopian king's question about Persian food at first sight seems to mark a logical progression: if Cambyses' drink is so good, perhaps his food could also be desirable.²⁷ But Herodotus reveals at the end of the passage that the question is actually the first part of a narrative joke. According to the king, it is obvious why the Persians do not live long—they eat manure! Thus, the food characteristic of Persian culture is declared inferior by the Ethiopian king, and, what is more, the Persians are superior to the Ethiopians only in regard to their drink, the wine. Herodotus suggests a final jab about the wine by his earlier description of it in 3.20 as *φοινικῆος*. That is, even though *φοινικῆος* is usually translated as 'palm', the adjective also strongly suggests 'Phoenician', a term that gestures to the stereotypically deceiving nature of Phoenicians that the Ethiopian king finds in the Persians' behaviour here. We might even say that the Ethiopian king perceives another deceptive aspect of the wine, for the Persians have appropriated a product from another culture for themselves and presented it as their own.

The Ethiopian king's inquiry into Persian life expectancies mirrors the ethnographer's tendency to work through different categories, yet at the same time informs us about the disparaging tone of his questioning. He demonstrates what Romm calls a 'bemused frame of mind' when he uses the respondents' own answers as the bases for his mockery of the Persian gifts, which (aside from the wine) are mundane items in Ethiopian society. What is more, as Romm notes, the Persian gifts reveal the Persians' ethnocentrism, which to the Ethiopians 'appears laughably presumptuous; the conquerors of the known world are here reduced to liars, cheats, fools, and eaters of dung (i.e.,

higher civilizations'. At the same time, there is an 'implicit critique of Persian sophistication' since the same wine that the Ethiopian king praises for its positive impact on lifespans has the opposite effect on Cambyses (*ibid.* 57–8). For more on the connection of this scene to Homer, see Irwin (2014) 42–57.

²⁷ Irwin (2014) 32 n. 22 finds another reminder of the focus on cultural diet with the very name of the ambassadors, the Fish *Eaters*.

cereals raised from the manured earth)'.²⁸ When the Ethiopian king points out the Ethiopians' food and drink of boiled meat and milk, their restorative spring, fetters of gold, Table of the Sun, and transparent stone coffins, he further emphasises the superiority of Ethiopian *nomoi* over Persian *nomoi*: '[i]n each case the Ethiopians are seen to obtain from the environment around them the substances which the Persians can only get, ignobly, by manufacture or cultivation'.²⁹ In this way, just as he presents a single truth-bearing Ethiopian gift as superior to the numerous deceptive gifts of the Persians, the Ethiopian king presents the natural wonders of Ethiopia as superior to the manufactured Persian wonders that Cambyses offers as evidence of his superiority. Herodotus therefore uses this scene to indulge in ethnocentric humour by manipulating stereotypes of the Persians and Ethiopians.

There is also a connection between the Ethiopian king and the historian himself. As Matthew Christ has argued, both Herodotus and the Ethiopian king hold negative views of Persian expansionism and are intensely interested in the cultural markers of the Persians. The Ethiopian king, moreover, 'mirrors in his own humorous way the historian's ethnological interest in peoples' longevity, diet and *nomoi* (3.22.3-4)', and like the Ethiopian king, Herodotus 'concedes the superiority of certain Persian *nomoi* (1.136-137) and is also intrigued by the Persian use of wine (1.133)'.³⁰ After the Ethiopian king inquires about the gift of wine, we see how the roles of the Ethiopian king and the historian blur, for the punchline joke emphasises the desirability of Persian wine at the same time as it adds to the general ridicule of Cambyses and Persian *nomoi*.

Herodotus explores the consequences of the Ethiopian king's mockery of Cambyses at length. First, as soon as he hears the Fish Eaters' report, Cambyses hastily sets out against the Ethiopians. He abandons the expedition after a

²⁸ Romm (1992), quotations from 56 and 57 respectively.

²⁹ Romm (1992) 57.

³⁰ Christ (1994) 182.

lack of provisions drives his men to resort to cannibalism (3.25). Here the theme of food takes a gruesome turn when, after they have eaten all the pack animals, plants, and grass, and have reached the desert where no other food is available, the Persians finally consume one other.³¹ Next, we learn of Cambyses' increasingly erratic and murderous behaviour (3.25–34). Herodotus provides a number of plausible explanations for Cambyses' madness, including his megalomania, killing of the Apis bull (which the Egyptians claim as the cause for his madness in 3.30), and murder of his family members and fellow Persians. Yet when the historian finally presents his own opinion, it is noteworthy that he emphasises a different connection, that between his laughter and his madness. Not only does Cambyses laugh at the Egyptian *nomoi* connected with the Apis bull (3.29), but he also mocks the cult statue of Hephaestus and the statues of the Cabiri, which he subsequently burns (3.37). Indeed, it is because Cambyses laughs at religion and *nomoi* that Herodotus declares him mad (3.38.1–2):³²

Now it is entirely clear to me that Cambyses was greatly mad, for he would not otherwise have attempted to laugh at religion and customs. For if someone were to command all men to choose the finest customs of all, each one would choose his own customs once he had seen other people's. Therefore it is not likely that anyone other than a mad man would laugh at such things.

³¹ I would like to thank one of the anonymous readers for drawing my attention to the way the theme of food continues to be found in the aftermath of the Fish Eaters' scene.

³² Cf. Rood (2006) 299, who argues that a more obvious sign of Cambyses' madness is found when he burns Amasis' corpse, since at 3.16 Herodotus tells us that burning a corpse was impious both for Persians and Egyptians. We should not discount the role of humour in Herodotus' account, however, since Herodotus himself focuses explicitly on Cambyses' *laughter* at religious *nomoi* as an undeniable sign of his madness (3.38).

Herodotus' global criticism of laughter at other peoples' *nomoi*, so soon after the Fish Eaters' episode, invites us to reconsider the Ethiopian king's laughter at Persian *nomoi*. How is it that the Ethiopian king, unlike Cambyses, is able to avoid any ill effects of his laughter at *nomoi*? To be sure, the Ethiopian king laughs to discourage the Persians' blind imperialism, which serves no morally sound purpose.

In the Fish Eaters' embassy scene from Herodotus, we have seen the complex relationship between humour and ethnography. Herodotus manipulates stereotypes so that the primitive Ethiopians appear more sophisticated than the civilised Persians as they trump the manufactured Persian gifts with their own natural wonders. The Fish Eaters appear as would-be deceptive ambassadors of the Persian king, but are unable to deceive the wise Ethiopian king. The leitmotif of food, as emphasised by the grain-eating Persians using the fish-eating ambassadors to spy on the meat-eating Ethiopians, is also important. Moreover, there is wine, the only Persian gift that the Ethiopian king praises for its salubrious effects. Ironically, this same wine is later associated with the downfall of Cambyses, who is as unable to control his appetite for wine as he is his appetite for further empire.

As we turn to the embassy scene in Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 61–133, we will see a number of the same elements that Herodotus uses in the Fish Eaters' scene, and also the distinctively different ways that Aristophanes incorporates these elements.

II. Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 61–133

Near the beginning of *Acharnians*, as Dicaeopolis is hoping that Athens will make peace with Sparta, he encounters Athenian ambassadors, just arrived from Persia, along with 'Persian' ambassadors (61–133). In contrast to the scene from Herodotus, the setting is a public assembly in Athens where a number of individuals are introduced in rapid succession, rather than a private embassy with a king in a foreign land with only one party of visitors. Further, the

main character of the embassy scene is not a king, but a just everyman and private citizen, Dicaeopolis. Thus, the affinities to the Fish Eaters' scene are seen through the inversion of a number of key elements. There is a contrast of public vs. private, democratic vs. monarchical, and just vs. unjust that the comedy, in association with the Fish Eaters' scene, brings to mind. In the case of this last pairing, not only does the name of the play's hero Dicaeopolis ('Just City') resonate, but also the Ethiopian king's declaration that Cambyses was not a just man (*δίκαιος*).

In general terms, the play takes up the utopian ideal that is suggested by the Ethiopian king, a just man who minds his own business, in his rebuke of Cambyses. At first, Dicaeopolis' concern is for his city, but when no one listens to him, the play takes a fantastic turn as Dicaeopolis seeks his own private peace.³³ The resources that Dicaeopolis' deme once naturally produced—coal, vinegar, and olive oil—remind us of the resources the Ethiopian king's land produced—gold, restorative springs, and the Table of the Sun. In each environment, these resources are both mundane and fantastic depending on perspective. For the Ethiopian king, the goods his land produces trivialise those the Persians offer as gifts, and appear as wonders to the Fish Eater spies. To Dicaeopolis, the goods his deme produced formerly seemed mundane, but in the context of the war they have become markers of a better time, even a Golden Age, created by peace.³⁴ Moreover, Dicaeopolis considers the commercialisation of these goods by the city a negative development (*Ach.* 32–6) in a way that is reminiscent of the Ethiopian king, who considers the manufactured products of the Persians inferior to the natural resources of the Ethiopians.

³³ Cf. Ste. Croix (1972) 365: 'In the opening scene Dicaeopolis wants his *City* to negotiate for peace with Sparta and, when no one will listen to him, *does what the City ought to have done*, and successfully negotiates for a peace himself—of course it has now to be a private peace, in which he and his family alone share' (italics original).

³⁴ For further discussion of the Golden Age motif in *Ach.*, see Olson (2002) lii–liii.

Unlike the Ethiopian king, Dicaeopolis is compelled to deal not with Persian arrogance, but with the arrogance of ambassadors from his own city who have misused their position for self-enrichment in Persia. As Olson (1991) 200–3 has argued, the play highlights economic disparities associated with the war, and as such, the play targets those who exploit the war for their own gain. In the embassy scene, Aristophanes does not represent Persian wealth as something to disparage, but instead focuses squarely on the well-to-do Athenian ambassadors just arrived from the court of the King of Persia and *their* wealth by association (61–3). Aristophanes refers dismissively to the prominent and fabulously wealthy Persian king,³⁵ yet goes on to call out the Athenian ambassadors for their extravagant appearance. In this way, he manipulates the Persian stereotype by transferring it, in essence, to the Athenian ambassadors. And just as the Ethiopian king immediately perceives the truth about the Fish Eaters, so too does Dicaeopolis about the Athenian ambassadors:

Herald. Ambassadors from the King.

Dicaeopolis. From what king? I am tired of ambassadors and the peacocks and their bragging.

Dicaeopolis' subsequent comments on the Persian dress of the Athenian ambassadors (*βαβαιάξ, ὠκβάτανα, τοῦ σχήματος*, 64) make it possible for him to use the sort of ethnic humour usually targeted at foreigners (and used by the Ethiopian king), to target instead his own countrymen.

The Athenian ambassadors, like the Fish Eaters, further confirm their host's initial judgement with their own words. In each scene, moreover, the host's reactions to the ambassadors' words are negative. When the Athenian ambassadors to Persia ironically complain about the dire circumstances caused by their excessive two drachma per

³⁵ Cf. similar formulations in Herodotus, but where Persian kings ask who the Greeks are: Cyrus about the Lacedaemonians in 1.153, and Darius about the Athenians in 5.105. See also A. *Pers.* 230–45, where Atossa asks a number of questions about Athens, including its location.

diem (66) and the conditions of their luxurious travel (68–71), Dicaeopolis explicitly contrasts the ambassadors' situation to the poor conditions suffered by himself (72–3) and other Athenian farmers who had been compelled to take up residence within the long walls early in the Peloponnesian War. Beyond the perhaps uncomfortable comedy thus generated by his humorous account of the decadent behaviour of the ambassadors, Aristophanes also recalls the economic distress that afflicted many Athenians during the war. By highlighting the struggles created by war, Aristophanes not only wins his audience's favour but also makes more favourable the conditions for his promotion of peace.³⁶

Like Herodotus, Aristophanes suggests an ethnic stereotype of the Persians by focusing on their food and wine, wealth, and excess, but unlike Herodotus, he uses this stereotype to attack not the Persians but the Athenian ambassadors, showing, we might say, the Athenian ambassadors partaking of the gifts the Fish Eaters said the Persian king enjoyed using (3.21.1), and especially the wine. They report that they were forced to drink sweet unmixed wine (*ἄκρατον οἶνον ἡδύν*, 75) from crystal and golden drinking cups (*ἐξ ὑαλίνων ἐκπωμάτων καὶ χρυσίδων*, 74).³⁷ Dicaeopolis' subsequent invocation, in exasperation, of the ancient name of Athens (*ὦ Κραναὰ πόλις*, 75) both suggests a pun on the 'mixed' wine the rest of the Athenians have been

³⁶ Olson (2002) lii puts it well: 'Indeed, the most brilliant literary and social manoeuvre in the play is the way in which it allows an audience made up of average democrats, who collectively exercised absolute authority over the state and individually filled virtually all its offices, to affirm not only that "everyone in power is corrupt" but also that they are all personally victims, who bear no responsibility for the troubles they have got in recent years and who would have been much better off had they not been so stupid as to be taken in by those who claimed to be their friends'.

³⁷ Olson (2002) 94 here calls attention to Plato Com. F 127 and quotes Hdt. 9.80.1 on the Persian spoils of Plataia: 'gold mixing-bowls and libation bowls and other drinking vessels' (tr. Olson).

drinking³⁸ and recalls his idealisation of past times at the beginning of the play.

True to his name, Dicaeopolis is acutely aware of what is right for his city and is not afraid to call out the Athenian ambassadors who selfishly enrich themselves. In this way, he resembles the Ethiopian king in his morally-tinged ridicule of Persian excess. In response to Dicaeopolis' perception that they are mocking Athens (τὸν κατάγελων τῶν πρέσβεων, 76), the ambassadors defend themselves by blaming the Persian *nomoi* for mandating excessive consumption. They try to distance themselves from the Persians by referring to them as 'barbarians' (οἱ βάρβαροι, 77), alleging that Persians admire only those who can drink and eat excessively (τοὺς πλεῖστα δυναμένους φαγεῖν τε καὶ πιεῖν, 78). Although they try to hide behind the excuse of *nomos*, they are exposed for their selfish behaviour in a way reminiscent of the Persians whom the Ethiopian king criticises for their unquenchable desire for further empire. The exchange quickly deteriorates into two types of low humour, sexual—not found in the Fish Eaters' embassy scene—and scatological—which is. The ambassadors' mention of the Great King easing himself for eight months in the Golden Mountains (ἐπὶ χρυσῶν ὄρων, 82) recalls both the Persian connection with gold and the scatological focus of the Ethiopian king's punchline joke.

Culinary wonders are prominent in this scene, just as they are in the Fish Eaters' scene with the Ethiopians' Table of the Sun. Yet if Aristophanes were wanting to highlight Persian culinary wonders, he would need to incorporate material from a part of the *Histories* other than the Fish Eaters' scene (where there is only the wine). In the Fish Eaters' scene, to be sure, Persian food is portrayed as a sort of anti-wonder. Here, on the other hand, the two Persian food-related wonders, oxen baked in pans and giant birds (86–9), are clearly meant to be impressive and awe-

³⁸ Olson (2002) 95 points out a pun here on the verb for 'mixing', *κεράννυμι*: 'while the Ambassadors have been happily drinking their wine neat, the rest of the Athenians have been dutifully diluting theirs'.

inducing. As noted earlier, some scholars have regarded the mention of oxen baked in pans as a parody of Herodotus 1.133.1, where he discusses the custom of wealthy Persians of serving whole animals—oxen, horses, camels, or donkeys—that are baked in ovens, on birthdays.³⁹ Indeed, Herodotus' interest in *thômata* (wonders) throughout his *Histories* and the specific detail about whole-baked animals in his ethnography of the Persians (whose *nomoi* are introduced in *Acharnians* with the entrance of the Athenian ambassadors from Persia) make a parody of Herodotus 1.133.1 very likely. Aristophanes reworks the information Herodotus presents in *Histories* 1.133.1 as part of a straightforward ethnography of the Persians in order to magnify the fabulous nature of Persian meal-preparation and thus ridicule the ambassadors who have handsomely benefitted from their official role while the people of Athens have been suffering from the war.

The ambassadors' mention of giant birds—three times the size of Cleonymus—underscores the intent of the derision, for the Persian culinary wonder is here explicitly linked to a crony of Cleon known for his gluttony.⁴⁰ Thus, if there was any doubt about how to interpret these *thômata*, Aristophanes removes it when he ties the wondrous giant birds to corrupt Athenian officials. In this way, Aristophanes uses the Persian wonders to encourage his audience to focus on the ambassadors' decadent behaviour. Whereas the identities of the Ethiopians and Persians are defined by their diet in the *Histories*, in this scene the Persian

³⁹ E.g. Starkie (1909) 30 and Wells (1923) 174. Olson (2002) liii cites Wells' reference to the whole-baked oxen (*Ach.* 85–6 ~ Hdt. 1.133.1) and conspicuously does not counter the possibility of an allusion to Herodotus, as he does the supposed connection to the King's Eye (*Ach.* 91–2 ~ Hdt. 1.114.2). In this way he seems to acknowledge at least some connection. See Olson (2002) 99 for examples of 'other creatures or substantial parts of creatures roasted whole, generally in contexts involving gustatory excess or exaggeration'. Nesselrath (2014) 56–7 is less dismissive of the possible reference to Hdt. 1.133.1 than of other scattered references to Herodotus that some scholars have identified. See Nesselrath (2014) 56–7 n. 8 for further bibliography.

⁴⁰ Henderson (1997) 27 n. 89.

wonders define the character of the Athenian ambassadors.

If Aristophanes here plays on a detail from Herodotus about Persian food—oxen baked whole—it is also likely that he took from the historian something about the Persians and their love for wine. Indeed, in addition to the positive portrayal of Persian wine in the Fish Eaters' scene, in the same section of the *Histories* where we learn about the custom of roasting whole animals, Herodotus observes the Persians' fondness for wine (οἴνω δὲ κάρτα προσκέαται, 1.133.3). He then expands on this statement by presenting an ethnographically interesting and surprising description of the ways Persians go about their decision-making process in alternately sober and drunken states (1.133.4).⁴¹ On the other hand, rather than adding Persian ethnographic curiosities, Aristophanes magnifies particular aspects of this Persian *nomos* to suit his comedic purposes of lampooning the ambassadors: the undiluted (ἄκρατον, 75) quality of the wine, as well as the excessively opulent vessels from which the Athenian ambassadors consume it.

Whereas the Fish Eaters' embassy scene consists primarily of an extended conversation between two parties, Aristophanes shifts our attention to a variety of characters, the last of whom are the King's Eye Pseudartabas and his accompanying eunuchs (91–122).⁴² In the portrayal of Pseudartabas, whom Chiasson rightly calls a 'caricature of a Persian magistrate',⁴³ we see how Aristophanes includes elements not found in Herodotus' Fish Eaters' scene. First, we have here an actual Persian,⁴⁴ who presents a message through the filter of a foreign language, whereas in

⁴¹ Dewald (1998) 608 (n. to 1.133) observes the similar behaviour of the Germans in Tac. *Germ.* 22.

⁴² On the complexities in this part of the embassy scene, see Chiasson (1984) 131–6.

⁴³ Chiasson (1984) 132.

⁴⁴ Although some scholars believe Pseudartabas is an actually an Athenian disguised as a Persian, Chiasson (1984) 133 makes a convincing case that this character was meant to be Persian. I am less convinced by Chiasson's argument (*ibid.* 134) that the eunuchs, too, were Persian.

Herodotus' embassy scene the Fish Eaters represent the Persians because they know the Ethiopian language. Second, while Herodotus does not draw our attention to the Fish Eaters' use of a foreign language, Aristophanes puts Pseudartabas' language on display. Moreover, Pseudartabas' laughable costume as a giant eye sets up the expectation that whatever he says will be ridiculous. Aristophanes challenges the audience's expectations, however, by making the object of laughter not the Persian Eye, who is unwaveringly clear in his pronouncement, but the Athenians (first Dicaeopolis, and then the ambassadors) who cannot understand the Persian Eye's speech. Pseudartabas' first utterance—*ἰαρταμὸν ἐξάρξαν ἀπισσόνα σάτρα*, 100—is apparent gibberish that Dicaeopolis cannot comprehend, though the ambassador interprets it to mean that the Great King will send gold.⁴⁵ When the ambassador tells the King's Eye to say the word 'gold' more loudly and clearly (*λέγε δὴ σὺ μείζον καὶ σαφῶς τὸ χρυσίον*, 103), Pseudartabas responds with another mock-Persian reply that both indicates that they will not get gold and also labels the ambassador as an effeminate Ionian (*οὐ λῆψι χρυσό χαννόπρωκτ' Ἴαοναῦ*, 104),⁴⁶ a type of sexualised ethnic insult not found in the Ethiopian king's diatribe.

We are reminded here of a common pattern in each embassy scene: the attempt to control the language of the ambassadors. Herodotus tells us that the Persian king Cambyses ordered the Fish Eaters what to say (3.20.1), and the Fish Eaters recite their script dutifully. In the scene from *Acharnians*, the Athenian ambassador indicates that the Persian king has ordered Pseudartabas what to say (98–9), though it seems that the ambassador is trying to interpret

⁴⁵ For further discussion, see Davies (2002) 166, Colvin (1999) 288–9 and 294, and Chiasson (1984) 131–6.

⁴⁶ Olson (2002) 106 notes the derogatory tone of Ἴαοναῦ: 'according to Hdt. 1.143.3 not only the Athenians but many of the other Ionians disliked being called by the name. Ar., at any rate, uses 'Ionian' elsewhere only of a non-Athenian (*Pax* 46), and the word and its cognates seem to have strong overtones of cowardice, effeminacy, and the like in 5th- and 4th-c. literature'.

Pseudartabas' message to serve his own purposes: to convince Dicaeopolis that the Persian king will provide monetary support to Athens against Sparta. Pseudartabas provides an effective foil to the Fish Eaters in his refusal to play a passive role, whether he comically refuses to follow instructions from the Athenian ambassador or whether he surprises the ambassador by blurting out the truth.

While Dicaeopolis, like the Ethiopian king, perceives at once a truth the visiting ambassadors are trying to conceal, it takes him longer to determine the situation with Pseudartabas. It seems that the addition of a true foreigner, Pseudartabas, clouds Dicaeopolis' ability to detect deception. When the ambassador tries to reassure Dicaeopolis that Pseudartabas really means they will be getting gold from the Persian king, Dicaeopolis figures out a way to extract the truth: he threatens to beat him severely (*σε βάψω βάμμα Σαρδιανικόν*, 112).⁴⁷ The truth emerges from the simplest of questions and responses: (1) would they receive gold from the Persian king?—a nod of no, and (2) were the ambassadors deceiving him?—a nod of yes. Yet the clues that confirm the truth for Dicaeopolis are Greek and relate to *nomoi*, for he notices the attendant 'Persian' eunuchs' 'Greek' way of nodding (*Ἑλληνικόν γ' ἐπένευσαν ἄνδρες οὔτοιί*, 115) and discovers that the silent characters are actually two notorious Athenian eunuchs. Here it is not foreigners who work to deceive the host, as the Persians do in Fish Eaters' scene, but Dicaeopolis' fellow Athenians. Thus, while in both embassy scenes we find the use of deceptive ambassadors who are not able to deceive a wise host, the orientation of attack differs. To be sure, Aristophanes presents both Athenian and Persian

⁴⁷ Cf. comic tone of the Persian/Greek encounter in Hdt. 3.130.2, where Darius threatens to bring out whips and spikes, and suddenly the Greek Democedes admits that he knows about medicine, though he is not quite a doctor! One of the anonymous readers also points out to me that Dicaeopolis' threat here of *basanizein* indicates what was normally done to slaves, and therefore we witness inter-ethnic profiling, with the Persians identified as slaves of their king and treated as such by the freeborn Athenians.

ambassadors, but holds up only the corrupt Athenians for ridicule.

As in Herodotus' narrative, where the report of the Fish Eaters' encounter with the Ethiopian king and his mocking gift of the bow cause Cambyses to set out hastily for an ill-fated attack, the embassy scene in *Acharnians*, too, serves an important causal purpose in the play's development. Dicaeopolis' frustrations culminate at the end of the scene, when the herald announces that the Council invites the King's Eye to dine in the Prytaneum (123–5).⁴⁸ When this happens, Dicaeopolis loses both his patience and his hope for peace with Sparta. He asks Theorus to arrange a private peace for himself and his family, and thus we see how the embassy scene sets in motion the remainder of the play. Indeed, both Aristophanes and Herodotus use these embassy scenes to drive their narratives in significant ways, and in each text the host emerges victorious. Through the use of purposeful humour, the authors also draw our attention back to the embassy scenes long after they have concluded and thereby encourage our active reflection. As Jeffrey Henderson suggests, it is in the first part of *Acharnians* where the most serious thought is found:

Aristophanes invites the spectators to identify in fantasy with Dicaeopolis and thus indulge in some vicarious wish-fulfilment. For a while an escapist vision lets them forget the hardships of the war. But Aristophanes surely hoped that the urgings of the first part of the play—that the spectators re-examine the rationale for continued war and be more critical of their leaders—would not be forgotten when the spectators left the theater.⁴⁹

While the embassy scenes function in similar causal ways in each text, however, the subsequent narratives evolve in opposite directions: Herodotus uses the Fish Eaters' scene to

⁴⁸ Olson (2002) 111–12 notes that the Assembly as a whole and not the Council issued these sorts of invitations, a misrepresentation consistent with the anti-democratic tone of the scene.

⁴⁹ Henderson (1997) 21.

dramatise the tragedy of the mad Cambyses and those who suffered at his hands, while at the end of *Acharnians* Dicaeopolis merrily dances off stage with his own undiluted wine and dancing girls. Thus, we see how each author uses a similar type of scene for very different purposes.

In *Acharnians* there is a connection between Dicaeopolis and Aristophanes, just as there is a connection between the Ethiopian king and Herodotus in the *Histories*. In fact, as Ste. Croix stresses, ‘alone of Aristophanes’ characters of whom we know anything, [Dicaeopolis] is *carefully and explicitly identified by the poet with himself*, not merely once but in two separate passages: lines 377–82 and 497–503.⁵⁰ Underlying this connection between writer and character is a didactic intention that is made strikingly explicit, much more so than in Herodotus. Dicaeopolis says that ‘comedy, too, knows what is right/just’ (τὸ γὰρ δίκαιον οἶδε καὶ τρυγωδία, 500) and even though he might make his audience uncomfortable, he will nevertheless be speaking justly (ἐγὼ δὲ λέξω δεινὰ μὲν δίκαια δέ, 501).⁵¹ Later, the chorus leader claims that the poet has rescued the people from being deceived by foreigners’ words (ξενικῶσι λόγοις, 634) and from falling victim to flattery, for previously ambassadors from other cities had only to call them ‘violet-crowned’ (ἰοστεφάνους) to deceive them (636–7). Here again, we are reminded of Dicaeopolis at the beginning of the play and his singular ability to detect the truth, and also of the Ethiopian king in the *Histories* in his inability to be deceived.⁵² By allowing their audiences to enjoy the

⁵⁰ Ste. Croix (1972) 363 (italics original). Cf. Olson (2002) 172–3.

⁵¹ Starkie (1909) 105 observes the significance of the connection between justice in this scene (500–1, 645, 655, 661) and the etymology of the speaker’s name in light of the charge of ἀδικία brought against Aristophanes the previous year.

⁵² Cf. Ste Croix (1972) 365: ‘One of the main functions of the introductory scene in the *Acharnians* (1–173), which occupies nearly an eighth of the play, is to establish Dicaeopolis as the one really sagacious man in Athens, who is shrewd enough to see through all deceptions, even when all those around him are being taken in: see especially lines 71–2, 79, 86–7, 105–7, 109 ff., 125–7, 135, 137, 161–3. The consistency of the portrait is remarkable.’

experiences of *not* being duped and *not* falling victim to flattery, Aristophanes and Herodotus set the proper stage to instruct their audiences. As Aristophanes asserts through the voice of his chorus leader, he provides frank instruction so that his audience will not be flattered, tempted, or deceived, but will find true happiness (*Ach.* 655–8, tr. Henderson (1997) 56):

But don't you ever let him go,
 for in his plays he'll say what's right.
 He says he'll give you good instruction,
 bringing you true happiness,
 and never flatter, never tempt you,
 never diddle you around,
 deceive or soften you with praise, but
 always say what's best for you.

With these words, Aristophanes offers guidance for understanding his aims more generally and also establishes his own authority in a way that recalls Herodotus in his proem. He does not say anything about his concern with *entertaining* his audience, which would be taken for granted in comedy. Rather, he explicitly pleads for his audience to look beyond its own amusement to reflect on the larger issues he is raising. Here we see a strong parallel to Herodotus, whose audiences surely would have expected and appreciated both instruction and entertainment.⁵³

When we consider the lingering effects of each of the embassy scenes, we notice how Herodotus and Aristophanes both encourage our active reflection on the issues they have raised, especially through their use of reversals of expectation and entertaining instruction. In this way, each invites his audience to ponder its own political realities, and thereby reminds us of a fundamental affinity of historiography and Old Comedy.

⁵³ Cf. Shimron (1989) 60.

III. Conclusion: Embassy Scenes in Herodotus and Aristophanes

A comparison of the embassy scenes in Herodotus' *Histories* (3.17–25) and Aristophanes' *Acharnians* (61–133) demonstrates a wide range of connections between the two. I have explored affinities that illuminate some of the broader relationships between historiography and Old Comedy of fifth-century Athens. More commonly noted have been connections between Herodotus and Aristophanes through parody: but parody represents only one way that Aristophanes could make use of Herodotus' work.

In *Acharnians*, there is not the same abundance of Herodotean verbal echoes as there is in *Birds* because, as Nesselrath has argued, Aristophanes was likely working from lectures he had heard rather than from a written text. Affinities to Herodotus in patterning are therefore even more likely in this particular play. Much like the opening section of the *Histories* that Aristophanes parodies in *Acharnians* 524–9, Herodotus' Fish Eaters' scene has humorous aspects that may have drawn Aristophanes' attention for the purpose of reworking in the same play.

In his essay on the malice of Herodotus, Plutarch provides a helpful catalogue of many of the *Histories*' most humour-laden and memorable passages. Despite writing much later than Herodotus, Plutarch offers us insight into an ancient audience's perception of Herodotus' humour.⁵⁴ In terms of specific connections between the *Histories* and *Acharnians*, it is noteworthy that Plutarch targets both Herodotus' opening (*Mal. Her.* 856F) and the Fish Eaters' scene (*Mal. Her.* 863D; tr. Bowen (1992) 57):

⁵⁴ van Lennep (1969) 123 observes the importance of Plutarch's essay for identifying humour in Herodotus. Cf. also Dewald (2006) 158: 'In some respects, Plutarch is a better reader of [Herodotus' humour] than many of Herodotus' modern commentators'. When we reflect on Plutarch's perception of the malice of Herodotus, whom he terms a 'barbophile' (*φιλοβάρβηρος*, *Mal. Her.* 12, 857A), we find that Plutarch equates it with *ethnic* attacks.

Why not adopt what Herodotus himself says (3.22) that the Ethiopian said about Persian perfume and purple clothes, that the myrrh was a pretence and the garments a pretence, and so say to him that his words are a pretence and his history a pretence, ‘all twisted, nothing sound, all back to front’?

Plutarch’s essay offers evidence about social memory because it reiterates portions of the *Histories*, like the Fish Eaters’ scene, that may have developed a life of their own apart from the larger text. These same scenes would likely have made ideal recitations that were known before the written version of the text was circulated. Also noteworthy in each instance—*Acharnians* 61–133 and 524–9—is Aristophanes’ compression of the Herodotean material, and the simplification of subject matter and narrative presentation, a technique not surprising for comedy. The webs of causation that result from the Fish Eaters’ report about the Ethiopian king and his gift of the bow are much too complex to work in comedy. We find instead a much more abbreviated scene in *Acharnians* that offers a simplified causal proposition: if Dicaeopolis cannot get his polis to seek peace, he has to seek his own *private* peace.

The anthropological concept of ethnic humour, which includes the use of stereotypes, caricature, and ethnocentrism, is relevant to the discussion of affinities between Herodotus and Aristophanes because this variety of humour would have been expected in fifth-century Athens, which had and was experiencing both war and social upheaval. Perhaps it is complete coincidence that Herodotus and Aristophanes both chose to include embassy scenes with elements in common, and ones that produce ethnic humour, and the presence of this type of humour is a phenomenon to be explained only by their shared cultural and intellectual milieu. Yet it is hard to dismiss the many other affinities between the two scenes. These include some prominent inversions: scene (private vs. public), type (monarchical vs. democratic), host (king vs. private citizen), and ambassadors (Persian ambassadors, via the Fish Eaters,

vs. Athenian ambassadors from Persia). There are also striking similarities: the focus on goods produced naturally vs. manufactured (Ethiopian vs. Persian in Herodotus) or commercialised (Dicaeopolis' deme before the war vs. Athens during war); the theme of food and wine; the hosts' ability immediately to perceive truths that the ambassadors try to conceal; the manipulation of stereotypes (in the Fish Eaters' scene, of uncivilised vs. civilised Ethiopians vs. Persians; in *Acharnians*, the transference of Persian *nomoi* onto the Athenian ambassadors for the purpose of derision); the connection between the Ethiopian king's declaration that Cambyses was not a 'just' (*dikaios*) man (3.21.2) and Aristophanes' featuring of a hero named Dicaeopolis; the strong connection between the host and author in each scene (Ethiopian king ~ Herodotus, Dicaeopolis ~ Aristophanes); and the causal significance of the embassy scenes in each work.

In addition to its humour, Herodotus' embassy scene would have also been particularly attractive to Aristophanes for reworking because of the current historical situation: the fact that both Athens and Sparta were seeking financial support from the Persian king would have made reference to all things Persian even more engaging. That Herodotus presented such an entertaining and thought-provoking embassy scene connected to Persia would have made it all the more ripe for the comic poet's own repurposing.

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THE DEATH OF NICIAS: NO LAUGHING MATTER

Daniel P. Tompkins

Abstract: Thucydides' brief obituary for Nicias (7.86.2) is instructively challenging. Scholars largely agree that the historian 'respects', 'praises', 'endorses', or 'pities' Nicias, without 'scorn or irony': but their agreement is nervous, since its authors have also keenly noted Nicias' political, strategic and tactical mistakes. Thucydides' text is 'nervous', too. Surprises, double meanings, and incongruities permeate both the obituary and the broader arc of the Nicias narrative, creating a discursive zone or borderland that has structural similarities to comedy. The text is grim, not 'funny', but viewing it through a comic prism reveals new and important levels of meaning.

I. 'I Watch Thucydides': The Power of Language in Thucydides

Basil Gildersleeve's comment on Greek particles remains a model of Thucydidean scholarship:

I try to learn Greek from my Thracian, and when there is question as to the significance of the particles ... I watch Thucydides ... *τοι* is an appeal for human sympathy, as *που* is a resigned submission to the merciless *rerum natura*—submission to the *ἀνάγκη* of life, the *ἀνάγκη* of death ... *τοι* has been called the 'confidential' particle ... Now turn to the three passages with *τοι* in Thucydides. One is in Perikles' funeral oration (2.41.4 [*μετὰ μεγάλων δὲ σημείων καὶ οὐ δὴ τοι ἀμάρτυρόν*]); one is in Kleon's harangue against the Lesbians ... (3.40.4); and one in Nicias' final speech

to his soldiers ... (7.77.2). A quiver in the face of Thucydides is always worth noticing.¹

‘Quiver in the face’ deftly alerts readers to tremulous passages in Thucydides that too often remain unexplored: just as many Homerists rejected tonal variation and individual motivation after Milman Parry revealed the extent of traditional formulae, K. J. Dover’s dismissal of ‘individual characterization’ in Thucydidean speeches found few challengers.²

Remarkably, it was Parry’s son, Adam Parry, who probed the tension between tradition and individual talent, between inherited formulae and authorial independence, that his father’s work had seemed to discourage. Preternaturally alert to nuance, influenced in part by Empson’s *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, Adam Parry brought to historical and epic texts a mind attuned to lyric. He responded to vivid moments in both Homer and Thucydides, to the jarring formulae, jagged narrative edges, and tiny particles, like $\gamma\epsilon$ at *Iliad* 16.61, that upended assumptions of authorial stolidity.³ It was language, Parry argued, that elevated Achilles’ complaint against Agamemnon into a challenge to the entire Homeric value system, and language, again, that transformed Thucydides’ plague narrative from routine Hippocratic symptomatology into ‘compassionate poetry’: ‘incommensurability’, he said, the unexpected dynamism of words, complicated and enriched our reading of these texts.⁴

¹ Gildersleeve (1930) 257.

² Dover (1973) 21.

³ On $\gamma\epsilon$: personal conversation, 1965.

⁴ Parry (1956), (1969) 176, and (1970). For brief but rewarding considerations of Adam Parry’s use of his father’s work, see Rose (1992) 46–8 and (2012) 112–14.

II. Single Words, Double Valences

Thucydides' 'incommensurables' derail expectations. Here is Pericles on the 'deathless memorials' Athenians established (2.41.4):

πανταχοῦ δὲ μνημεῖα κακῶν τε καὶ ἀγαθῶν ἀίδια
ξυγκατοικίσαντες.

... jointly establishing—like colonies!—deathless memorials of good and bad things.⁵

But why *κακῶν*? What 'evils' does the city memorialise? Wilamowitz understands Pericles to be referring to Athenians whose efforts sometimes failed, bringing woes on themselves:

Dass die Athener 455 bei Memphis untergegangen sind, beweist Athens Grosse nicht weniger, als dass sie am Eurymedon gesiegt haben.⁶

The Athenian defeat at Memphis [Thuc. 1.109–10] reveals the city's greatness no less than the victory at Eurymedon.

On the other hand, Friedrich Nietzsche insisted, more brutally but with equal philological soundness, that the Athenians imposed *κακά* on their subjects:

Das Raubtier, die prachtvolle nach Beute und Sieg lüstern schweifende blonde Bestie ... Zum Beispiel wenn Perikles seinen Athenern sagt, in jener berühmten Leichenrede, 'zu allem Land und Meer hat

⁵ I have tried here to draw attention to the imperializing metaphor in *ξυγκατοικίσαντες*. *κακῶν τε καὶ ἀγαθῶν* is the text preferred by Alberti (1972). Here and elsewhere in this essay, uncredited translations are the author's.

⁶ Wilamowitz (1908) 98; the comment is also quoted by Müller (1958) 172.

unsere Kühnheit sich den Weg gebrochen, unvergängliche Denkmale sich überall im Guten und Schlimmen aufrichtend'.⁷

The carnivore, the roaming blond beast splendidly craving loot and triumph ... For example, when Pericles says of his Athenians, in that well-known Funeral Speech, 'Our daring has cleared a trail to every land and sea, building imperishable memorials to itself for good and terrible things'.

No internal metric determines which interpretation to prefer. Undoubtedly, Athens causes suffering, just as Nietzsche suggests. At the same time, *μνημεῖα ... ἀΐδια* and Wilamowitz's gloss call to mind the sufferings of Athenians, as memorialised in the Athenian list of Erechtheid dead found in Cyprus, Egypt, and Phoenicia.⁸

Must we choose between these? Or might Nietzsche's exuberant endorsement of conquest coexist with Wilamowitz' emphasis on suffering? Pericles' single word, *κακῶν*, generates both outcomes, justifying both readings and creating a double valence of interpretation. That *κακῶν τε καὶ ἀγαθῶν* plays on a keystone of the Greek moral tradition, *καλὸς κἀγαθός*, raises its prominence and heightens the tension.⁹

Similar interpretative doubling occurs elsewhere in the text, both in speeches, where the speakers deploy it as a rhetorical device, and in narrative. The Corinthians at

⁷Nietzsche (1878) 1.11; Müller (1958) 171–2.

⁸ Meiggs and Lewis (1969) 73–7. Christopher Pelling pointed this passage out to me.

⁹ This passage has attracted some fine commentary. See particularly by Flashar (1969) 26–27 = Flashar (1989) 454–455, though Flashar seems to shift from initially rejecting Nietzsche to accepting what Nietzsche proposes: that the passage celebrates 'the proud imperial character of the conquering power'. Tobias Joho, Bernd Seidensticker, and Vincent J. Rosivach assisted me as I worked on the Nietzsche passage, which certainly invites a much fuller discussion. I am indebted here to comments by Freud and Susan Stewart on 'simultaneity' (*Gleichzeitigkeit*): Freud (1960) 155 or (1999) 248; Stewart (1979) 161, 168.

Sparta, for instance, criticise the paradoxical Spartan practice of ‘defending themselves by delay’, τῆ μελλήσει ἀμυνόμενοι (1.69.4):

ἡσυχάζετε γάρ, μόνοι Ἑλλήνων, ὧ Λακεδαιμόνιοι, οὐ τῆ δυνάμει τινά, ἀλλὰ τῆ μελλήσει ἀμυνόμενοι, καὶ μόνοι οὐκ ἀρχομένην τὴν αὐξήσιν τῶν ἐχθρῶν διπλασιουμένην δὲ καταλύοντες.

You, Spartans, alone among Greeks stay tranquil, repelling foes by delay rather than force, and you alone crush your enemies’ growth not at the outset, but after it has doubled.

The speakers then exploit the adjective ἀσφαλεῖς to show that Sparta’s behaviour has harmed both herself and her allies (1.69.5):

καίτοι ἐλέγεσθε ἀσφαλεῖς εἶναι, ὧν ἄρα ὁ λόγος τοῦ ἔργου ἐκράτει. τὸν τε γὰρ Μῆδον αὐτοὶ ἴσμεν ἐκ περάτων γῆς πρότερον ἐπὶ τὴν Πελοπόννησον ἐλθόντα ἢ τὰ παρ’ ὑμῶν ἀξίως προαπαντῆσαι, καὶ νῦν τοὺς Ἀθηναίους οὐχ ἐκάς, ὥσπερ ἐκεῖνον, ἀλλ’ ἐγγὺς ὄντας περιορᾶτε, καὶ ἀντὶ τοῦ ἐπελθεῖν αὐτοὶ ἀμύνεσθαι βούλεσθε μᾶλλον ἐπιόντας, καὶ ἐς τύχας πρὸς πολλῶ δυνατωτέρους ἀγωνιζόμενοι καταστῆναι, ἐπιστάμενοι καὶ τὸν βάρβαρον αὐτὸν περὶ αὐτῶ τὰ πλείω σφαλέντα, καὶ πρὸς αὐτοὺς τοὺς Ἀθηναίους πολλὰ ἡμᾶς ἤδη τοῖς ἀμαρτήμασιν αὐτῶν μᾶλλον ἢ τῆ ἀφ’ ὑμῶν τιμωρία περιγεγεννημένους, ἐπεὶ αἱ γε ὑμέτεραι ἐλπίδες ἤδη τινὰς που καὶ ἀπαρασκευόους διὰ τὸ πιστεῦσαι ἔφθειραν.

Too, you were called ‘secure’: the word did not match the deed. We know that Persia reached the Peloponnese from the end of the earth before you confronted her appropriately, and now you disregard Athens, which is not remote like Persia but a neighbour, and instead of attacking, you prefer to repel her when she is attacking, and pitting yourself against a

more powerful opponent to rely on chance, despite your awareness that Persia's failure was self-inflicted, and that we have survived against the Athenians themselves more because of their own errors than thanks to aid from you, since hopes placed in you have destroyed men who were unprepared, owing to their trust in you.

For Gomme, ἀσφαλεῖς were “men that can be relied upon” ... not “cautious” (Stahl), or “safe” ... The word points forward to αἴ γε ὑμέτεροι ἐλπίδες¹⁰. That is: ‘You have been called ἀσφαλεῖς, “reliable”. But your ἀσφάλεια has tripped up your allies, whose trusting hopes in you have proved damaging’. ἀσφαλεῖς invokes both σφάλλω, in the active voice, and equally legitimately, σφάλλομαι in the middle voice, to implying that Sparta herself would be secure, would not trip up. In this sense, the sentence points not forward to the disappointed allies, but backward to τῇ μελλήσει ἀμυνόμενοι (1.69.4): You relied not on force but on delay to defend yourselves, allowing a far larger hostile force to attack....

The fecund ambiguity of ἀσφαλεῖς thus accommodates, or inspires, two divergent interpretations, and ἄρα in ὧν ἄρα ὁ λόγος τοῦ ἔργου ἐκράτει emphasises two truths that have long been ignored: in the Corinthians' λόγος, Sparta's reputation is an illusion or λόγος (of ‘security’) that endangers not only the allies but Sparta herself.¹¹

‘Double valences’ appear in some but not all Thucydidean speeches. The Corinthians' use of ἀσφαλεῖς embarrasses the Spartans. Pericles' κακῶν τε καὶ ἀγαθῶν seems less cunning, less deliberate, but still meaningful, since it alerts us, the readers, to profoundly different outcomes of Athenian imperialism, as well as to the latent volatility of Thucydidean language.

¹⁰ Gomme (1950) *ad loc.*

¹¹ On ἄρα: Denniston (1954) 36. Examples of Spartan λόγοι condemning λόγοι: 1.84.3 and 1.86.3.

III. Nicias and ‘Prudence’ at Athens

‘Incongruity’, one critic remarks, ‘can be regarded as a contradiction of the cognitive scheme; in Wittgensteinian terms, as a rule that has not been followed’.¹² For an example in Thucydides, consider the passage at 4.28.5. Contemporary Americans may find the Pylos expedition difficult to comprehend: who could imagine local grandees hoping for the failure of an expedition, with the inevitable loss of American lives, simply in order to be rid of the commander? But failure is precisely what Cleon’s foes desired (4.28.5):

τοῖς δὲ Ἀθηναίοις ἐνέπεσε μὲν τι καὶ γέλωτος τῇ
κουφολογίᾳ αὐτοῦ, ἀσμένους δ’ ὅμως ἐγίγνετο τοῖς
σώφροσι τῶν ἀνθρώπων, λογιζομένοις δυοῖν ἀγαθοῖν τοῦ
ἐτέρου τεύξεσθαι, ἢ Κλέωνος ἀπαλλαγῆσεσθαι, ὃ μᾶλλον
ἤλπιζον, ἢ σφαλῆσαι γνώμης Λακεδαιμονίουσιν σφίσι
χειρώσεσθαι.

At his idle talk, a certain hilarity even overcame the Athenians, but the ‘prudent’ among them were delighted, reasoning that they would get one of two good things: be rid of Cleon, which they rather preferred, or, if they failed, to overcome the Spartans.¹³

Cleon’s antics amused ‘the prudent’ (τοῖς σώφροσι), who savored the chance to be rid of him, or, as a second option, victory over Spartans.

A. G. Woodhead (who says Athens was ‘playing ducks and drakes’ in this decision) and W. R. Connor point out the danger the expedition faced. Reviewing earlier scholarship, H. D. Westlake remarked, ‘It has often been noted that the behaviour of Nicias is not at all creditable: he

¹² Vandaele (2002) 227.

¹³ As Gomme notes on 1.70.6, γνώμη is ‘all that is not σῶμα, intellect as well as will; if anything, intellect more than will’. The volitional element in γνώμης and the desiderative side of ἤλπιζον are both important here. Otherwise δυοῖν ἀγαθοῖν would have no force.

is seen to have been willing, even eager, to shirk his duty and resign his command ... Thucydides neither condemns nor defends the attitude of Nicias: he ignores it'.¹⁴ To say, 'He ignores it', however, misses a crucial incongruity, perhaps because *σώφροσι*, prosaic and uncoloured, flew beneath critics' radar. How, we must ask, could 'prudent' men hope for disaster, how can mission failure be deemed a 'good', *ἀγαθόν*, and victory a 'mistake', as signaled by *σφαλεῖσι γνώμης*?¹⁵ All but one of the more than twenty occurrences of *σώφρων*, *σωφρόνως*, and *σωφροσύνη* in Thucydides concern restrained, oligarchic, or conservative, behaviour, often in international relations. Only here is *σώφρων* deployed ironically, tagging the real imprudence of 'safe-thinking' men who by selecting an apparent incompetent put Athenians at risk. Thucydides neither explicitly links Nicias with, nor distinguishes him from, these enemies of Cleon.

With *σώφροσι*, lexical prudence collides with imprudence on the level of action: the word emphasises that Thucydides is not 'ignoring' Nicias' attitude.

IV. Using and Avoiding Fortune

Four years after the Pylos affair, two motivations for signing the Peace of Nicias crystallise in the single word, *τύχη* (5.16.1):

¹⁴ See Woodhead (1960) 315, Connor (1984) 115 n. 2, Gomme (1956) 469, Hornblower (1996) 188, Westlake (1968) 88. West (1924) 213 is less concerned, commenting with breathtakingly good sense: 'Demosthenes was a capable officer, and affairs would be well managed if he was second in command, nor would they probably go any better if Nicias was on the ground. There was no more need for the presence of Nicias than there was for the presence of Cleon.' But West is describing the military situation, while Thucydides at 4.28.5 emphasises the attitudes of some Athenians.

¹⁵ Nicias worries constantly about 'tripping up': see 5.16.2, 6.10.2, 6.11.4, 6.11.6, 6.23.2.

Νικίας μὲν βουλόμενος, ἐν ᾧ ἀπαθῆς ἦν καὶ ἡξιούτο, διασώσασθαι τὴν εὐτυχίαν, καὶ ἔς τε τὸ αὐτίκα πόνων πεπαῦσθαι καὶ αὐτὸς καὶ τοὺς πολίτας παῦσαι καὶ τῷ μέλλοντι χρόνῳ καταλιπεῖν ὄνομα ὡς οὐδὲν σφήλας τὴν πόλιν διεγένετο, νομίζων ἐκ τοῦ ἀκινδύνου τοῦτο ξυμβαίνειν καὶ ὅστις ἐλάχιστα τύχη αὐτὸν παραδίδωσι, τὸ δὲ ἀκίνδυνον τὴν εἰρήνην παρέχειν ...

Nicias desired, while he was still safe and esteemed, to preserve his good fortune, and to ease his own and the Athenians' labour for the present, and to leave a reputation for going through life without harming the city, because he thought that his would come from avoiding danger and taking the fewest risks, and that peace reduced risk ...

'Fortune' can point to both future risk (τύχη) and past benefit (εὐτυχίαν). From this point forward in the narrative, 'fortune' joins 'prudence' as a Nician Leitmotif. Just as Nicias offers to surrender command in two later passages, he reveals his ambivalence about fortune on three additional occasions. First, debating Alcibiades, he says that good fortune will be essential in Sicily, but immediately adds that he does not want to trust himself to fortune (6.23.3):

... εἰδὼς πολλὰ μὲν ἡμᾶς δέον εὖ βουλευσασθαι, ἔτι δὲ πλείω εὐτυχεῖν ... ὅτι ἐλάχιστα τῇ τύχῃ παραδοὺς ἑμαυτὸν βούλομαι ἐκπλεῖν ...

Knowing that we must plan many things well, and even more, to have good luck ... I wish to sail entrusting myself to fortune as little as possible ...

Alcibiades himself noted that chance was generally kind to Nicias: ἕως ... ὁ Νικίας εὐτυχῆς δοκεῖ εἶναι, 'as long as ... Nicias seems fortunate' (6.17.1). Later, as the situation worsens, Nicias hopes fortune will be on his side (τὸ τῆς τύχης κὰν μεθ' ἡμῶν ἐλπίσαντες στήναι, 7.61.3)—but

immediately disparages the good fortune of the enemy (7.63.4). Then his final speech, though certainly brave in the face of disaster, opens a cornucopia of jostling platitudes about suffering: the failure of ‘luck’, the futility of good works, the likelihood of divine *φθόνος* (see §X below). Nicias mentions that he’s always previously been fortunate (*οὐτ’ εὐτυχία δοκῶν που ὕστερός του εἶναι*, 7.77.2), but hopes that the enemy’s string of luck has reached its limit (*ἵκανὰ γὰρ τοῖς τε πολεμίοις ἠτύχηται*, 7.77.3).

No other Thucydidean character has so long a string of good fortune, but no other dwells so anxiously on the dangers of *τύχη*, a single Greek word that covers both ‘mere chance’ and ‘good fortune’. Like *σώφροσι* and the other examples above, *τύχη* is a compound of connotations, primed with verbal potency. Both *σώφροσι* and *τύχη* reveal disjunctures, the first between a label and reality, the second, within Nicias’ consciousness. They are not ‘funny’, but their impact comes in part from double entendres that have close comic cousins.

V. Voluntary Withdrawals

Arguing against the Sicilian invasion, Nicias offers to give up his command, using the same verb (*παρίημι*) he had employed at 4.28.3 (6.23.3):

ταῦτα γὰρ τῇ τε ξυμπάσῃ πόλει βεβαιότατα ἡγοῦμαι καὶ ἡμῶν τοῖς στρατευσομένοις σωτήρια. εἰ δέ τῳ ἄλλῳ δοκεῖ, παρίημι αὐτῷ τὴν ἀρχήν.

I deem these suggestions most secure for the city and safe for us commanders. If anyone thinks otherwise, I yield command to him.

A year later, in Sicily, Nicias again offers to quit (7.15.1). Each time, he seeks to compel the assembly to replace him. His nephritis makes his final request more reasonable, but the pattern is by then established (7.15.1–2):

ἐπειδὴ δὲ Σικελία τε ἅπασα ξυνίσταται καὶ ἐκ Πελοποννήσου ἄλλη στρατιὰ προσδόκιμος αὐτοῖς, βουλευέσθε ἤδη ὡς τῶν γ' ἐνθάδε μηδὲ τοῖς παροῦσιν ἀνταρκούντων, ἀλλ' ἢ τούτους μεταπέμπειν δέον ἢ ἄλλην στρατιὰν μὴ ἐλάσσω ἐπιπέμπειν καὶ πεζὴν καὶ ναυτικὴν καὶ χρήματα μὴ ὀλίγα, ἐμοὶ δὲ διάδοχόν τινα, ὡς ἀδύνατός εἰμι διὰ νόσον νεφρῆτιν παραμένειν. ἀξιῶ δ' ὑμῶν ξυγγνώμης τυγχάνειν.

Since all Sicily stands together and another army will arrive from the Peloponnese, plan now, realising that our supplies do not suffice for the force that is here, but that it is necessary to recall it or to send another of equal size: infantry, navy, substantial funds, and a successor for me, since my nephritis prevents me from staying. I think it appropriate to have your pardon.

'Merit' (cf. ἀξιῶ in the concluding sentence) is a constant concern of Nicias, ironically recurring in the necrology at 7.86 (ἦκιστα δὲ ἄξιος ὢν ... ἐς τοῦτο δυστυχίας).

The assembly grants only one of Nicias' requests to be excused from service, at 4.28. The fact that no other Athenian commander, in the entire history of Athenian democracy (508–323 BCE), even once attempted to withdraw from command points up how exceptional Nicias' effort is: 'prudential' is a word with many facets.¹⁶

¹⁶ Xenophon once offers to stand aside during a crisis, but the situation is different: Xen. *Anab.* 5.7.10. I am grateful to Donald Lateiner for this suggestion. Kant, in a slightly different context, underlines the ambiguity of 'prudence' ((2012) 60–1): 'wer in der erstern Art klug ist, nicht aber in der zweyten, von dem könnte man besser sagen: er ist gescheut und verschlagen, im Ganzen aber doch unklug.' ('someone who is prudent in the former sense, but not in the second, of him one might better say: he is clever and crafty, and yet on the whole imprudent.')

VI. Rhetoric and Character (7.48)

After disastrous defeat on Epipolae drastically reduced Athenian options (7.42–5), Nicias debated these with Demosthenes and Eurymedon, briefly but emphatically opposing open withdrawal (7.47.3–49.4). He distrusts both the Athenians at home, who will be motivated not by the military situation but by slander, and the troops in Sicily, who will, he avers, turn on their generals once home. ‘Knowing the nature of the Athenians’ (*τὰς φύσεις ἐπιστάμενος ὑμῶν*), he prefers battle in Sicily to shameful and unjust punishment in Athens, adding that Syracuse, burdened by pay for mercenaries, fortifications and a fleet, is financially weaker than Athens (7.48.4–5).

Tim Rood and Simon Hornblower have clarified important issues in this passage, rightly rejecting Dover’s claim that Nicias is cowardly. Rood keenly insists that Nicias conceals his real concern about the dangers of staying in Sicily, emphasising ‘the [negative] reaction of the Athenians at home’ instead:

Thucydides is telling a story about Nicias’ rhetoric rather than his character ... The paradox is that he spoke with a vehemence at odds with his uncertainty; and that this vehemence ensured that his own uncertainty prevailed on his colleagues.¹⁷

Rood and Hornblower acknowledge Nicias’ disingenuousness, insincerity, and ‘inability to control the changeableness of the demos’. Rood adds that that Nicias’ colleagues understood Athenian volatility.¹⁸ His distinction between ‘rhetoric’ and ‘character’ comes under strain, however, in 7.48.4 since, on inspection, Nicias’ words there reflect real, not feigned, anxieties and recall earlier moments including his surrender of leadership in Pylos (4.28), requests for huge forces in Sicily (6.19, 6.24), and his letter to Athens (7.14.2, 7.14.4):

¹⁷ Rood (1998) 187–8.

¹⁸ Rood as in preceding note; cf. Hornblower (2008) 634.

χαλεπαὶ γὰρ αἱ ὑμέτεραι φύσεις ἄρξαι.

Your natures are difficult to control.

τὰς φύσεις ἐπιστάμενος ὑμῶν, βουλομένων μὲν τὰ ἥδιστα
ἀκούειν, αἰτιωμένων δὲ ὕστερον.

I know your natures: you wish to hear pleasant news,
and you later place blame.

Passages like those make it difficult to dismiss Nicias' distrust of the Athenian assembly as insincere or 'rhetorical'. Nicias insists that he 'knows' that the assembly's 'nature' is unmanageable. Tracing his disastrous reversals, Thucydides complicates and challenges the Greek moral tradition, upsetting categories like 'heroism' or 'virtue' and preparing the reader to interpret the ambiguities of the final eulogy for Nicias.

Because he 'knows the Athenians' natures', Nicias says he prefers death at the hands of enemies to unjust and shameful execution at home (7.48.4):

... ἐπ' αἰσχρῇ τε αἰτία καὶ ἀδίκως ὑπ' Ἀθηναίων
ἀπολέσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ ὑπὸ τῶν πολεμίων, εἰ δεῖ,
κινδυνεύσας τοῦτο παθεῖν ἰδίᾳ.

Shame, of course, is central in heroic deaths (Hom. *Il.* 22.105; Soph. *Antig.* 5, *Ajax* 472).¹⁹ Nicias aspires to ἀρετή, the 'heroic virtue' that marks the Sophoclean hero in particular as a surly isolate, crucially at odds with those around him: 'To the rest of the world, the hero's angry, stubborn temper seems "thoughtless, ill-counselled".'²⁰ But whether he attains it remains in question. Nicias reminds us of the long-standing cultural imperatives that motivated Greek

¹⁹ Adkins (1975); see also the discussion in Rood (1998) 185 n. 9.

²⁰ Knox (1964) 57, 21. Knox notes that the noun ἀρετή is rare in Sophocles.

decision-making, but the tension between individual and society is magnified here, since Nicias' decision, unlike those of Ajax and Antigone, helps to destroy an entire army. (We cannot forget Nicias' readiness to hand the reins to Cleon at 4.28.)

Nicias 'heroic' commitment is short-lived: within sixty-five lines he reneges, allowing a retreat (7.50.3)—only to change his mind yet again after an eclipse (7.50.4). If his initial resistance to withdrawal was Sophoclean, these later shifts recall the 'complete change of atmosphere' that Bernard Knox discerned in Euripidean tragedy.²¹

In these grim chapters, Nicias speaks three times: twice before the final battle (once indirectly) and then during the final march. The speeches are packed with changes of direction, qualifications, failed efforts to explain, and recurrent, sometimes baffling, references to himself, all of which put the line of thought at risk.²² In his final speech, Nicias uses two of the particles mentioned by Gildersleeve in the introduction to this essay: *τοι*, 'an appeal for human sympathy', and *που*, 'a resigned submission to the merciless *rerum natura*', as well as *δή* with a verb (*ὀρᾶτε*), a usage 'hardly to be found' in 'the austerer style of Thucydides and the orators', Denniston says.²³ This is a dramatic world, rich in language (sentence structure, word choice), action, character and thought: every word matters.²⁴

I have discussed the direct speeches of Nicias elsewhere and will not comment further on these at this point.²⁵ Three additional passages require commentary: Nicias' indirect speech before the battle in the harbour, 7.69; Hermocrates' trickery, 7.73; and Thucydides' necrology for Nicias, 7.86.

²¹ See Knox (1966), (1970), and especially (1978) 345–8.

²² See Dover in Gomme–Andrewes–Dover (1970) on 7.14.2.

²³ Denniston (1959) 214. *δή* occurs with verbs in Thucydides only eight times. In emotional passages like 7.77.2, it carries more emotional force than Denniston (216) acknowledges. The comments above draw on the fuller discussion at Tompkins (1972) 197–8.

²⁴ Cf. Arist. *Poet.* 1450a.

²⁵ See also Tompkins (1972).

VII. Nicias at 7.69

Nicias' appeal to his trierarchs (7.69) reveals that he is outmatched by the circumstances he had helped to create. Although he had just warned his troops not to be 'overly stunned by events', *ἐκπεπληχθαί τι ταῖς ξυμφοραῖς ἄγαν* (7.63.3), Nicias himself is 'stunned', *ἐκπεπληγμένος*, at the plight of his forces (7.69.2).²⁶ Lateiner pointed out Nicias' 'inability to adapt his words and actions to new circumstances', mentioning his 'passive, reactive themes of uncertain hope, present necessity, and general inadequacy' and his 'retreat' to 'futile clichés about chance and hope ... absence of tactical advice and effective encouragement'.²⁷ Nicias is portrayed as 'saying what men might say when not on guard against seeming to *ἀρχαιολογεῖν*':

*ἄλλα τε λέγων ὅσα ἐν τῷ τοιούτῳ ἤδη τοῦ καιροῦ ὄντες
ἄνθρωποι οὐ πρὸς τὸ δοκεῖν τινὲ ἀρχαιολογεῖν
φυλαξάμενοι ... ἐπιβοῶνται.*

And saying everything that men in such a moment, dropping their guard against seeming to use antiquated language ... call out.

Lateiner offers the translation 'speak time-worn clichés', connoting 'failure to recognize [new] conditions and inability to conceive new approaches to more complex problems'. Nicias' words, he says, are a foil to earlier utterances by Pericles and by the Athenians at Melos, signs of the 'failure of nerve that Pericles had warned against (2.63.3) ... indecision, bad luck, and mistakes'. Nicias' 'moralistic rhetoric ... accorded poorly with empire'; his 'private superstition', 'confused' understanding of politics,

²⁶ Nicias also used this verb at 6.11.4. The sequence of uses charts his and the Athenians' reversal. The adverb *ἄγαν*, 'excessively, overly', repeated at 7.77.1 and 7.77.4, is revealing. Here it seems pleonastic.

²⁷ Lateiner (1985) 201–2.

his ‘archaic concept of *areté*’, and ‘unwavering belief in his own merit’ made him ineffective.²⁸

Rood counters: Nicias’ ‘generalizing remarks mark the greatness of the encounter, ... most men would speak as Nicias does’. The final words of Thucydides’ summary, ἀρχαιολογεῖν ... ὠφέλιμα νομίζοντες ἐπιβοῶνται, he adds, ‘derive pathos from the contrast between belief and reality: the cries are a prelude to destruction; there is no answering signal from the gods...’. Hornblower considers it ‘wrong to diminish Th.’s word *archaiologeîn* as censure of Nicias for ‘inadequate’ encouragement; [it is not] some sort of snooty distancing device’.²⁹

Reader responses to Nicias do indeed vary. For Hornblower and Rood, Nicias behaves ‘as men do’ and speaks ‘as most men speak’. They dismiss, without extended analysis, efforts like Lateiner’s to connect Nicias’ speech with his previous utterances. But it is precisely those previous utterances that clarify the gap between Nicias and ‘most men’ and make him so compelling a character. Although I did not treat indirect speeches in an earlier study of Nicias, the subordination, qualification, occasional self-contradiction, and sentence length that distinguished Nicias’ direct speeches are present here as well.³⁰

Karl Maurer says that 7.69.2 is ‘one of the greatest, most truly beautiful periods’ in Thucydides, praising its ‘prodigious symmetry’:³¹

ὁ δὲ Νικίας ὑπὸ τῶν παρόντων ἐκπεπληγμένος καὶ ὄρων οἶος ὁ κίνδυνος καὶ ὡς ἐγγὺς ἦδη ἦν, ἐπειδὴ καὶ ὅσον οὐκ ἔμελλον ἀνάγεσθαι, καὶ νομίσας, ὅπερ πάσχουσιν ἐν τοῖς μεγάλοις ἀγῶσι, πάντα τε ἔργῳ ἔτι σφίσιν ἐνδεᾶ εἶναι καὶ λόγῳ αὐτοῖς οὐπω ἰκανὰ εἰρηῆσθαι, αὐθις τῶν τριηράρχων ἕνα ἕκαστον ἀνεκάλει, πατρόθεν τε

²⁸ Lateiner (1985) 204–7, 211, 211–13, respectively.

²⁹ Rood (1998) 194–5; Hornblower (2008) 690.

³⁰ Tompkins (1972). Lateiner (1985) 212 n. 38 credits Tompkins (1974), unpublished.

³¹ Maurer (1995) 120–1 with n. 32.

ἐπονομάζων καὶ αὐτοὺς ὀνομαστὶ καὶ φυλῆν, ἀξιῶν τό τε καθ' ἑαυτόν, ᾧ ὑπῆρχε λαμπρότητός τι, μὴ προδιδόναι τινὰ καὶ τὰς πατρικὰς ἀρετάς, ὧν ἐπιφανεῖς ἦσαν οἱ πρόγονοι, μὴ ἀφανίζειν, πατρίδος τε τῆς ἐλευθερωτάτης ὑπομνησκῶν καὶ τῆς ἐν αὐτῇ ἀνεπιτάκτου πᾶσιν ἐς τὴν δίαιταν ἐξουσίας, ἄλλα τε λέγων ὅσα ἐν τῷ τοιοῦτῳ ἤδη τοῦ καιροῦ ὄντες ἄνθρωποι οὐ πρὸς τὸ δοκεῖν τινὶ ἀρχαιολογεῖν φυλαζόμενοι εἴποιεν ἄν, καὶ ὑπὲρ ἀπάντων παραπλήσια ἔς τε γυναικας καὶ παῖδας καὶ θεοὺς πατρώους προφερόμενα, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τῇ παρουσίᾳ ἐκπλήξει ὠφέλιμα νομίζοντες ἐπιβοῶνται.

Stunned by what had occurred, discerning the danger's nature and proximity, at the moment of launching, because he thought, as men do in great struggles, that all they had done was insufficient and that they had not yet said enough, he began once again to call on each, by his father's, his own, and his tribe's name, requesting that no one betray his personal quality, through which he had any fame, or inherited virtues, if his forefathers were famous, and reminding them of their freest of all fatherlands and of its absolute freedom of daily life for all, and saying those things that men in such a point of crisis might say, careless about seeming to someone to speak time-worn clichés—and on behalf of all, similar things referring to women and children and household deities—but actually do cry out, considering them useful in the present astonishment.³²

Readers wondering whether Nicias is 'speaking as most men speak' might compare the indirect speech of Pericles (2.13). No sentence there is as long (138 words) or labyrinthine. Indeed, no sentence in any direct speech in Thucydides is this long.³³ ἀρχαιολογεῖν, which appears only

³² Maurer's argument ((1995) 120–1) for deleting εἴποιεν ἄν is tempting, but I have not followed it here.

³³ Of the 26 sentences in Thucydides' speeches with 60 words or more, eleven are spoken by Nicias (6.10.2, 6.12.2, 6.13.1, 6.14, 6.21, 6.22, 6.68.2, 7.13.2, 7.63.3, 7.64.2, 7.77.4): far more than we might expect from

here in Greek texts of the fifth or fourth century BCE, appears to be colorful and distinctive indeed, and to fit Nicias' way of speaking.

VIII. Approaching Thucydides with Comedy in Mind

At whom did ancient Greeks—at whom does anyone—laugh, and why? In Greek culture in particular, as Stephen Halliwell remarks, humour was often condescending or critical (we recall Nietzsche's *Raubtier*):

Laughter is invariably regarded in Greek texts as having a human object or target, and it is the intended or likely effect of 'pain', 'shame', or 'harm' on this target (either in person or through his reputation and social standing) which is the primary determinant of its significance.

Laughter ... is an uncertain and dangerous force, because of its propensity to express, or produce, some degree of human opposition or antagonism. This is especially so in a society with a strong sense of shame and social position, for the laughter of denigration and scorn is a powerful means of conveying dishonour ...³⁴

Niall Slater adds:

Fifth-century audiences seem to have had a somewhat crueler sense of humor than we do. The starving Megarian in *Achamians*, willing to sell his daughters for food, gives us some pause today, but we must assume the original audience found it quite entertaining ...³⁵

a man who speaks, in toto, only 401 of the 3,693 total lines of direct speeches in the text. Even Demosthenes' *On the Crown* has no sentence this long.

³⁴ Halliwell (1991) 283, 285. See also Lateiner in this volume.

³⁵ Slater (1999) 358.

There is nothing ‘hilarious’ about Nicias’ plight, and his personal bravery is certainly evident. Nevertheless, in Nicias’ darkest hour, his actions—his verbosity, his reversion to cliché, his reliance on religious tradition—might spark Halliwell’s ‘laughter of denigration and scorn’. Nicias, deciding that nothing he has said is adequate, approaches his commanders for a second time with appeals about fatherland, family, freedom, women, children, household deities, and everything else a man might say when he ceases to worry about speaking tired clichés.

One benefit of approaching Thucydides with comedy in mind is that doing so complicates judgement. Our dominant response to the Athenian catastrophe will likely remain gloomy and ‘tragic’. But Thucydides’ ‘framing’ of Nicias—the empty variations, overdone triads (*πατρόθεν, αὐτοῦς, φυλῆν; γυναικάς, παῖδας, θεούς*), repetitions (*-ὄνομα-* and the fourfold *πατρ-*), the empty synonymy of *ἐνδεᾶ ... οὐπω ἱκανὰ*, the whole catalogue-like verbal inundation—may expose him, in a world socialised to laugh contemptuously at failure and weakness, not to open malice, shame, denigration and scorn, but to uneasy feelings. Like all catalogues, Nicias’ risked seeming overdone even without a nudge from Thucydides (*ὅπερ πάσχουσιν ἐν τοῖς μεγάλοις ἀγῶσι*). Nicias, whose illness and relative age have been mentioned (7.15, 6.13.1), is weak and vulnerable. Both his situation and his language complicate the scene immensely, emphasising the pathetic side of this character without depriving him of his strengths. Pondering the sources of Greek laughter, we may sense that Nicias is only a step or two away from savage ridicule.³⁶

³⁶ ‘Savage ridicule’ is a feature of Nietzsche’s comments on comedy, particularly the humiliations of Don Quixote in Part II of Cervantes’ novel, which shock us but, Nietzsche ((1878) 1.7) claims, delighted early audiences: ‘Leiden-sehn thut wohl, Leiden-machen noch wohler... Ohne Grausamkeit kein Fest: so lehrt es die älteste, längste Geschichte des Menschen ...’ (‘To see suffering is pleasant, to inflict it more so ... Without cruelty, no celebration: so says the oldest, longest human history ...’).

Plato's *Symposium* and *Philebus* testify to the ancient debate over whether genres are rigidly separate or can be merged. One argument of the present essay is that tragedy, comedy, and historiography share a conceptual and discursive zone or borderland that teems with ambiguities, irony, and double valences. The shared terrain also reflects common social norms concerning, for instance, weakness and ridicule. Even when not explicit, these lurk in the deep structure of the work, influencing actors and readers alike, particularly when Nicias risks becoming merely pathetic in 7.69. (Note that word, 'risks'. The pathos remains implicit and potential.)

IX. Hermocrates *πονηρός*

After the defeat in the Syracusan harbour, the army rejects Nicias' proposal to fight the next day, so the commanders prepare a nocturnal march away from Syracuse. Realising that the Syracusans, celebrating their victory as well as a festival, would not take up arms that night, Hermocrates instead deceived Nicias with the lie that the roads were blocked. Nicias, believing him, put off his departure till the next day, when the Syracusans were ready (7.72–3).

Hermocrates' ruse has comic antecedents. From the *Odyssey* onward, the *πονηρός*—the clever rogue—was a staple of Greek literature. Cedric Whitman provided a general overview of this tradition.³⁷ Relying not on brute strength but verbal skill and trickery, the *πονηρός* makes his opponent appear unskilled or hamfisted.

It's as a *πονηρός* that Themistocles outfoxes both Persians and Spartans in Herodotus and Thucydides (Hdt. 8.75; Thuc. 1.90–1, 1.135–8).³⁸ Thucydides' Hermocrates

³⁷ Whitman (1964) 29–36.

³⁸ At 1.90–1, after the Persian defeat, when Spartan envoys urged Athens not to rebuild her walls, Themistocles instructed the Athenians to send him alone to Sparta and commence reconstruction. Arriving in Sparta, he not only temporised but, after persuading Sparta to send inspectors to Athens, arranged to have these men detained until his own return, and then, finally, announced to his hosts that Athens, now defensible, would deal with other Greek states in the only way possible:

thinks equally fast and instinctively, and his stratagem (Thuc. 7.73) recalls Themistocles' in Book 1. The reversal is profound: Athenians have lost their franchise on *πονηρία*, a Syracusan is 'running the con', and Nicias the Athenian is his 'mark'. As Thucydides later remarked, it was the Syracusans, antitypes of Spartans, who proved Athens' deadliest foe (8.96.5):

μάλιστα ... ὁμοίτροποι γινόμενοι ἄριστα καὶ προσ-
επολέμησαν.

Because their ways of life were most similar, they were also Athens' best opponents.

We recall Dicaeopolis getting the upper hand over Lamachus in Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, or Freud's comment on reversals:

Die Schlagfertigkeit besteht ja im Eingehen der Abwehr auf die Aggression, im 'Umkehren des Spiesses', im 'Bezahlen mit gleicher Münze' ...³⁹

Repartée ['quick-wittedness' may be more apt] consists in the defense going to meet the aggression, in 'turning the tables on someone' or 'paying someone back in his own coin' ...⁴⁰

Of all the reversals Athens encounters in Sicily, this turnaround in cunning is one of the most striking. Like Odysseus facing the Cyclops and other models of *πονηρία*, Hermocrates can rely only on his wits: his ruse, though not 'comedy', gains in resonance from its comic associations.⁴¹

as an equal. In 1.135–8, Themistocles escapes from Athens to Persia relying primarily on his wits.

³⁹ Freud (1999) 83, cf. 68.

⁴⁰ Freud (1960) 68, cf. 52.

⁴¹ For more on Thucydides' Hermocrates, see Tompkins (2015).

X. The Death of Nicias

The most important passage to consider in this study, however, is Thucydides' necrology for Nicias (7.86.5):

*καὶ ὁ μὲν τοιαύτη ἢ ὅτι ἐγγύτατα τούτων αἰτία
ἔτεθνήκει, ἥκιστα δὲ ἄξιος ὢν τῶν γε ἐπ' ἐμοῦ Ἑλλήνων
ἐς τοῦτο δυστυχίας ἀφικέσθαι διὰ τὴν πᾶσαν ἐς ἀρετὴν
νενομισμένην ἐπιτήδευσιν.*

He perished for such a reason or close to it, though least worthy of the Greeks of my day to arrive at this bad fate, given his way of life completely directed toward conventional virtue.

Nearly every recent commentator sees commendation in these lines: Zadorojnyi concludes that Thucydides 'respects' Nicias' effort and 'endorses' his ἀρετή; Rood, that the passage contains 'pity' but 'no scorn or irony' about Nicias' 'lack of intelligence' (Nicias is 'more a Kutuzov than a Cassandra').⁴² Hornblower concedes that 'perhaps the present statement contains some studied ambiguity', but immediately cites the 'robust commonsense protest of Nisbet and Rudd ... against modern critical tendencies to see ambiguity all over the place'.⁴³ Finally, Adkins insisted that 'Thucydides is praising Nicias'.⁴⁴ As a group, these statements argue that Nicias' leadership, while not perfect, was laudable and free of irony and ambiguity.

These scholars have enriched our understanding of Thucydides, and one demurs only with care. But the thread

⁴² Zadorojnyi (1998) 302; Rood (1998) 198. Kutuzov seems an odd choice since he, more like Hermocrates than Nicias, harried Napoleon's troops on their retreat from Moscow.

⁴³ Hornblower (2008) 741. Hornblower is not on an anti-ambiguity crusade, as his careful comment on 8.97.2 at p. 1036 indicates.

⁴⁴ Rood (1998) 183–4, 198; Hornblower (2008) 741; Connor (1984) 205; Adkins (1975). Rood (1998) 183–5 efficiently summarises recent comments on 7.86.

of ‘praise’, ‘conventional virtue’, and lack of irony requires challenge because it so drastically filtrates the implications in Thucydides’ language, attenuating the force of his words. This is apparent if we look closely at three words in the sentence: *ἄξιος*, *δυστυχία*, and *ἀρετή*. On the surface, each seems to express praise. When examined, however, each cues the reader to an accumulation of problems.

ἄξιος, for instance, was one of Nicias’ favourite words, occurring eight times in his speeches, always with emphasis but with a shift in focus over time. Nicias initially emphasised the need to do one’s duty, to live up to a reputation (*ἄξιον τῆς διανοίας δρᾶν*, 6.21.1; cf. 6.12.1, 6.68.4, 7.61.3): this is *ἄξιος* in its active sense. Later, as danger loomed, Nicias’ discourse became more passive and pathetic. From its initial orientation toward ‘duty’, i.e. ‘doing what we must’, *ἄξιος* shifts toward ‘desert’, or ‘getting what we are owed’ (7.77.4):

οὔκτου γὰρ ἀπ’ αὐτῶν ἀξιώτεροι ἤδη ἐσμὲν ἢ φθόνου.

We deserve pity more than envy.

As with *τοῖς σώφροσι* (4.28.5), this unsignaled reorientation may elude editors. In Thucydides’ hands, the adjective cannot fail to remind us of Nicias’ conflicted, ultimately pathetic, notions about the role of ‘merit’ in shaping events. Next, consider the difficult statement about Nicias’ ‘virtue’ at the end of 7.86.5:

διὰ τὴν πᾶσαν ἐς ἀρετὴν νενομισμένην ἐπιτήδευσιν.

One challenge here concerns the modifiers *πᾶσαν* and *νενομισμένην*. I believe that Hornblower and Rood (among others) correctly link them with *ἐπιτήδευσιν*: ‘Because his intense concern was directed toward virtue’.⁴⁵ This reminds us that Nicias’ very personalised ‘competitiveness’ proved,

⁴⁵ Hornblower (2008) 741; Rood (1998) 184 n. 9.

in the end, to be ruinous.⁴⁶ Foregrounding ἀρετή, Thucydides forces readers to ask whether and how this value serves the city as a whole. Finally, Nicias' fate was a δυστυχία. Nicias' Doric and conservative policy of shunning danger and fortune had been evident from the start of his career. Rood perceptively notes that δυστυχίας at 7.86.5 reverses εὐτυχίαν at 5.16.1.⁴⁷ As the full account of Nicias' 'good fortune' makes clear that from the start, his leadership suffered from instability, belying his 'conservative' reputation. More than any other Thucydidean leader's, Nicias' fate is determined by 'luck'.

Virtue, desert, and fortune: the man who so strongly believed in merit, strove for 'virtue', and assiduously avoided fortune, has the bad fortune to meet an unmerited death that his own espousal of ἀρετή and avoidance of τὸ αἰσχρόν brought about. With stunning ease, the lexicon of commendation is inverted, revealing undue reliance on luck, stubborn adherence to ethical codes, inability to realise that merely 'deserving' something does not achieve it.⁴⁸ Ambiguity or *Doppelsinn*, the distinctive element that distinguished jokes in Freud's eyes, is thus a constant in Nicias' career, without becoming truly 'comic'. Thucydides reminds us of this at 7.86, but the reminder is less one of 'respect', 'endorsement', or 'praise' than a complex and ironic appraisal of a life that ended sadly, partly through the victim's agency.

⁴⁶ Adkins (1975) 388.

⁴⁷ Rood (1998) 199 n. 76.

⁴⁸ This interpretation differs from Rood's cogent argument ((1998) 185): 'My analysis of Nicias' character as a whole will seek to show that there is no scorn or irony in Thucydides' closing words—only the same sense of pity that the reader is invited to feel for the inhabitants of Mykalessos'.

XI. Conclusion

Nicias is often described as a ‘tragic warner’.⁴⁹ Like Persian advisors in Herodotus, he alludes to the unintended consequences of poor decisions. But Nicias differs from these models by being not only a warner but an agent, himself responsible for crucial and destructive choices. These include urging a very large force for the Sicilian campaign (6.20–4), refusing to withdraw when possible (7.48), then allowing an eclipse to slow the retreat (7.51.4). No other Athenian leader played so large a role in decision-making during the expedition.⁵⁰ Further complicating the picture, Nicias, unlike the warners in Homer and Herodotus, becomes a victim, his throat unceremoniously slit, partly at the urging of allies who feared detection (7.86.3).

Combining the roles of warner, agent, and victim, Nicias incorporates, encapsulates, and confuses categories of character. Vladimir Propp, who pioneered the study of ‘functions among dramatis personae’, would not have been surprised. Propp categorised ‘spheres of action’ (‘villain’, ‘donor’, ‘helper’, ‘princess’, ‘hero’ and so on) but added at once that a single character can be ‘involved in several spheres of action’.⁵¹ Classicists may be misled by the fact that Poulydamas in the *Iliad* (e.g. 18.254–83) is a warner and nothing more. Nicias, on the other hand, was largely responsible for his army’s annihilation and his own death.

Repeatedly in this narrative, Thucydides uses words and narrative elements that have ‘comic’ qualities: the double or multiple connotations of *τοῖς σώφροσι* and *τύχη* at 5.16.1, et al., the use of surprise, of trickery by a *πονηρός*, of the ‘tragic warner’ and the bumbling leader. But they are not ‘funny’ and we never laugh: cumulatively, they lead to disaster.

⁴⁹ Rood (1998) 184: ‘a “tragic warner”, a Cassandra figure’. Marinatos (1980) treats Nicias’ role as warner, but not as agent or victim.

⁵⁰ In the complex decision-making process in Herodotus Book 7, Artabanus also becomes an agent as Xerxes decides to invade Greece. See the discussion by Pelling (1991) 130–42. I am grateful to Emily Baragwanath for assistance on this point.

⁵¹ Propp (1968) 79–81.

Non-comic narratives use comic incongruity more than we suppose: in Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent*, a boy's senseless death verges on hilarity: the 'rainlike fall of [Stevie's] mangled limbs' and the lad's decapitated head in mid-air 'fad[e] out slowly like the last star of a pyrotechnic display'.⁵² Deaths from tuberculosis litter Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain*, but he was capable of calling it a work of 'humoristische Nihilismus'.⁵³

Jokes exemplify the power of language to express the co-existence of opposite tendencies, or the underlying negative potential of a seemingly positive statement. In the Nicias narrative, joke-like language reveals deeper meanings in situations that are definitely not funny.

Considering historiography from the vantage-point of comedy thus has the powerful, liberating effect of opening rather than restricting interpretive options. The reader is invited not to choose between alternatives, but to accept compelling contradictions. Nicias was both victim and agent; Athenians left memorials both of evils they had suffered, and evils they had done.⁵⁴

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⁵² Conrad (1907) 313.

⁵³ For a sophisticated treatment of 'humour' in *Magic Mountain*, see Shookman (2008).

⁵⁴ I owe thanks to several scholars for assistance in the long genesis of this essay: Donald Lateiner, Christopher Pelling, Emily Baragwanath, Edith Foster, Tobias Joho, John Marincola, Paul Cartledge and Simon Hornblower. See also the credits at individual footnotes, especially note 10. It is also worthwhile to note that Baragwanath has written well about syntactical and other forms of ambiguity in Herodotus, in Baragwanath (2008) 168, 200, 209–10, and, with Mathieu de Bakker, in Baragwanath and de Bakker (2012) 25 and 44 n.

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ARISTOPHANES' CLEON AND POST-PELOPONNESIAN WAR ATHENIANS: DENUNCIATIONS IN THUCYDIDES

Edith Foster

Abstract: This paper explores some important ways in which the assembly scenes in Book 4 of Thucydides (21–2 and 27.3–29) reactivate the themes and strategies of characterisation from Aristophanes' *Knights*. Scholars have often argued that the consistency between Thucydides' and Aristophanes' representations of Cleon and the assembly reflects a shared bias against Cleon. The paper suggests that we should review this opinion in the light of the fact that Thucydides' post-war readers were in the opposite situation from Aristophanes' triumphant post-Pylos audience of 424, and examines Thucydides' resuscitation of Aristophanic characterisations and themes in terms of his aims in respect to these post-war readers. As a particular example of Thucydides' re-use of Aristophanic modes, the paper examines Thucydides' close attention to depicting and explaining Cleon's denunciations of others. It goes on to mention other commonalities of theme and attitude between the two authors, and finally suggests that Thucydides' reactivation of Aristophanic themes links him to further developments in fourth-century historiography, for which comedy was an important source.

The short chapters showing the workings of the Athenian democratic assembly at 4.21–2 and 27–8 are unique in Thucydides.¹ They also take place at a unique juncture in Thucydides' narrative of the war, after the Athenians have won a surprising victory over Sparta in south-western Greece, but before either side has suffered decisive losses. That is: the Athenians have captured and are blockading 420 Spartan prisoners on the island of Sphacteria after building and defending a fort at Pylos and

¹ On the unique character of these chapters, cf. e.g. Flower (1992) 40 and Westlake (1968) 70. On Cleon's status in Thucydides as the only fully painted demagogue, see Rusten (2006) 552–3. On Cleon as compared to Pericles, see Tsakmakis and Kostopoulos (2013) 171–3.

then defeating the Spartan navy in the adjacent bay (4.12–14.5). Some unknown number of soldiers died in the hard fighting (cf. 4.14.5, where the Athenians and Spartans give back each other's corpses), and the Spartan leader Brasidas has been wounded (4.12.1). However, Brasidas would recover fully to fight another day, and the men on the island are unscathed. After assessing the situation (4.15.1), the Spartans decide to send ambassadors to Athens. The narrative that follows is open to development in any direction.²

This narrative includes the speech of the Spartan ambassadors who come to Athens to try to reclaim their men (4.17–20) and the subsequent assembly scenes. The paper offered here will confine itself mostly to discussing the assembly scenes. It suggests that they build on Aristophanes' *Knights* (and other plays), and that they renewed Aristophanic themes—in particular Aristophanes' emphasis on Cleon's habits of denouncing and prosecuting his political enemies—for the post-war Athenian audience.³

It is hardly new to draw a relation between the historian and the comic poet in this regard.⁴ In particular, it is common to argue that Aristophanes' and Thucydides' similarly negative representations of Cleon arise from resentment against a popular leader who is thought to have harmed each of them.⁵ At the same time, scholars

² Cf. the Spartan references to the openness of the situation at 4.20.1 and 2.

³ We cannot be certain when any part of Thucydides was first distributed, although it seems improbable that any part of it emerged before 410, and most likely that it was distributed on Thucydides' return to Athens in 403. For a discussion of the probable 'publication' dates of the text from 4.1–5.24, cf. Hornblower (1994) 120–2, with id. (2008) 1 and 659–60.

⁴ Cf. e.g. de Romilly (1963) 186.

⁵ For an overview of this idea, which begins with Marcellinus, and which the *OCD* article on Cleon still treats as factual, see Henderson (2017) 614. For a fully elaborated argument that both Aristophanes and Thucydides were prejudiced against Cleon, cf. Lafargue (2013), esp. 19–25, and id. (2015), esp. 132–5, 157. For another recent expression of the view that Thucydides' characterisation arises from prejudice, cf. Biles

consistently create a second relationship between *Knights* and Thucydides. Somewhat in contradiction to the tendency to consider Thucydides' account biased by his resentment of Cleon, Thucydides is also cited as a true report that explains what happened at Pylos and afterward, so that we can understand the comedy.⁶

Our use of Thucydides to explain Aristophanes reverses the ancient reality. It seems unlikely that any part of Thucydides was read before the late fifth century, so that Thucydides wrote for Athenians who already knew Aristophanes' plays, not the other way around. Thucydides seems to have reawakened a number of Aristophanic premises for this audience. Perhaps most centrally, Aristophanes made clear not just in *Knights*, but in several plays (*Acharnians*, *Wasps*, *Peace*, and even *Frogs*, which was produced in 405, eighteen years after Cleon's death) that Cleon should be condemned because of his political corruption.⁷ Thucydides claims this attitude as the correct one (5.16.1, discussed in §II), and offers a portrait of Cleon that in his view (2.65.10) helps to explain how such men and such leadership contributed to Athens' defeat in the war.

(2016) who writes of the historians' 'obvious loathing for and prejudice against the demagogue' (127 n. 52). My argument largely agrees with Connor (1984): 'His [Thucydides'] account ... is shaped not so much by animosity as by an elaborate strategy of replicating some of the emotions and reactions experienced at the time of the events' (113).

⁶ Essentially all commentaries adopt this mode, since without it we cannot understand the play's references. Even scholars who are sure that Thucydides was biased think his account was more or less accurate. Biles (2016), for instance, does not entirely doubt the veracity of the portrait represented: 'given the unlikelihood that the historian relied exclusively on the comedian as a source, the safest conclusion is probably that these two hostile witnesses arrived at closely similar estimations of the demagogue's politics and political style precisely because more than an iota of truth lies beneath the caricature and venom' (127 n. 52).

⁷ For the tirade against Cleon in *Frogs*, see 549ff. For *Acharnians*, see especially the opening of the play, in which Cleon is immediately attacked. For the other plays, see subsequent notes.

As mentioned above, despite the importance of this theme for Thucydides' over-all explanation of the war, it has been usual (but not universal) to suggest that Thucydides' treatment of Cleon arose from resentment. Perhaps this is the case, but I suggest that we might also look for some ways in which Thucydides' portrait of Cleon responds to the situation of his late-war or post-war audience, which was very different from that of Aristophanes' initial audience. Aristophanes, praising his own bravery,⁸ criticised Cleon after the People had proclaimed him the victor over the Spartans at Sphacteria and showered him with unprecedented honours.⁹ By contrast, Thucydides wrote for an audience that had suffered much from demagogues such as Alcibiades and Theramenes in the waning period of the war. At the moment of their defeat in the war as a whole, the Athenians had remembered the crimes of Cleon's period of leadership, especially the destruction of the Aeginetans (4.57.3–4), Scione (4.122.5–6), and Torone (5.3.4), with bitter fear (Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.3).¹⁰ Moreover, Thucydides' readership was saddled with the consequences of Cleon's military defeat at Amphipolis in 423, since this important city had not been reclaimed. Thucydides' audience had therefore seen Cleon's single victory at Sphacteria buried in graver defeats of every kind. While the argument that Thucydides' portrait of Cleon mainly reflects the historian's resentment seems to imply that a biased Thucydides was trying to convince post-

⁸ On Aristophanes' praises of his own bravery for attacking Cleon, see again Henderson (2017) 612–3, citing *Clouds* 545–62, *Wasps* 1029–37, *Peace* 748–61. Other comic poets also attacked Cleon (cf. e.g. Eupolis FF 308 and 456, Plato FF 166 and 170, with Connor (1971) 168–9) just as they of course attacked many other politicians.

⁹ For an overview of these honours and other post-Pylos victory celebrations, see Lafargue (2015) 129–51. See, however, also Kallet (2003), who argues that support for Cleon was never unanimous, and that Cleon's popularity experienced highs and lows until his sudden death.

¹⁰ For a discussion of the aggressively imperialistic character of Cleon's leadership, particularly toward the allies, see Saldutti (2014), esp. 115–67, with Smarczyk (2016).

war Athenians that this democratic leader of the 420s was rotten, I suggest that there may have been little need.¹¹ On the contrary: in these drastically changed circumstances, Thucydides might renew Aristophanes' warnings and perhaps be heeded. Moreover, not only Thucydides, but the extant fourth-century sources are almost universally negative in their description of Cleon.¹² Rather than accusing Thucydides, Aristophanes, and the other writers who described Cleon of mere biased hostility, surely we might consider the possibility that Cleon really was problematic, and that some members of Thucydides' post-war audience were interested in understanding his role.

If this was the situation, Thucydides took the opportunity to base his account on familiar paradigms. Thucydides' references to *Knights* require no more of his Athenian audience than Aristophanes himself had required of it. For instance, Euripides' *Telephus* was already thirteen years old by the time Aristophanes imitated and quoted it in *Acharnians*, and it was twenty-seven years old by the time Aristophanes referenced it in *Thesmophoriazusae*.¹³ Moreover, neither the historian nor the comic poet seems to have required that the audience always remember past literary works in specific linguistic detail. Foley (1988), referring to *Acharnians*, argues as follows: 'In my view, Aristophanes'

¹¹ Note the emphasis on the fact that Cleon was trusted in the late 420s in Thucydides' two introductions to Cleon, as if to separate the *demos* of that time from the reader. Cf. 3.36.6: ὅσπερ καὶ τὴν προτέραν ἐνεκλήκει ὥστε ἀποκτείνειν, ὃν καὶ ἐς τὰ ἄλλα βιαιότατος τῶν πολιτῶν τῷ τε δήμῳ παρὰ πολὺ ἐν τῷ τότε πιθανώτατος, and 4.21.3: μάλιστα δὲ αὐτοὺς ἐνήγε Κλέων ὁ Κλεινέτου, ἀνὴρ δημαγωγὸς κατ' ἐκείνον τὸν χρόνον ὃν καὶ τῷ πλήθει πιθανώτατος.

¹² Cf. Isoc. *Panath.* 12.63, in which he cites the destruction of Scione and Torone, along with the destruction of Melos, as being among the worst crimes with which the Greeks reproached Athens. For Cleon's negative subsequent reputation, cf. Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 28.3–4; Isoc. *Antid.* 15.314–9; Theopompus, *Philippica*, *FGrHist* 115 FF 92–4. See Lafargue (2013) 26–8 for further evidence and an argument that Cleon's negative reputation in the fourth century arose because the opponents of democracy needed an anti-hero.

¹³ Cf. Pelling (2000) 143.

audience would have needed to know little more than the major episodes of the plot of Euripides' *Telephus* and, preferably, the major points made in *Telephus*' speech before the Greeks in order to appreciate Aristophanes' parody/paratragedy'.¹⁴ In short, while both authors were capable of citing or remembering the specific words of important past paradigms, they were equally adept at adopting the structures and themes of well-known literature.¹⁵ As mentioned, this paper focusses on Thucydides' reawakening of Aristophanes' themes and strategies of characterisation. Although Thucydides may himself have attended the performance of *Knights*, we do not, as far as I can tell, find Thucydidean remembrances of specific Aristophanic jokes or figures of speech from *Knights* in the assembly scenes we will discuss here.¹⁶ Before discussing Thucydides, it will be useful to review *Knights*.

I. The *Knights*

By the time Aristophanes' *Knights* was produced and had won first prize at the Lenaea in 424 BCE, the fighting at Pylos was over. The Spartan embassy had failed to achieve peace or the return of the 420 Spartans on Sphacteria, hostilities had resumed, and Athens had won a decisive victory, killing 128 Spartans, but taking 292 back to Athens. The Spartans were desperate to retrieve these survivors and

¹⁴ Foley (1988) 34 n. 9.

¹⁵ Cf. Foster (2012), on Thucydides' use of Herodotus in the Pylos story, and Joho (2017).

¹⁶ See n. 26 for a suggestion that verbal echoes between Aristophanes and Thucydides might be found if the texts were approached more for resemblances of linguistic strategy than for literal verbal echoes. A recent monograph argues for taking Aristophanes' readers in ancient Athens more seriously: cf. Wright (2012). However, I am thinking of an audience that includes not only (re-)readers, but also those who knew the play through (re-)telling, in addition to the surviving original spectators (who may have included Thucydides himself, still at Athens in 424 BCE).

renewed their peace offers, but the Athenians refused (Thuc. 4.41.3).

The Spartan prisoners were being held at Athens, therefore, when *Knights* was first performed, and the Athenian general Cleon, their putative captor, is the main butt of the play. In *Knights*, Cleon is figured as ‘the Paphlagonian’, a foreign, aggressive, and greedy slave of ‘Demos’, who personifies the Athenian democratic assembly. Two other slaves of Demos, who are eerily similar to Nicias and Demosthenes, the other important Athenian generals of the Pylos story, are also present; since they are abused by the Paphlagonian, they find a competitor for him, namely the ‘Sausage Seller’, a native Athenian ‘common man’ figure who will save Athens from the Paphlagonian. Most of the play is taken up by a contest of bribery, seduction, and trickery in which the Sausage Seller outcrasses the Paphlagonian and persistently offers Demos more of whatever the Paphlagonian offers. The offerings are very often food, and since the Sausage Seller is essentially a personified ‘down home’ food theme, he has an innate advantage.¹⁷ He defeats the Paphlagonian and claims the position of Demos’ chief slave. From this height of power the Sausage Seller takes control of Demos, boils him, and returns him to the state of common sense and virtue he had enjoyed in the olden days of the Persian Wars. In the end, Demos sends the Paphlagonian out to the gates to sell sausages; meanwhile, the Sausage Seller, now ensconced in the Paphlagonian’s place, encourages Demos to make peace with the Spartans.

Before being boiled, Demos had been a two-sided character. On the one hand, he was a ragged, cantankerous, and apparently unintelligent old man who was vulnerable to every trivial bribe of a cushion or a salad; on the other, he possessed absolute power, and admitted

¹⁷ On the Sausage Seller’s indigenous advantages, i.e. his Athenian, rather than foreign diet, and its similarity to the sacrificial regime of the city (where the Paphlagonian is distant in both respects), see Wilkins (2000) 179–201. For an examination of the use of flattery and seduction in this contest, see Scholz (2004).

that he was fattening his various flatterers in order to sacrifice them later on (1120, cf. 1141ff.).¹⁸ However, his susceptibility to each new bribe had been by far his most conspicuous attribute, and before Demos was reformed, the aim of both the Sausage Seller and the Paphlagonian had been to instill greater and greater appetite into Demos in order to control him through satisfying his desires. In the final competition before Demos, they each offer him bigger and better food, with the Paphlagonian (i.e. Cleon the boastful victor) hawking his ‘cakes made of grain imported from Pylos’ (1167) and advertising the agency of ‘Athena, Warrior Goddess of Pylos’ (*Pallas Pylaimachos* 1172) in stirring soup. In the end, the Sausage Seller prevails by stealing a hare from the Paphlagonian before he can offer it to Demos. The Sausage Seller then himself offers the hare to Demos and wins the competition for Demos’ favour, just as Cleon had stolen the Pylos victory from Demosthenes and in that way won the competition for public favour, a fraud that had been emphasised during the play (e.g. 50–7, 391–2).

Thucydides’ reawakening of Aristophanes’ well-known portrait of Cleon will be the focus of this chapter’s analysis. In *Knights*, all good citizens wish to be rid of Cleon (225–9), who is depicted as an obnoxious bane to the whole state (e.g. 303–13). Aristophanes emphasises again and again that Cleon is a politician of limited skills who masks his corruption and greed by threatening to denounce and prosecute any opponent before the People (235–9, 278, 299–302, 435–6, 475–9, 773–7, where he boasts of his many prosecutions, 828). Cleon can claim only one service to the state, namely the (stolen) victory at Pylos, which he mentions repeatedly (353–5, 844–6, 1006, 1059, 1168, 1172).¹⁹ His crimes against Athens are much greater than his

¹⁸ Cf. esp. Balot (2001) 198–9, with Kallet (2003) 137–40 (who relates the representation of *dēmos tyrannos* in *Knights* and the Periclean funeral oration in Thucydides), and Major (2013) 77–82.

¹⁹ Aristophanes’ Cleon is also a warmonger; as de Romilly (1963) 186 notes, Cleon’s stated reason for refusing the peace treaty with Sparta (*Knights* 796–801) is to allow Athens to continue on a path of unrestricted imperialism.

supposed service; in particular, he scuttled the peace with Sparta for the sake of personal profit (465–75; 792–6), and therefore causes the Athenians to continue to live in wartime poverty while he benefits.²⁰

II. Cleon and Denunciation in *Thucydides*

Thucydides' resuscitation of Aristophanes' characterisation of Cleon is found mostly in the assembly scenes of Book 4, since in these scenes, as in *Knights*, Cleon interacts directly with the Athenian assembly. The following section of this paper examines Thucydides' recasting of Aristophanes' frequent demonstrations that Cleon used denunciations to suppress competitors, gain advantages, and achieve political aims and prominence.²¹

Denunciations are an interestingly central aspect of Cleon's character in Thucydides.²² The historian's focus on Cleon's denunciations is confirmed in his final comment on Cleon (5.16.1), where he says that he had not wanted peace, 'knowing that if there were a rest [from war] he would be more visible in his crimes and untrustworthy in his accusations'.²³ Thucydides argues that Cleon needed the

²⁰ Cf. Gomme (1956) *ad* Thuc. 2.17.2.

²¹ While *Knights* is the main focus of this paper, these demonstrations continue in the plays produced after *Knights*. In *Wasps*, the practice of denunciation is taken over by Cleon's supporters, the jurors. See Biles and Olson (2015) 55; they summarise at 61: 'The text of *Wasps* itself makes clear that Cleon and others of his ideological stripe were in this period ready to accuse anyone who opposed their understanding of the proper conduct of Athens' internal and external affairs of being secretly determined to undermine the city's laws with an eye to instituting a pro-Spartan, oligarchical tyranny.' See also n. 23.

²² Related are F 93 of Theopompus, which shows Cleon denouncing the Athenian knights (perhaps in reliance on Comedy; see conclusion, below), and Plut. *Alcib.* 14.4, which shows Alcibiades imitating Cleon's denunciation of Nicias as a coward, perhaps an echo of Thucydides.

²³ Note the close relation of Thucydides' statement to the sense of *Knights* 801–5: οὐχ ἵνα γ' ἄρξῃ μὰ Δί' Ἀρκαδίας προνοούμενος, ἀλλ' ἵνα μάλλον / σὺ μὲν ἀρπάξῃς καὶ δωροδοκῆς παρὰ τῶν πόλεων, ὁ δὲ δῆμος / ὑπὸ τοῦ πολέμου καὶ τῆς ὀμίχλης ἅ πανουργεῖς μὴ καθορᾶ σου, / ἀλλ' ὑπ'

war, since in calmer circumstances his actions and accusations might have been scrutinised more carefully. By making this observation into his last word on Cleon he essentially makes crimes and accusations into Cleon's legacy in the *History*.²⁴

This final comment caps a presentation characterised by concrete demonstrations of how Cleon used accusations to reach his goals. The historian first represents this tactic in the Mytilenean debate, where Cleon first accuses his political opponents of having been bribed (3.38.2),²⁵ and then accuses the Mytileneans not merely of revolting from Athens' empire, but of actively plotting to destroy that empire, together with Athens' worst enemies (3.39.2, cf. 40.1). Famously, his aim in exaggerating the extent of Mytilenean ambitions is to restore the Athenians to their original harsh anger against the Mytileneans, so that they will maintain their decision to put all Mytilenean citizens to death.²⁶

ἀνάγκης ἅμα καὶ χρείας καὶ μισθοῦ πρὸς σε κεχήνη. ('Not so that he can rule Arcadia, by Zeus, but so that you can pillage and take bribes from the cities; and so that Demos does not catch sight of your crimes beneath the mist of war, but rather hangs open mouthed upon you for pay, harassed by necessity and poverty.')

²⁴ Likewise, *Peace* 635–50 expatiates on the damage done to Athens and Greece by the demagogues' tactics of denunciation, announces that Cleon was the source of these ills, and prays that he may remain in hell.

²⁵ By contrast, in *Knights* (835), Cleon is himself accused of having been bribed by the Mytileneans.

²⁶ On the character of Cleon's speech, see especially Macleod (1978); on Cleon's harsh linguistic usages in this debate, see Tsakmakis and Kostopoulos (2013), who analyse Cleon's speech at 3.37–40 according to the standards of politeness theory. According to their analysis, Thucydides shows that Cleon frequently used the accusatory second person plural and the imperative mood. Moreover, he expounded offensive characterisations of his audience and offered few explanations. These characteristics are familiar from Aristophanes' *Knights*, as well, and investigations of possible commonalities between Thucydides and Aristophanes in terms of such linguistic strategies for characterising Cleon (rather than in terms of specific words), might profit from the methods of this study.

Diodotus succeeds in thwarting that kind of aim, for the time being;²⁷ on the other hand, the first assembly scene of Book 4 shows a denunciation that succeeded. This assembly scene occurs mid-way through Thucydides' Pylos story, and follows immediately upon the speech in which the Spartans present their case for a treaty and an alliance in return for the 420 men besieged on the island. The scene is interesting for many reasons, but also because it shows that Thucydides, unlike Aristophanes, was careful to show Cleon's strengths, as well as his weaknesses. Cleon, reintroduced as 'the demagogue at that time most persuasive to the People' (4.21.3, cf. 3.36.6), begins his response to the Spartans by defending Athens' interests: he persuades the assembly to require as a condition of negotiations that the Spartan prisoners surrender their arms and be brought to Athens, and moreover also to require that the Spartans give up the cities ceded to them in the thirty-year treaty of 446 'at a time when the Athenians had much greater need of a truce' (4.21.3; see 1.115.1 for the treaty). After this, the Athenians said, they would return the prisoners and negotiate a treaty 'at some time congenial to both parties' (4.21.3).

This answer prudently refuses to return the Spartan prisoners until Athens gains concrete concessions from her victories at Pylos. At the same time, it takes advantage of the Spartan ambassadors' argument that cities should make generous concessions to one another in the interests of peace. The Spartans had argued that their defeat was a disaster and that the Athenians should be generous with a view to creating good relations for the future (19.2–4). Moreover, they had said that treaties which forced unwilling parties to harsh agreements would not be firm ones (19.3). Cleon reminds the Spartans that these were hardly their views when they had the upper hand, and that

²⁷ At 4.122.6 Cleon succeeds in persuading the Athenians to put the Scionaeans to death, and to sell their wives and children into slavery. However, his speech is not represented.

Athens' defeats can just as easily be called 'disasters'.²⁸ He requires the Spartans to live up to the generosity their own speech has recommended by giving back the possessions they took under what the Athenians consider a harsh treaty agreement. Cleon's answer to the Spartan speech exposes its weaknesses and creates concrete benefits for Athens; considered, moreover, as a strategy to claim the People's goodwill, Cleon's position is genius.

However, Cleon is unwilling or unable to continue in this diplomatic manner. The Spartan ambassadors, who had believed that the Athenians were eager for peace (21.1), and perhaps still believe this, now ask to meet delegated representatives with whom they might discuss the Athenians' requirements point by point (22.1). In *Knights*, Cleon had used every opportunity to accuse others of political dishonesty. Thucydides now displays this same trait: 'Cleon then laid into them hard (πολύς ἐνέκειτο), saying that he had known even beforehand that they [the Spartans] had nothing right (δίκαιον) in mind, and that now it was clear, since they were refusing to speak to the many and wished to be representatives to a few men. And if they were thinking anything honest (ὄγιές), he told them to speak to all' (22.2).

The suggestion of Cleon's previous requirements, namely that the Spartans were asking the Athenians to do something they hadn't been willing to do themselves, is overwhelmed by this harsh accusation that the Spartans intend to deceive the democracy together with a few. Cleon's quick and loud advertisement of his certainty that the Spartans are fundamentally untrustworthy, his argument that their actions (i.e. asking to speak privately with a few representatives) betray how right he was to think this, and his challenge to the Spartans, to speak before the People, if they are not in fact plotting something underhanded, is indeed reminiscent of Aristophanes' Cleon,

²⁸ I.e., instead of being named as what they really are, namely humiliating military defeats. Cf. *ξυμφορά* at 4.21.3; the euphemism *ξυμφορά* appeared four times during the Spartans' foregoing speech. Cf. 17.1, 18.1, 18.4, and 20.2.

who persistently advertised himself as sniffing out plots against the demos, regardless of the weakness of the evidence (see below).

As for Thucydides' Spartans, they are put in an impossible diplomatic position by Cleon's insistence that they negotiate in public. As Thucydides explains, if they negotiated in public they might easily come into the reputation of betraying their allies while at the same time failing to reach an agreement with the Athenians (22.3). The Spartans, therefore, go home and the truce that had been established for the duration of the negotiations comes to an end. Overall, the scene shows that Cleon's denunciation scuttles the peace agreement, including the advantageous agreement he himself had formulated and recommended.

The second assembly scene contains a further number of denunciations. It occurs after the competition between Athens and Sparta at Pylos has resumed. At the moment, things are going badly for the Athenian besiegers, who are unable to prevent the Spartans on the island from being provisioned. As winter approaches, it becomes apparent that stormy weather will offer the besieged Spartans a realistic chance of escaping their Athenian guards (27.1). Realising this, the Athenians begin to regret refusing the Spartan peace offer (27.3), particularly as they observe that the Spartans have stopped sending ambassadors, and this makes them think that the Spartans feel more certain of being able to resolve the situation in their own favour (27.2).

After describing these thoughts and feelings of the assembly, Thucydides reintroduces Cleon, reporting that he had become aware of the Athenians' 'suspicion toward him in respect to preventing the agreement' (4.27.3).²⁹ Thucydides does not explain what the People's suspicion of Cleon might have been, and it seems possible that this statement would have been comprehensible to his audience, as it is to us, because of Aristophanes' suggestions (e.g. *Knights* 461–71, 792–6) that Cleon had scuttled the peace for the sake of

²⁹ Κλέων δὲ γνοὺς αὐτῶν τὴν ἐς αὐτὸν ὑποψίαν περὶ τῆς καλύμης τῆς ξυμβάσεως ... (27.3).

personal profit. Alternatively, of course, Thucydides' readers may themselves have remembered or heard of the suspicions to which Thucydides refers.

Whether or not this was the case, Thucydides' Cleon reacts to the suspicions against him in the manner of Aristophanes' Cleon, namely by accusing the messengers from Pylos of lying about the precariousness of the siege. This time, however, his baseless accusation is not believed. Instead, the People delegate him, with Theagenes, to go out to Pylos and assess the situation on the ground (27.3).³⁰ Their action is a perfect response to an accusation that is unsupported by evidence.

Thus, it is as if the assembly has seen through Cleon's tactics. However, Cleon finds a way to save the situation. When he realises that he is now trapped into 'either saying the same thing as those he had slandered, or saying the opposite, to be revealed as a liar' (4.27.4), and since he also perceives that the People are leaning toward sending an expedition, he makes a new suggestion, namely that if things are really so bad, the Athenians should not waste time with fact finding, but should lead a force to Pylos immediately (27.4). Thucydides therefore shows how Cleon initially tries to distract attention from the suspicions against him by attacking the messengers. He is briefly trapped by his accusation when the assembly decides to send him out to Pylos, but is able to figure out what the People want, and to offer it to them, thus escaping—for the moment.

However, Cleon must now require a renewed expedition to Pylos, and in addition, he still must turn the blame for the deteriorating siege on someone other than himself. He therefore attacks Nicias, an established political enemy (27.5), 'rebuking him that it would be easy, if the generals were men, to sail with an armed force and to capture those on the island, and that if he himself were a general, he would have done this' (27.5). Another insult-laden denunciation, then: where the Spartans were plotters and

³⁰ The identity of the Theagenes referred to here is unclear. He may or may not be the same man who is named at 5.19.2 and 5.24.1. Moreover, the spelling of the name is disputed. Cf. Hornblower (1996) ad loc.

the messengers from Pylos were liars, Nicias is an effeminate coward. However, for the second time in one assembly meeting Cleon's words bite himself rather than his opponent. The Assembly begins to grumble 'that he should sail right now, if it seems to him easy' and Nicias tells him the same thing, namely that he should lead a campaign to Sphacteria, taking whatever forces he likes (28.1). Once again, then, Cleon is trapped by his own words, and this time there will be no escape. At first, Cleon thinks Nicias is not speaking in earnest, but he is ultimately compelled to realise that Nicias intends his offer seriously. Thucydides then affords the reader the satisfaction of seeing this aggressive abuser of others afraid (*δεδιώσας*, 28.2) and making excuses ('He said that not he himself, but that one [Nicias], was general'), all in vain.³¹

As the scene draws to its close Thucydides continues to emphasise that Cleon ended up with the command at Pylos because he failed to extricate himself from his accusations against others: Nicias called the Athenians to witness that he would withdraw in Cleon's favour, and 'the more Cleon tried to escape and *to take back what he had said*, the more the crowd shouted for Nicias to hand over his office, and for him [Cleon] to sail' (4.28.3). Finally, when Cleon saw that there was '*no longer any backing out of his words*', he denied being afraid (but Thucydides has instructed us), and took his great oath not only to go to Pylos, but to take no further troops from Athens itself, and to kill or bring back the Spartans within twenty days (28.4).³²

Overall, the second assembly scene offers a portrait of a slanderous demagogue whose (habitual) denunciations

³¹ Connor (1984) 114 argues that the scene is 'delicious' because of Cleon's violent character in the Mytilenaeon debate. I regret that the further connections to the Mytilenaeon debate, not to mention to Thucydides' description of Cleon's subsequent campaigns, cannot here be discussed. See Rusten (2006) 552–3 with n. 15, on Thucydides' depiction of Cleon's cowardice in battle.

³² On Cleon's claim that he is not afraid, after Thucydides has told us that he is, see above all Babut (1986) 72. On oaths and their status in Thucydides (this is a rare fulfilled oath), cf. Lateiner (2012).

misfire twice in one assembly meeting.³³ The vividness of this account arises partly from the detailed portrait of Cleon's psychology.³⁴ Schneider attributes Thucydides' treatment of Cleon to 'calculated malice'.³⁵ Perhaps, but is it not possible that Thucydides' late war or post-war audience, which faced the consequences of Cleon's rhetoric and politics, was receptive to a detailed retelling of how such a man first came to command Athenian armies, with one analyst's view of why this complex moment worked out the way it did?

I further suggest that it makes sense to expect that Thucydides would have predicted and perhaps relied on his audience to associate the denunciations he represents here with the lengthy contests of denunciation and accusation typical of *Knights* and other Aristophanic plays. As mentioned, Aristophanes had made denunciations into a central element of his characterisation of Cleon. The Paphlagonian's first words in *Knights* (235–9) fiercely attack Nicias and Demosthenes for plotting to revolt Athens' Chalcidean subordinates. In this scene, the Paphlagonian sees a Chalcidean cup that was in fact stolen from himself, and threatens to advertise it as a sign that his fellow slaves have been bribed into collusion. Aristophanes thus began *Knight's* attack on Cleon by showing that Cleon deflected suspicion from himself by creating baseless accusations against others, just as we have seen also in Thucydides.

As listed above, this initial accusation is followed by many similar ones;³⁶ they culminate in the Paphlagonian's threat to denounce the Sausage Seller and the Knights to

³³ Cf. Westlake (1968) 71–2.

³⁴ Schneider (1974) 46–52 offers a useful review of Thucydides' many references to Cleon's changing perception of his situation.

³⁵ Schneider (1974) 49: 'kalkulierte Bosheit'.

³⁶ For example: the Paphlagonian accuses the Sausage Seller of helping the Spartan fleet (278); he threatens to denounce the Sausage Seller for religious offenses (299); he accuses him of plotting (in general, apparently) (314), and of stealing from Athens (345); he threatens prosecution (442); he calls the Knights conspirators (453), and accuses them of plotting against him (462); etc.

the Athenian *boulé* for plotting against Athens with Persia (475–9). This threat is made in direct response to the Sausage Seller's suggestion (465–74) that Cleon is deriving personal profit from private negotiations with the Spartans over the prisoners captured at Pylos, the suspicion against Cleon to which Thucydides seems to have referred at 27.3 in the expectation that he would be understood.

Many other similarities between the play and the historical narrative might be mentioned: Cleon's angry character in both writers, for instance;³⁷ the fact that in both the play and the history Cleon is trapped by his own devices; or the fact that both the play and the historian show that Cleon stole the credit for the victory at Pylos from the general Demosthenes.³⁸ Likewise, Thucydides takes up Aristophanes' characterisation of the assembly itself with his examination of Athenian greed. His important and repeated image of the assembly 'stretching out for more' (4.17.4, 21.2, 41.4, 92.2), reconfigures the greed that was a main characteristic of the corrupt demos of *Knights*. It is precisely these and other such similarities that have led to the 'theory of common resentment', a biographical hypothesis, which argues that the similarities between the two depictions of Cleon represent shared personal biases. But power hungry demagogues and impetuous leaders do exist. Thucydides might have suspected that his post-war audience would derive some satisfaction from a vivid description of how Cleon's denunciations to the assembly trapped him into the command at Pylos, and perhaps also satisfaction from the renewal of Aristophanic themes. Aristophanes was still alive and producing plays among them during the post-war period, but it was hardly going to

³⁷ See Biles (2016) 130–1 for the continuing prominence of anger in Aristophanes' characterisation of Cleon and his followers in *Wasps*.

³⁸ Subsequent chapters of Thucydides' account lengthily confirm Aristophanes' accusation that Cleon stole the credit for the victory at Pylos from Demosthenes, whom Thucydides represents as the careful and only planner of the battle in which the Spartans were captured (see esp. 4.29–30).

be possible for the playwright himself to claim that he had been right, and the People wrong, about Cleon.

III. Conclusion

Thucydides' second assembly scene ends with Cleon's great oath to bring the Spartans back to Athens within twenty days, and with laughter. Thucydides reports that Cleon's foolish talk (*κουφολογία*) is amusing to the Athenians, and that 'laughter falls upon them' (28.5). The Athenians can still laugh at this point in the war. However, laughter in Thucydides is not comic.³⁹ Cleon will fulfill his oath and consolidate his position at Athens—no laughing matter for Thucydides' post-war audience.

The status of laughter in Thucydides is only one of a number of sharp differences between comedy and historiography. As we have just seen, Thucydidean scenes can be highly ironic, with many unexpected reversals. However, the decorum of Thucydidean historiography seems to forbid outright jokes, and certainly expels any kind of fabulosity, such as is familiar from nearly every Aristophanic play.⁴⁰ Likewise, the obvious and declared partisanship of the comic poets is not suitable for historiography. As has been noted, Thucydides recorded Cleon's political capacities in a long direct speech and in accounts of his political behaviour, whereas Aristophanes will give Cleon no credit for anything. Finally, Thucydidean

³⁹ Cf. 3.83.1, where the destructive effects of stasis include ridicule of honesty. On laughter and its use in the historians, cf. de Romilly (1966), Lateiner (1977). Assemblies laugh twice in Thucydides (here and at 6.35.1), and both times the predictions they laugh at, rather than being risible, come true.

⁴⁰ Other ironic or lighter scenes in Thucydides can be found, for instance, at 1.91 or 4.3–4. On Thucydides' close control over mythology cf. Munson (2017).

historiography differs from comedy in another important aspect, namely in its willingness fundamentally to criticise the People. In *Knights* Aristophanes had critiqued, but ultimately exonerated the demos (1326).⁴¹ By contrast, Thucydides showed that the Athenian Assembly of its own fault allowed Cleon to lead it to violent decisions and significant defeats; by the time he wrote, these were, as mentioned above, a matter of fearful memory, symbolic of the excesses that had caused Athens to lose its leading position in the Greek world. The suggestion of this paper is that Thucydides' vivid resuscitation of Aristophanes' warnings about the assembly's willfulness and the character of the leader who promoted this willfulness responded to the prominence of the consequences of Cleon's leadership in the late-war and post-war period.

Thucydides thus revived Aristophanes' political analysis of Cleon and the assembly, and historians after Thucydides continued to use comedy as a source for historiographical proofs and analyses. As has been recently discussed by Parmeggiani, fourth-century historians both quoted comedy directly and also used comedy as a source when describing the fifth century.⁴² It is tempting to speculate that in doing so they were in fact elaborating on a relationship already visible in Thucydides, even if Thucydides' relationship to comedy had taken a different form. Thucydides does not 'quote' Aristophanes, who was, as mentioned, alive and well at Athens during this period.⁴³ He nevertheless reawakens his views for an audience that

⁴¹ Henderson (2017) 608–9: 'Aristophanes is careful never to portray the demos as intrinsically unfit for sovereignty but puts all the blame on its demagogic, that is, deceptive leaders: all would be well (again) if the demos turned once more to "the best" as its advisors, as in the good old days ...'

⁴² Parmeggiani (2014) 115–32, and Baron in this volume.

⁴³ See also Tordoff in this volume.

was looking, possibly, not only for answers to questions about the war, but also for a connection to its own past.⁴⁴

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⁴⁴ Cf. Hanink (2014) and (2015). I owe a deep debt of thanks to Emily Baragwanath, a fearless organisator of panels and indispensable editor. In addition, I must thank Donald Lateiner, Daniel Tompkins, †Geoffrey Hawthorn, Frances Pownall, as well as the invaluable anonymous reviewers of *Histos*, for advice, corrections, and encouragement. Finally, I owe thanks to CAMWS, which in 2013 generously hosted the panel ‘Clio and Thalia: Reconsidering the Relation of Attic Old Comedy and Historiography’ at which a version of this paper was first read.

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MEMORY AND THE RHETORIC OF
ΣΩΤΗΡΙΑ IN ARISTOPHANES’
*ASSEMBLY WOMEN**

Rob Tordoff

Abstract. This paper presents a historicising reading of Aristophanes’ *Assembly Women* in the context of Athenian politics in 392/1. Aristophanes’ thematic engagement with memory and the rhetoric of *σωτηρία* (‘safety’, ‘preservation’, ‘salvation’) is a case study of ideological struggle over language in the politics of democratic Athens. The word evokes a long and tumultuous history of revolution in Athens stretching back to 411, when Athenian democracy first voted itself out of existence, as the assembly does in *Assembly Women*. Read from this perspective, *Assembly Women* is hardly less topical than Aristophanes’ fifth-century plays. On the contrary, history, memory, and the past were centrally topical in Athenian politics in late 390s Athens, and all may be illuminated by an integrated study of the contemporary evidence of comedy, oratory, and historiography.

1. Introduction

In *Assembly Women* the assembly that Praxagora persuades to hand over power to the women of Athens is convoked for the purpose of debating the ‘*sôtéria*’ of the city; so too was the assembly summoned to Kolonos in 411, the assembly that gathered after the battle of Elateia in

* I would like to thank Emily Baragwanath and Edith Foster for the invitation to present the paper on which this essay is based at a conference panel at the 2013 meeting of CAMWS in Iowa City, for the opportunity to contribute an essay to this collection, and for their historical and editorial expertise and advice. Thanks are due also to the anonymous reader, whose suggestions improved a number of aspects of my work. In this essay, ancient Greek is transliterated and all but names of people, places, and very widely recognised terms (e.g. polis) are italicised, with the exception that authors, historical persons, and places well-known outside the discipline of Classics are given in Latinate form (e.g. Thucydides, Alcibiades, Attica).

339, and that summoned after the defeat at Khaironeia in 338.¹ The ancient Greek word *sôtêria* is usually translated into English as ‘deliverance’ or ‘salvation’, and it would seem justifiable to infer a crisis in the background to *Assembly Women*. After the end of the Social War, Isocrates apologises for addressing the question of the *sôtêria* of the city when Athens is not in any immediate danger (*Areop.* 7.1). Puzzlingly, Aristophanes’ *Assembly Women* does not make clear what emergency the polis is meant to be facing, and critics have complained that no event nor set of circumstances during the Corinthian War, into which historical context the play must somewhere fit, seems to furnish an adequate point of origin for the plot.² The difficulties are sharpened by the fact that among Aristophanes’ eleven surviving plays *Assembly Women* alone is without a generally agreed date for its first performance.³ Arguments have been presented for a range of possibilities from 394 to 389, with the most persuasive favouring the years 392 to 390.⁴

¹ *Eccl.* 396–7; cf. 202, 401, 412. Kolonos: *Ath. Pol.* 29.4. Elateia: Dem. 18.170. Khaironeia: Dem. 18.248. It is generally, but not universally, accepted that the assembly which Thucydides describes being held at Kolonos (8.67.2) is to be identified with that in *Ath. Pol.* 29.4–5; see Rhodes (1981) 363–5.

² For example, Ober (1998) 130 (cf. 150) writes (his emphasis) ‘Aristophanes never explicitly alludes to a particular problem, to a proximate cause ... no particular crisis is ever mentioned.’ Cf. Sommerstein (1998) 18; Reinders (2001) 251.

³ The date of *Thesmophoriazusae* is not absolutely certain, but 411 is almost universally accepted and the only alternative is the following year. Cf. Austin–Olson (2002) xxxv: ‘[t]he evidence ... overwhelmingly supports a date of 411’. For the suggestion that the play might date to 410, see Hall (1989) 53–4; Rhodes (1972) 185–90.

⁴ It is clear that *Ecclesiazusae* must antedate *Plutus*, which was performed in the archonship of Antipatros in 389/8 (*Hypoth.* III). In the *Prolegomena on Comedy* (XXVII Koster), *Plutus* is connected, along with the lost *Cocalus*, to the last years of Aristophanes’ career and the beginning of some form of collaboration with his son Araros, whereas *Eccl.* receives no mention in this context. A number of oblique references in *Eccl.* 193–203, 356 are plausibly explained as allusions to political events of the late 390s, but the evidence does not permit a

In this essay, I suggest a new reconstruction of the immediate political background against which Aristophanes wrote *Assembly Women*. My reconstruction accepts the most widely held and current view of the date of *Assembly Women* (spring 392/1),⁵ but argues that the evidence of Andokides' third oration, *On the Peace* (earlier in 392/1), has been overlooked in earlier work on Aristophanes' penultimate surviving play. What has hitherto been a puzzlingly inexplicable sense of crisis in *Assembly Women* can be persuasively explained by the political debate surrounding the peace negotiations between Athens and Sparta that Andokides describes. For there was a panic in Athens in the latter part of 392, in the period in which Aristophanes was most probably at work on *Assembly Women*. The panic was created by the fear that history might repeat itself if Athens and Sparta made peace. Significant numbers of Athenians believed, or at least publicly claimed, that if the city made peace with Sparta, it would lead to the dismantling of the democracy and the return of oligarchy to Athens, as had happened at the end of the Peloponnesian War in 404. Andokides sought to counter these fears by urging acceptance of his brokered peace with what amounted to a public lecture on Athenian history (3.3–12), demonstrating that no negotiated peace treaty with Sparta had ever led to the fall of the democracy.

In my view, it is not coincidental that in 411, when the democracy was facing the threat of oligarchic revolution,

conclusive view of the exact year: cf. Funke (1980) 171. *Σ Eccl.* 193 offers a date for the play but the text is corrupt and even after plausible restoration remains inconclusive: see Strauss (1986) 149 n. 85. The latest proposed date of 389 (Judeich (1892) 89 n. 1) is no longer seriously entertained: see Funke (1980) 170–1 with n. 19. Ussher (1973) xx–xxv favours an early date of 393, giving priority to the evidence of *Σ* 193; *contra* Funke (1980) 168 n. 3. For arguments for dates from 392 to 390, see Funke (1980) 168–71 (392 or 391); Seager (1967) 107 n. 110 (391 or 390, narrowly favouring 390); *contra*: Funke (1980) 170 with n. 15; but see Sommerstein (1998) 7 n. 35; Sommerstein (1998) 5–7 (favouring 391).

⁵ For the evidence and arguments, see Sommerstein (1998) 5–7; cf. Barry (1942) 4–14 with references to the earlier literature at 13 n. 2; Carrière (1979) 177–82.

Aristophanes wrote his other surviving ‘women plays’.⁶ Nor is it a coincidence, in view of the political background furnished by Andokides, that in *Assembly Women* Aristophanes has the democracy vote itself out of existence at an assembly debating the *sôtêria* of the polis, just as the assembly had done at Kolonos in 411.⁷ The sense of history and its ideological fashioning that I argue is found in *Assembly Women* had recently been given very public prominence by Andokides in his oration *On the Peace*. This and presumably other now lost discourses circulating around Andokides’ peace proposals, I suggest, may have provoked Aristophanes to reflect on Athenians’ memories of the events of the previous two decades.⁸

Assembly Women, then, was written as a comic meditation on the Athenian experience of revolution, which had at the time a history stretching back twenty years to 411.⁹ I elucidate the argument by tracing the history of the rhetoric of *sôtêria* at Athens, reconstructed from Thucydides and a handful of other contemporary sources. In anticipation of my conclusions, I will show that *Assembly Women* is a highly political and topical play of the 390s, whereas topicality and political engagement are qualities that have often been

⁶ *Lys.* was certainly performed in 412/11 and *Th.* was all but certainly performed in the same year. Date of *Lys.*: *Hypoth.* 1.33–4. Date of *Th.*: above, n. 4. For the gender politics of *Lys.*, *Th.*, and *Eccl.*, see below, n. 38.

⁷ *Eccl.* 455–7; cf. Thuc. 8.67, 69.1; *Ath. Pol.* 29.1, 30.1.

⁸ Presumably Thucydides is also in the intellectual background somewhere. Andokides 3.2 (χρή γάρ, ὃ Ἀθηναῖοι, τεκμηρίοις χρῆσθαι τοῖς πρότερον γενομένοις περὶ τῶν μελλόντων ἔσεσθαι) may echo Thucydides (1.22.4), but caution is advisable: similar phrasing is found at *Lys.* 25.23 and the idea that the past may be used to predict the future is a commonplace: Edwards (1995) 194; cf. Nouhaud (1982) 88–9 (also citing less exact parallels in Isoc. 1.34, 2.35). Even on a revisionist down-dating of Thucydides, which I argue for in Tordoff (2014), Aristophanes will have had several years to read and digest the historian’s work before composing *Assembly Women*. For possible scenarios of the circulation of Thucydides’ ideas (e.g. readings at symposia), see Hornblower (1987) 29 n. 65; (2004) 33.

⁹ Cf. the general picture sketched by Scholtz (2007) 71–109.

found wanting in Aristophanes' late works.¹⁰ Moreover, I will argue that the play is concerned with memory, history, and the past in a new way, one that is exemplified in none of Aristophanes' earlier surviving dramas, but one that does suggest parallels with historiography, especially in the form of Thucydides' project in Athens after the Peloponnesian War. For what was topical and political in late 390s Athens was precisely the ideological struggle over the city's past.

II. Andokides' Speech *On the Peace*, Athenian History, and Fear of Oligarchy

At some point in the first half of the Athenian archon year of Philokles (392/1), Andokides returned from Sparta to address the Athenian assembly.¹¹ At Sparta he had

¹⁰ For a collection of negative judgments on *Eccl.*, see David (1984) 1 n. 1.

¹¹ Philoch. *FGrHist* 328 F 149a dates the peace negotiations at Sparta, which are the subject of Andok. 3, to the archonship of Philokles (392/1). Andokides' speech is usually placed in the fall or winter of 392/1. The internal evidence of the speech agrees with Philochorus: Andokides says (3.20) that the Corinthian War has been being fought for four years, i.e. summer 395–summer 392, but this provides no exact *terminus post quem*. Andokides' words imply a context for the speech at some point after midsummer 392 (for a succinct presentation of the chronological problems, see Ryder (1965) 168–9). A *terminus ante quem* is provided by 3.27, which cannot fit a context later than Agesilaos' invasion of Argos in spring 391 (described by Xen. *Hell.* 4.4.19). The *terminus post quem* emerges from 3.18, where Andokides mentions the capture of Lekhaion by the Spartans, but the dating of this event within the year 392 is uncertain. Cawkwell (1976) 271 n. 13 places it in the spring; Funke (1980) 84 in summer; and Strauss (1986) 147 n. 62 in the fall. Andokides' language in 3.18 refers to Lekhaion and the battles of Nemea and Coronea in the same breath, although Nemea and Coronea were fought two years earlier in 394. His words (τοτὲ μὲν ... αὐθις δ' ... τρίτον δ' ἤνικα Λέχαιον ἔλαβον) 'At one time ... then again ... and for the third time when they captured Lekhaion' fit better if the capture of Lekhaion lies some appreciable time before the speech. In my view the best that can be made of the difficult evidence is that Lekhaion was captured in the spring and that Andokides delivered his speech in the late summer. Albini (1964) 11–12 places Andoc. 3 in spring 392, but the chronology he uses for the Corinthian War is no longer the accepted

negotiated the terms of a peace, which he referred for debate to the sovereign *dēmos*.¹² The strategy of Andokides' speech is highly defensive: he clearly anticipated a hostile and prejudiced audience, many among whom feared, or were inciting the fear, that peace with Sparta would lead to a repeat of the events of 404, with the dissolution of the democracy and the imposition of a Spartan-backed oligarchy.¹³ Athenians in 392/1 will no doubt have recalled the desperate times in 405/4 when Theramenes spent months negotiating at Sparta while Athens was brought to its knees by starvation.¹⁴ In the event, Andokides' presentation of the terms of peace failed spectacularly. It is not certain who was behind the opposition, but it has been plausibly suggested that Thrasyboulos championed the rejection of Andokides' peace and the continuation of the

one and he undervalues the evidence of Philochorus, a hazardous approach to fourth-century history.

The chronology of the Corinthian War is a vexed subject. For a survey: Funke (1980) 76 n. 4. My general chronology for 395–391 follows Ryder (1965) 165–9, and my chronology of the year 392 follows most closely that of Cawkwell (1976) 271 n. 13, but the whole edifice is supported by the assumption (cf. Ryder (1965) 165–6) that the second sentence of Xen. *Hell.* 4.4.1 subsumes all the land-campaign events of 393. This assumption is made also by, *inter alios*, Funke (1980) 81–9; Hamilton (1979) 249–51; Strauss (1986) 147 n. 57; Tuplin (1982a) 75. For a different view, see Buckler (2003) 104–9, cf. (1999) 210 n. 1; Pascual (2009) 75–90.

¹² *Hypoth.* Andoc. 3 reports that the authenticity of *On the Peace* was denied in antiquity by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Harpocration notes the possibility that it might be spurious in the three entries in which he quotes it: s.v. Ἐλληνοταμίαι, νεώρια, Πηγαί. Some modern scholars have followed suit: for references, see Jebb (1893) 1.127; but in recent times the speech has generally been accepted as genuine: cf. Edwards (1995) 107–8. Doubts have arisen because of the historical inaccuracies in 3.3–12 and the fact that Aeschines (2.172–6) repeats the same information almost verbatim. For discussion, see Albin (1964) 17–24, esp. 23 for a pithy rejoinder to unwarranted doubts about 3.3–12: 'Andocide non è uno storico.'

¹³ For this aspect of the political context of the speech, see Missiou (1992) 61–6; Seager (1967) 105–6.

¹⁴ Lys. 12.68–70, 13.9–14; Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.10–23; Diod. Sic. 13.107.4.

war.¹⁵ What is known is that the ambassadors were prosecuted on a motion moved by Kallistratos.¹⁶ The charges leveled are unclear, but nearly fifty years later Demosthenes refers to disobeying instructions, reporting misleading information to the *boulé*, giving false evidence concerning the allies, and corruption.¹⁷ The accused fled into exile to avoid standing trial on capital charges; presumably they were condemned to death *in absentia*.¹⁸

Andokides' speech preserves valuable evidence of a panic about oligarchy in Athens in 392. It is clear that he knew of the panic before he sailed to Sparta to negotiate because he returned to Athens to present his case for peace anticipating its arguments. In the very first section of *On the Peace* Andokides adverts to the opposition of speakers who have been claiming that a peace treaty with Sparta will present the very great danger to the *dēmos* of the overthrow of the constitution.¹⁹ The same characterisation of the political mood in Athens forming the background to the peace negotiations at Sparta is restated more emphatically a little later (3.10):

¹⁵ Seager (1967) 107–8; cf. *Eccl.* 202–3, 356–7.

¹⁶ The indictment was probably made by *εἰσαγγελία* to the assembly, though we do not know whether the case was heard by the assembly or by a court: see Hansen (1975) 87–8. For Kallistratos as the mover, see Philoch., *FGrHist* 328 F 149a.

¹⁷ Dem. 19.227–9. On the problem of what 'disobeying instructions' means in the context of an embassy 'with full powers', see Pownall (1995).

¹⁸ Flight into exile: Ps.-Plut. *Moralia* 835A. Capital charge (*θάνατον*): Dem. 19.277, where Demosthenes reports this as the charge against at least one member of the embassy, Epikrates. The latter, Epikrates of Kephisia (*PA* 4859; *PAA* 393945), was a popular democrat and a supporter of renewed Athenian imperialism. If Epikrates was condemned to death, it is reasonable to assume that the other delegates, especially a man like Andokides, whose democratic credentials were far more suspect, suffered the same sentence. It is possible that Epikrates was pardoned and returned to Athens, if *IG* ii² 6444 is indeed his gravestone (cf. *PAA* 393950).

¹⁹ Andoc. 3.1: λέγουσι γὰρ ὡς ἔστι δεινότατον τῷ δήμῳ, γενομένης εἰρήνης, ἢ νῦν οὐσα πολιτεία μὴ καταλύθῃ.

ἤδη δέ τινων ἤκουσα λεγόντων ὡς ἐκ τῆς τελευταίας εἰρήνης τῆς πρὸς Λακεδαιμονίους οἳ τε τριάκοντα κατέστησαν πολλοί τε Ἀθηναίων κώνειον πίνοντες ἀπέθανον οἱ δὲ φεύγοντες ὄχοντο.

Before now I have heard some men saying that as a result of the last peace with the Lacedaemonians we had the Thirty, many Athenians died by drinking hemlock, and others disappeared in exile.

The most important word is the first, the temporal adverb ἤδη ('before now', 'already'): it clearly conveys the pre-existing atmosphere of suspicion and hostility towards the negotiations at Sparta. Evidently, when Andokides and his fellow delegates were sent to Sparta, there was already a panic in Athens about the possibility of 'history' repeating itself with capitulation to Sparta and the removal of democracy, barely more than a decade after the restoration of the constitution in 403. In response to this, Andokides' rhetorical strategy in *On the Peace* is to instruct the *dēmos* on its peace treaties with Sparta since the mid-fifth century.²⁰ A number of inaccuracies notwithstanding, Andokides demonstrates that Athens has made peace with Sparta three times in the past without the democratic constitution suffering. He also shows, correctly, that the case of the end of the Peloponnesian War in 404 is irrelevant because at that time Athens surrendered to Sparta, whereas in 392 peace could be negotiated on an equal footing.

It is impossible to determine to what extent the opposition to Andokides was fueled by genuine fear of history repeating itself if Athens made peace with Sparta, or to

²⁰ On Andokides' historical inaccuracies in *De Pace*, see Perlman (1961) 163; cf. Albini (1964) 17–18. For a defence of Andokides and the argument that his information derives from the *Atthis* of Hellanicus, see Thompson (1967). For recent discussion of Andok. 3 and the 'uses of history', see Grethlein (2010) 126–44; cf. Steinbock (2012) 1–99 (esp. 74–5 on *De Pace*) on the oratorical use of history in social memory in a predominantly oral society.

what extent the panic was cynically stoked by Athenians who favoured continuing the war. I suspect, but cannot prove, that it was more a case of the latter;²¹ but we must remember that in 391 no Athenian knew that the democracy would survive down to the period of Macedonian hegemony some seventy years later. What is abundantly clear is that oligarchy and the history of Athenians' conduct in 404–403 was a topic of extreme political antagonism in the period of *Assembly Women* and for many years afterwards.

Athens experienced two episodes of murderous oligarchic revolution in the late fifth century, after almost one hundred years of uninterrupted democratic rule since the expulsion of Hippias in 511/10.²² In 411 the oligarchs murdered a number of their opponents, though 'not many' according to Thucydides (Thuc. 8.65.2, 70.2). The Thirty probably executed 1,500 Athenians, more than the casualties caused by the Peloponnesians in ten years of war, as the herald Kleokritos memorably claimed after the battle of Mounikhia.²³ Social trauma on this scale is not easily forgotten, and the reconciliation of democrats and oligarchs in the famous amnesty was a tremendous achievement.²⁴

²¹ These attitudes become a rhetorical topos by the mid fourth century. Isoc. 7.51 (ca. 355 BCE) chides the Athenians for the knee-jerk reaction that men who desire peace are likely oligarchs.

²² Hdt. 5.55; Thuc. 6.59.4, 8.68.4; *Ath. Pol.* 19.2, 19.6, 32.2.

²³ Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.21; cf. *Ath. Pol.* 35.4; Isoc. 4.113, 7.67, 20.11; Aesch. 2.77, 3.235. Σ Aesch. 1.39 reports on the authority of Lysias that 2,500 Athenians died.

²⁴ The literature on the reconciliation and the amnesty is very large and a full bibliography is impractical in this place. Two ground-breaking studies have appeared recently: Carawan (2013), esp. on the period after 403, the legal dimensions of the amnesty and reconciliation agreement, and trials under the restored democracy; Shear (2011) on the whole period from 411, the archaeology and topography of commemoration, and the inscription of the laws of Athens. For further discussion of the amnesty, reconciliation, and the aftermath of 404, see Loening (1987); Loraux (2002); Wolpert (2002a). On the functioning and success of the amnesty, see Ober (2002); Quillin (2002); Wolpert (2002b). For the legal scope of the amnesty: Carawan (2002), (2006), (2012), cf.

Yet bitterness remained on both sides, as did fear and suspicion: Athenians had long memories.²⁵ The grave monument of Kritias (location unknown) is said to have remembered the oligarchs as good men who had for a brief time restrained the *hybris* of the accursed *dêmos* of the Athenians; a representation of *Oligarkhia* setting a torch to *Dêmokratia* was carved on the stone.²⁶ In the immediate aftermath of the return of the democrats, many supporters of the oligarchy had left Athens and established a new community at Eleusis. Eleusis was forcibly and treacherously reincorporated by democrat irredentists in the archonship of Xenainetos (401/0), according to Xenophon following reports that Eleusis was raising a force of mercenaries.²⁷

Despite the amnesty and Arkhinos' introduction of a law enabling the use of the *paragraphê* to block trials on matters contravening it (Isoc. 18.1–3), Athenians found ways to settle old scores. For example, Lysias claims that the courts condemned to death an informer called Menestratos after the amnesty (Lys. 13.56). Most famous of all, Socrates drank the hemlock in 399, convicted of corrupting the minds of young men and introducing new gods. There was something like an on-going witch-hunt for oligarchs and their sympathisers in early fourth-century Athens, as is suggested, for example, by the scrutiny of Mantitheus in the late 390s (Lys. 16.6). Naturally, one strategy for avoiding or deflecting suspicion was to trumpet the disloyalty of others as loudly as possible. The prosecutors of Andokides in 400 included Meletos, who had arrested the general Leon of

(2013) 1–42; *contra*: Joyce (2008). For the readmission of former oligarchs into Athenian society and political life, note esp. Lys. 16.8, 26.2.

²⁵ Note that it was not only the events of 404/3 that were remembered: for example, the speaker of Isoc. 20.10 reminds the jury that democracy was overthrown twice, i.e. in 411 and 404; cf. Lys. 34.1.

²⁶ Σ Aesch. 1.39 = D–K 88 A 13.

²⁷ Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.43. For the date, see *Ath. Pol.* 40.4.

Salamis on the orders of the Thirty, and Epikhares, who had served on the oligarchic council.²⁸

The democracy reserved particular venom for members of the cavalry.²⁹ They had remained in the city under the Thirty and had been instrumental in fighting against the democrats and in the massacre of the Eleusinians.³⁰ Soon after the restoration of democracy, Theozotides reduced the polis stipend for cavalry service; he was attacked for it in return, as the fragmentary speech of Lysias *Against Theozotides* shows.³¹ In the same year that Socrates was executed, the assembly voted to send 300 cavalrymen to Asia with the Spartans, a move that Xenophon describes as a purge (Xen. *Hell.* 3.1.4). That Athenians of cavalry status were at pains to protest their loyalty to the democratic constitution, or to distance themselves from any slur of former oligarchic sympathies, is made clear by the grave stele of Dexileos son of Lysanias of Thorikos, which extraordinarily records the year of Dexileos' birth (the archonship of Teisandros: i.e. 414/3), placing his innocence of participation in the oligarchies of 411–10 and 404–3 beyond all possible doubt. Similarly, the casualty list of the cavalry at Koroneia in 394 was probably erected to illustrate cavalry loyalty to the democracy, since the fallen were already commemorated on the polis list of casualties.³²

²⁸ Meletos (*PA* 9825; *PAA* 639292): Andoc. 1.94; cf. MacDowell (1962) 208–10 on the different men named Meletos in this period (this Meletos may be the same man as *PAA* 639290 and 639340). Epikhares (*PA* 4991; *PAA* 399195): Andoc. 1.95, 99. This man is perhaps Epikhares of Lamptrai (*PAA* 399525; cf. Lys. 12.55).

²⁹ For more detailed accounts, see Bugh (1988) 129–43; Spence (1993) 216–24, but note that 223 n. 250 is erroneous: Aristophanes does in fact mention the cavalry in *Assembly Women* (see *Eccl.* 846).

³⁰ Cavalry at Phyle: Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.2–7; at Mounikhia: 2.4.10; around Athens: 2.4.24–6; around Piraeus: 2.4.31–4; massacre at Eleusis: 2.4.8–10.

³¹ Lys. F 130 Carey (= *P. Hib.* I.14 F c). Discussion: Stroud (1971), esp. 297–301.

³² Dexileos (*PA* 3229; *PAA* 303605): *IG* ii² 6217; *SEG* 37.165. Cavalry casualties: *IG* ii² 5222; cf. *IG* ii² 5221 for the polis casualty list. See Bugh (1988) 138–9; Spence (1993) 219.

As late as 382, an Athenian called Euandros, who had presented himself as candidate for the office of eponymous archon, was charged with service on the *boulé* in 404/3 and membership of the cavalry (Lys. 26.10).³³

This brief sketch of Athenian attitudes to oligarchs and Athenians' memories of oligarchic government should be sufficient to illustrate and contextualise the hostility Andokides faced on his return from Sparta in 392.³⁴ It was probably not long after Andokides delivered *On the Peace* that Aristophanes turned his hand to writing *Assembly Women*.³⁵ The comic dramatist took up the theme of the history of oligarchic revolution at Athens and treated it in similar terms to those in which he had anticipated the rise of the Four Hundred in 411 in *Lysistrata* and (probably) in *Women at the Thesmophoria*—through a comic narrative constructed around the fantasy of a conspiracy of the women of Athens.³⁶ Aristophanes' treatment of the

³³ Euandros (*PA* 5267; *PAA* 426310) passed his *dokimasia* and became eponymous archon for 382/1 (e.g. Dem. 24.138).

³⁴ For full discussion of the memory of oligarchy and the democracy's response to it, see now Shear (2011). For shorter treatments, see Krentz (1982) 113–24; Strauss (1986) 89–120.

³⁵ For the slender evidence for the chronology of the granting of choruses and the production of drama at the Lenaia and Dionysia in classical Athens, see Wilson (2000) 51–2, 61–2.

³⁶ On the date of *Thesm.* see above, n. 4. As far as I am aware, there has never been any exploration of the idea that each of Aristophanes' surviving 'women plays' was written in response to the threat or fear of oligarchic revolution. For example, Taaffe (1993) 129–33 rightly connects the representation of gender in *Eccl.* to the changes the Peloponnesian War must have made to the demographic structure of the polis, but she assigns the play vaguely to 392 or 391 and does not investigate the precise political circumstances in which it was probably first performed; she therefore misses the similarities to the political situation in 412/11. My argument enables a new analysis of the political symbolism of gender on the Aristophanic stage, which I discuss in a forthcoming paper. For a different view of the political background to *Assembly Women*, see Rothwell (1990) 2–7. He takes the play to date to 'around 392' (*ibid.* 2 n. 9) and writes that 'oligarchy ... remained so thoroughly discredited that it would be only an external threat' (*ibid.* 3), and 'the setbacks of late 392 were not those of 404/3' (*ibid.* 5). From the

oligarchic panic in 392/1 deliberately and provocatively recalls his earlier plays plotted around the theme of female conspiracy, both written at a time when Athens did in fact succumb to an oligarchic revolution. In *Assembly Women* Aristophanes reminds the audience of the similarities (and differences) between what happened twenty years earlier and what has just happened in Andokides' peace negotiations with Sparta, alerting them to the long and tangled history of ideological struggle between democracy and its critics and opponents.

III. The Poetics of Memory in *Assembly Women*

Aristophanes' fifth-century works are highly topical political comedies. Critics too numerous to list have noticed that the late plays do not possess the same degree of topicality as the earlier dramas.³⁷ As a rule, historical reference in Aristophanes falls into two categories: contemporary and recent references overwhelmingly confined to the decade before the original production of the drama and references to a distant 'golden age', located over a generation (about forty years or more) before the play was first performed.³⁸ *Assembly Women* is unusual in two respects: first, it makes memory thematically important, an aspect of the play that

long, historical perspective, he is correct, but that is not how matters appeared to Athenians at the time.

³⁷ For a corrective study of *Plutus*, see Dillon (1987).

³⁸ Aristophanes' practice reveals remarkable consistency in this regard over a well-documented career of nearly forty years. As I demonstrate in a forthcoming paper, a typical Aristophanic comedy such as *Cavalry* (424 BCE) makes copious reference to historical persons and events; approximately 75% of these are recent or directly contemporary, and approximately 15% date back over forty years. References to points in time more than a decade before the original performance, or fewer than forty years before, are vanishingly rare, approximately 1%. The overwhelming majority of the recent references extend no more than five years before the first performance, with about two thirds of them belonging to the past year. The changes detectable in the late plays probably reflect the long shadow of the events of 404–403 but perhaps also an altered demographic profile of the audience.

has never, to my knowledge, been elucidated; second, the chronological range of its recent historical reference is deeper than most other plays of Aristophanes, including an unusual level of reference to things that happened more than ten years (indeed, more than fifteen years) before the play's original performance. In this section, I demonstrate that *Assembly Women* constructs an implied audience whose historical competence extends to detailed knowledge of Athenian history in the decade before the fall of the Athenian Empire. This feature of *Assembly Women* underwrites the play's engagement with the rhetoric of revolution at Athens discussed below.

The thematic interest in memory in *Assembly Women* begins in Praxagora's prologue speech. After her address to the lamp and a few lines setting the scene, she tells the audience a joke about something someone called Phyromakhos once said (21–3) which cannot on the present state of the evidence be explained. The identity of Phyromakhos and the nature of whatever it was he once said are uncertain,³⁹ but all that matters for the present

³⁹ The lines are: ... καταλαβεῖν δ' ἡμᾶς ἔδρας / δεῖ τὰς ἐταίρας κάγκαθιζομένας λαθεῖν, / ὡς Φυρόμαχος ποτ' εἶπεν, εἰ μέμνησθ' ἔτι. Σ *Eccl.* 22 offer two accounts. Either Phyromakhos (*PA* 15054; *PAA* 966780) was a tragic actor, actually called Kleomakhos, who accidentally aspired ἔδρας and was ridiculed for this *kakemphaton* (possible, but this Kleomakhos is otherwise unattested and the notice smacks of scholarly invention); or Phyromakhos was a politician who moved a decree about separate seating for men and women and separate seating for free women and prostitutes; if the forum to which this decree is supposed to have applied is the democratic assembly, it is plainly anachronistic and false, but the note does not actually specify that it refers to the assembly. For discussion, see Sommerstein *ad loc.*; for references to the earlier literature on these lines, see Ussher *ad loc.* It is tempting to speculate that the reference is to the reorganisation of seating in the *bouleuterion* in the archonship of Glaukippos in 410/09 (Philoch. *FGrHist* 328 F 140 = Σ *Ar. Plut.* 972), which must have been a reaction to the overthrow of democracy in 411 (cf. Rhodes (1972) 192). From this time members of the *boule* took their seats by letter (i.e. randomly), presumably to prevent any future conspirators sitting *en bloc*, which is what Praxagora plans to do in the assembly (21–3, cf. 86–7). Phyromakhos will have said something muddled (amusingly, given the first nominal element of his name: φύρα: mix) about the new system, probably shortly after the innovation, which

argument is the fact that the words ‘if you still remember that’ (*ei memnēsth’ eti*) are unique in Aristophanes. Nowhere else does the playwright alert the audience to a requirement that they think back to recall something they might have forgotten.⁴⁰ Positioned prominently in the prologue speech, this ‘old joke’ must be programmatic: in short, the poetic key to reading *Assembly Women* is that readers must cast their minds back and remember the past.

The poetics of memory are developed in a number of subsequent passages that variously underscore the ideological power of evoking the past, shape the chronological parameters within which the audience is to remember, and jog the audience’s memory. The longest passage in which the ideological value of the past is at issue appears in Praxagora’s rehearsal speech (221–32). These lines are unremarkable for their presentation of the past as a better world, but they are unique in Aristophanes for repeating a slogan (*ὡσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ*: ‘just as in the past’)

would explain why the reference is difficult to remember. What he said probably had to do with the word *hetairoi*, meaning members of a secret political organisation; these had been instrumental in the oligarchic revolutions of 411 and 404 (Thuc. 8.54.4; Lys. 12.43). No Phyromakhos is attested in the late 390s, but several men called Phyromakhos are known from the fifth century. Of the more likely candidates for mention in Aristophanes, one was a *basileus* probably in the last decade of the fifth century (*PA* 15053; *PAA* 966760); *IG* ³ 1384.

⁴⁰ The only (weak) parallel in Aristophanes is *Nub.* 924–6, where the mention of Pandeletos is marked as *passé*. Pandeletos is probably the same man found in Cratin. F 260 K–A, and the source of this fragment (*Suda* π 171) reports that in *Chirons* Cratinus made reference to a Pandeletos who was active in the assembly and the courts. Since the *Chirons* most likely dates to the mid-430s and the passage of Aristophanes in question is probably among the revisions made to the play (cf. *Hypoth.* VI), we may infer that the (implied) audience of *Clouds* II (probably *ante* 415) would have felt a reference to a citizen who had been notorious some fifteen or more years earlier to be distinctly ‘old hat’; in the *agôn* of *Clouds* the Better Argument is continually reproached with being out-of-date and it seems most likely that this is one more instance of the same. For different views of the date of *Clouds* II, compare Kopff (1990) and Storey (1993).

nine times.⁴¹ The extraordinary emphasis underlines the thematic importance of memory, history, and the past in *Assembly Women*.

The lost golden age is evoked in a short passage (302–6) condemning assembly pay as a despised innovation.⁴² The distant past is characterised as the time of Myronides in the mid fifth century, some seventy years earlier.⁴³ The strategy here is no different from that found in Aristophanes' earlier plays, but a number of other passages do something more remarkable in recalling the world of Athens before the end of the Peloponnesian War, fifteen or more years before. The first of these is quite general, so general in fact that the time to which it refers is the subject of some dispute. In it Praxagora explains that she learned her rhetorical skills when she lived on the Pnyx as a refugee at some point when the countryside had to be evacuated (243–4). It is not easy to believe that her words are meant to evoke the evacuation of Attica in 431, since she is elsewhere characterised as being fairly young (427–8),⁴⁴ but it is not impossible that members of the audience over the age of forty-five would think of the first evacuation of Attica since they would recall this as a distant memory from early childhood. More likely, however, her words will have prompted different members of the audience to recall their experiences in the period

⁴¹ The closest parallel is *Av.* 114–16 where ὄσπερ νό ποτε is repeated three times. For another Old Comic example, see *P. Oxy.* 2806.9–11 in Austin (1973) 49. Neither passage even approximates the demagogic extravagance of *Eccl.* 221–32.

⁴² Other disapproving references to the *ekklesiastikon* at 186–8.

⁴³ Myronides (*PA* 10509; *PAA* 663265 usually identified with *PAA* 663260), son of Kallias, fought at Plataea in 479 (*Plut. Arist.* 20.1) and held military command with distinction in the early to mid-450s: *Thuc.* 1.105.4 (at Megara in 458/7), 108.2–3 (at Oinophyta in 457/6). He is already a representative of the golden age in *Ar. Lys.* 801–3.

⁴⁴ She is said to look like Nikias. If this is Nikias (*PA* 10809; *PAA* 712525) the son of Nikeratos (c. 415–345), then Praxagora is youthful indeed. This Nikias was still a boy in 403 when he was placed in supplication on the knees of the Spartan king Pausanias (*Lys.* 18.10–11, 22) after the battle with the Athenian democrats outside Piraeus (cf. *Xen. Hell.* 2.4.30–38).

from 413 when the Peloponnesians occupied Dekeleia down to 405 when Athenians retreated to the protection of the city walls after the defeat at Aigospotamoi. As Ussher explains, ‘any time in the period from 413 to 405 will suit her use of this expression’.⁴⁵

A handful of less obtrusive references complete the picture. In 329–30 the neighbor asks Blepyros if Kinesias has emptied his bowels on him. The incident to which this refers probably belongs to the period before 405, since it was a joke already in *Frogs* (366). There Aristophanes mentions a dithyrambic poet who defecates on offerings made to Hekate and an ancient scholarly notice identifies Kinesias as the culprit.⁴⁶ A fragment of Lysias shows that Kinesias’ ‘unspeakable impiety’ was brought up in a prosecution brought against him.⁴⁷ Again, the recycling of an old joke which refers to something that had happened at least fifteen years earlier requires the audience to think back further than usual and to remember the period before the end of the Peloponnesian War.

In 183–5 Praxagora declares that once Athens held no assemblies at all, but at least in those days people knew Agyrrhios was good for nothing. It has been suggested that holding no assemblies is not to be taken literally, since the most recent period in which this had happened was under the Thirty.⁴⁸ It is indeed impossible to believe that Aristophanes would construct his audience with the first person pronoun ‘we’ as the ‘men of the City’ who had remained in Athens under the Thirty. Athenians who had done so were publically embarrassed at any opportunity, as the oratory of the period shows (e.g. Isoc. 16.43–4; Lys. 16.3, 26.2). But taking Praxagora’s words figuratively, as a reference to the time after 403 when it seems to have been

⁴⁵ Ussher (1973) *ad loc.* For a different view, see Sommerstein (1998) *ad loc.* In the end, members of the audience will have understood Praxagora’s words variously, according to their age and memories of their wartime experiences.

⁴⁶ Σ *Ran.* 366.

⁴⁷ Lysias, F 195 Carey *ap.* Athen. 12.551e–552b.

⁴⁸ Sommerstein (1998) *ad loc.*

difficult to achieve quorum in the assembly,⁴⁹ is tricky, since the negative adverbial phrase *ouden to parapan* ('not at all') is not very common in Aristophanes: it is emphatic, and its force is absolute.⁵⁰ It is best, therefore, to take Praxagora at her word and to recall the other time when Athens really had held no assemblies whatsoever: that is, the roughly four months in 411 when the Four Hundred had been in power (*Ath. Pol.* 33.1). Agyrrhios is known at the earliest from just before 405; an ancient scholarly notice in Aristophanes' *Frogs* cites him as a possible candidate for a proposal to reduce remuneration for comic poets.⁵¹ But he is likely to have been a recognisable figure before then: he was probably born before 440, and this allows enough room for him to be politically known by the end of the 410s when he would have been at least thirty.⁵²

In the second half of the play there are two sets of references to historical events and persons from the late fifth century. In 644–7 Blepyros imagines with horror becoming a father figure to three evidently disreputable young men. It has been plausibly argued that the joke here depends on remembering the fathers of the young men in question. The clearest case is that of Leukolophos, whose unusual name identifies him fairly certainly as the son of Adeimantos, who had fallen out of favour with the democracy after the battle of Arginousai. If Epikouros is the son of Pakhes, then the audience's memory may have been drawn all the way back to the 420s when Pakhes committed suicide in court.⁵³

⁴⁹ *Ath. Pol.* 41.3; Andoc. 1.87; Dem. 24.45; [Dem.] 59.89.

⁵⁰ The Greek phrase *οὐδὲν τὸ παράπαν* is rare in Aristophanes except in *Plut.* (17, 351, 961, 1183); otherwise it is only found at *Vesp.* 478. For the force of *παράπαν* in negative adverbial phrases, see LSJ s.v. I.2.

⁵¹ Along with Arkhinos (*PA* 2526; *PAA* 213880): Ar. *Ran.* 367 with Σ *ad loc.* = Plato Comicus, F 141 K–A. Agyrrhios (*PA* 179; *PAA* 107660) is otherwise known only from the period of the restored democracy. He is secretary of the *boulé* in 403/2 (*IG* ii² 1.41, 2.1, 6) and he introduces and then raises assembly pay between 403 (*Ath. Pol.* 41.3) and the original production of *Assembly Women*.

⁵² For Agyrrhios' likely age, see Davies (1971) 278.

⁵³ See Tuplin (1982b); cf. Sommerstein (1998) *ad loc.* Epikouros (*PAA* 393300), if he is the son of Pakhes (*PA* 11746; *PA* 770400): Plut. *Arist.* 26.5;

The final set of references evoking memories of Athens before the end of the war comes in 815–17, where Khremes' antagonist recalls a decree mandating the issue of bronze coinage. This recalls the year 406/5 when in dire fiscal straits Athens began the extraordinary policy of monetary debasement, a political decision that Aristophanes had famously addressed in the parabasis of *Frogs*.⁵⁴

To complete the picture with firm evidence of thematic ring-composition, Aristophanes returns to the motif of memory in the final episode. The wise among the audience are adjured to remember the clever bits of the play, while the judges are asked to remember both the intellectual content and the laughter, not to break their oaths, and not to behave like *hetairai* who only remember their latest clients (1155, 1159, 1162).⁵⁵ The reminder to the judges (1159–60) to remember and not to break their oaths (μειμνημένους / μὴ ἴπιορκεῖν) will surely have recalled the Amnesty and the oaths sworn not to rake over the coals of the civil war: a slyly pointed reminder of one of the most fissiparous issues in recent political history.

In summary, the thematic prominence of memory in *Assembly Women* and the numerous references to the last decade of the Peloponnesian War are atypical in Aristophanes and construct an implied audience of Athenians who have been politically active, or at least politically aware, since the time of the disaster in Sicily in 413. The programmatic reference to the old joke about Phylomakhos in the prologue speech lays the foundations

Nic. 6.1; cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 522–3. The crimes of which Pakhes was convicted are unclear: see Tuplin (1982b) 328. Leukolophos (*PA* 9061; *PAA* 604860), if he is the son of Adeimantos (*PA* 202, *PAA* 107965): Andoc. 1.16; Xen. *Hell.* 2.1.32; Lys. 14.38; he was prosecuted by Conon in 393 (Dem. 19.191). Aristyllos (*PA* 2126; *PAA* 176565) remains a mystery; it was once thought that this is one of the play's glancing references to Plato: references in Ussher (1973) *ad Eccl.* 646–8.

⁵⁴ Athens began to issue bronze coins (Ar. *Ran.* 725–6) in the archonship of Kallias (406/5): Σ *Ran.* 725 = Philoch., *FGHist* 328 F 141b.

⁵⁵ The only parallel for exhortation like this in Aristophanes is *Ach.* 516, where the audience is asked to remember what has just happened on stage.

for the theme of memory and the extensive network of unusually distant and detailed historical reference in this play.

The following sections explore how *Assembly Women* relies on the audience's knowledge of history and its awareness of the importance of history for understanding the play to evoke a well-known rhetorical slogan, 'the *sôtêria* of the polis', and its political use in the previous twenty years of Athens' history.

IV. *Assembly Women* and Σωτηρία in Aristophanes

The abstract noun *σωτηρία* is not uncommon in classical Greek and is conventionally rendered in English as 'salvation' or 'deliverance'.⁵⁶ Like the common noun *σωτήρ* ('saviour'), which is a cult title of Zeus, it is a deverbative formation of the epic word *σαῶσαι* ('to keep alive, save'), which presents as *σῶζω* in Ionic-Attic.⁵⁷ The Proto-Greek root is found in *σᾶφος* (whence *σῶς*: 'safe, healthy, intact'), which may in turn stem from the Indo-European **teuh₂-* ('be strong').⁵⁸ Aristophanes' *Assembly Women* reports a markedly elevated usage of vocabulary in this lexical grouping, which, as mentioned above, has puzzled critics.⁵⁹ The thematic deployment of these words in the play may be described as follows.

The assembly at which Praxagora launches her revolutionary plot is summoned for the *sôtêria* of the polis, as we learn from Blepyros' friend Khremes (396–7). So also was the assembly in which the democracy voted for oligarchy twenty years earlier, on the evidence of the Aristotelian *Constitution of the Athenians* (29.2, 4), since in the play as in 411 the assembly votes momentarily to abrogate its own democratic sovereignty, it is difficult to believe that

⁵⁶ Cf. LSJ s.v.

⁵⁷ Beekes (2010) II, s.v. *σῶς*.

⁵⁸ Beekes *loc. cit.*; cf. Chantraine (1968) 1084–5, s.v. *σῶς*.

⁵⁹ Above, n. 3.

the dramatic situation would not have reminded the audience of the historical one. The thematic presence of *sôtêria* in *Assembly Women* begins somewhat earlier in Praxagora's rehearsal speech with a mention of *sôtêria* having 'peeped out' (202). This reference cannot be explained with certainty on the evidence available, but it is probably a nod to the peace negotiations earlier in 392/1.⁶⁰ Soon after, Praxagora presents herself as a speaker with a plan to *save* the city (209), and this is followed by two further uses of the verb *sôzein* ('to save' or 'keep safe') attesting to men's inability to *save* the city (219) and women's skill at keeping their sons *safe* when they are at war (234). In the report of the assembly's business, *sôtêria* is mentioned twice as an item of discussion (401, 412): first, the assembly rails against Neokleides for being too incompetent to address them on a question of such importance as *sôtêria*; then, the clever speaker Euaion ludicrously makes his own poverty the issue in need of *sôtêria* (412). In both cases the verb *sôzein* is also used (402, 414). Furthermore, Zeus Soter is invoked four times (79, 761, 1045, 1103), twice by Epigenes as he is dragged away by the old women, suggesting that perhaps Praxagora's salvation of Athens has turned out to be no salvation at all. It should be abundantly clear, even from this brief survey, that saving, salvation, and safety are thematically central to *Assembly Women*.

Before studying Aristophanes' practice elsewhere, let us sketch a defence to a potential objection. From a certain perspective, there is nothing surprising about the presence of words to do with saving, being saved, and achieving safety in Aristophanic comedy. Many years ago one scholar analysed the structure of the Aristophanic comic plot, finding 'salvation' to be a central element: the typical Aristophanic plot is generated by a problem or threat, the hero (or antihero) responds first by rejecting an ordinary solution, then by inventing an ingenious plan, and finally emerges triumphant from a crisis, while his allies and

⁶⁰ Sommerstein (1998) *ad loc.*

adversaries respectively celebrate or suffer.⁶¹ The idea of escape from danger to a place or state of safety is intrinsic to the plot patterning of Aristophanic comedy.

But the formal characteristics of the Aristophanic plot do not of necessity determine or even fully explain the content or themes of individual plays. Instances of *sôtêria* and related vocabulary are significantly more prominent in *Assembly Women* than in most of Aristophanes' plays. They are next most frequently found in *Frogs* and *Lysistrata*, both originally performed at a time when Athens was facing a double crisis: serious military threat from without and revolution from within. By comparison their appearance in the rest of Aristophanes' *oeuvre* is quite muted. *Acharnians*, written when Athens' military position was enormously more confident, has only one instance of any word drawn from the whole lexical array of terms to do with safety and saving. A 'normal' level of usage of this vocabulary in Aristophanic comedy falls between four and seven occurrences in a drama: as found in *Cavalry*, *Clouds*, *Wasps*, *Peace*, *Birds*, *Women at the Thesmophoria*, and *Wealth*.⁶²

Given the impressively elevated deployment of the language of saving and safety in *Lysistrata*, *Frogs*, and

⁶¹ Frey (1948) argues that *sôtêria* is central to the constitutive pattern of the Aristophanic comic plot, in the sense that the play begins with the hero or heroine facing a crisis which is resolved to the greater good of ordinary Athenian citizens: 'Jede aristophanische Komödie erstrebt und vollzieht die Rettung des zu Beginn unter einer Notlage leidenden Helden' (169). Valid as this observation is, it does not preclude further thematic interest in *sôtêria*, nor for that matter special contemporary political resonance. For more recent contributions to the plot grammar of Aristophanic comedy, see Sifakis (1992); Kloss (2001) 238–85; Lowe (2000); Ruffell (2011), esp. 112–56.

⁶² For *σωτηρία* in Ar.: *Eq.* 12; *Vesp.* 369; *Pax* 301, 595; *Av.* 879; *Lys.* 30; *Thesm.* 765, 946; *Ran.* 1436; *Eccl.* 202, 396, 401, 412. *σωτήρ* is found at: *Eq.* 149, 458; *Nub.* 1161; *Pax* 915; *Av.* 545; *Thesm.* 1009; *Ran.* 738, 1127, 1152, 1433; *Eccl.* 79, 761, 1045, 1103; *Plut.* 327, 877, 1175, 1186, 1189. For *σῶς*: *Eq.* 613; *Lys.* 488; *Thesm.* 821; FF 640, 690 K–A. For *σῶζειν*: *Ach.* 71; *Eq.* 1017, 1024, 1042, 1047; *Nub.* 77, 930, 1177; *Vesp.* 393, 1055, 1123; *Pax* 730, 866, 1022, 1035; *Av.* 376, 380, 1062; *Lys.* 41, 46, 497, 498, 499, 501, 525, 1144; *Thesm.* 186, 270 (*συσσώσειν*), 820, 1014; *Ran.* 382, 386, 1419, 1448, 1450, 1458, 1501; *Eccl.* 209, 219, 234, 402, 414, 544; *Plut.* 1180.

Assembly Women, it seems intuitively plausible that narratological fashioning might not account fully for their emphatic prominence. The suspicion becomes more insistent on inspection of the incidence of such vocabulary in other contemporary sources. Euripides' plays from around the time of the Sicilian Expedition and the years immediately following also show an elevated lexical and thematic concentration on *sôtêria*.⁶³

It is not clear when the festival of Zeus Soter in Piraeus became as important as it had done by the 330s;⁶⁴ nor can we say for certain when the shrine of Zeus Soter and Athena Soteira was built there.⁶⁵ But it is curious that every reference in Aristophanes to Zeus Soter appears in works dating to 411 or later;⁶⁶ and the only direct attestations of Zeus Soter in Euripides are found in the *Heracles*, which probably dates to around the time of the Sicilian Expedition, while the Dioskouroi, Kastor and Polydeukes, the sons of Zeus, appear as *sôtêres* (saviors) in two plays that certainly belong or have been thought to belong to the time of the Sicilian Expedition and its aftermath.⁶⁷ According to

⁶³ For *σωτηρία* in Euripides: *Med.* (431 BCE) 14, 534, 915; *Heracl.* (c. 430 BCE) 12, 452, 1045; *HF* (c. 416 BCE) 54, 81, 85, 304, 1336; *Tr.* (415 BCE) 743, 753; *IT* (c. 414 BCE) 487, 594, 905, 979, 1413; *Hel.* (412 BCE) 1027, 1031, 1034, 1055, 1291; *Ph.* (c. 410 BCE) 890, 893, 898, 910, 918, 975; *Or.* (408 BCE) 678, 724, 778, 1173, 1178, 1188, 1203, 1343, 1348; *IA* (posthumous: i.e. before winter 407/6 BCE) 1018, 1472. On the motif of salvation in Euripides, see Garzya (1962). The word is much less common in Sophocles and I cannot find the same pattern of contemporary echo in it: *Aj.* 1080; *Ant.* 186, 440; *El.* 925; *Ph.* 1396; *OC* 725, 796; but then the evidence of Sophocles is scantier than that of Euripides and Aristophanes.

⁶⁴ *IG* ii² 1496.88–9. For discussion of the cult of Zeus Soter at Athens, see Parker (1996) 238–41; for a succinct presentation of the evidence, see Parker (2005) 466–7.

⁶⁵ Garland (1987) 137 suggests a shrine had been there since the first half of the fifth century; but see Parker (1996) 240 n. 80.

⁶⁶ As observed by Sommerstein (2001) *ad Plut.* 1175.

⁶⁷ Zeus Soter in Euripides: *HF* (c. 416 BCE) 48, 523. The Dioskouroi: *El.* 993; *Hel.* (412 BCE) 1500, 1664. The date of *El.* is controversial. On the basis of a possible allusion in 1347 it has been dated to the time of the expedition to Sicily, but stylistic analysis of the increasing frequency

Diodorus, the Athenians made a public votive to Zeus Soter before the battle of Arginousai in 405.⁶⁸ Zeus Soter became the god to whom Athenians made sacrifice for the avoidance of danger, whether about to confront it or having escaped it. Given the importance of Zeus Soter as the god of safe voyages (and therefore victory in sea-battles), it seems plausible to connect the expedition to Sicily with an increased interest in the cult of Zeus Soter and the years of the Ionian War with a heightened concern about *sôtêria*.⁶⁹

The evidence can provide only an impressionistic picture, but it seems reasonable to infer a wave of social anxiety in late fifth-century Athens, caught up by which Athenians felt more than usually exposed to danger and glad to have escaped danger. No doubt that wave of anxiety was given enormous impetus and amplitude by the defeat in Sicily in 413 and the consequent anticipation of future and final destruction (cf. Thuc. 8.1.2).⁷⁰ Athenians' fears and relief were expressed by an intensification of interest in *sôtêria* and saving divinities, chief among them Zeus Soter. But this is not all, for the language of safety and saving is to

of Euripides' use of resolution in iambic trimeters places it closer to 420 BCE. Cropp and Fick (1985) 5 find 21.5% resolved trimeters in *El.*, compared to 29.3% in *IT* and 35.5% in *Hel.* For the methodology, see Cropp and Fick (1985) 1–8; Dale (1967) xxiv–xxviii, both with references to the earlier literature. But the uncertainties introduced by interpolation are significant, and even on the analysis of Cropp and Fick (1985) the data fails to show a completely uniform chronological increase in the frequency of resolved trimeters in Euripides.

⁶⁸ Diod. 13.102.2.

⁶⁹ For the functions of Zeus Soter (esp. protecting travellers, defendants), see Ar. *Plut.* 1179–82. After the victory at Knidos in 394 Konon was voted a statue beside Zeus Soter in the agora: Isoc. 9.57. The statue of Zeus Soter was also known as Zeus Eleutherios (the 'Liberator'): Paus. 1.3.2; further references: Parker (1996) 239 n. 76.

⁷⁰ It is into this context that the only pre-403 epigraphic examples of *sôtêria* of which I know fit. These are two restorations in *IG* i³ 125.1–12, 27, a decree of 405/4 honouring Epikerdes of Cyrene (cf. Dem. 20.41–5), who twice supplied food, or money to purchase it, to the Athenians ἐς σωτηρίαν, once in the aftermath of the Sicilian disaster (for the captured Athenians in the quarries) and again at the end of the war (Dem. 20.42). For further discussion of the inscription, see below n. 111.

be found also in formal political discourse in the aftermath of the Sicilian disaster; Thucydides makes it central to the factional struggles between oligarchs and democrats that began in 412/11, and the Aristotelian *Constitution of the Athenians* also attests its public prominence in the revolution of the Four Hundred, as do Aristophanes and Lysias. In what follows, I shall argue that *sôtêria* became a much played rhetorical card in Athenian political discourse from around the time of the Sicilian Expedition, and that it was played particularly strongly in 412/11 at the time of the first oligarchic revolution. In *Assembly Women*, against the background of the oligarchic panic in 392, Aristophanes will have drawn on the word as a sharp reminder of the genuinely fevered discourse of twenty years previously.

The idea that *sôtêria* became an oligarchic or anti-democratic rhetorical tool from around 412 was canvassed some time ago, but it seems to have made little impression on accounts of the history of the uprising of the oligarchs in 411 and their rhetorical and political success.⁷¹ The case is a good one, nevertheless: Thucydides' repeated and insistent use of the term in the eighth book of his *History* suggests that it was an important rhetorical weapon in the hands of Peisandros and his colleagues, one which Athenian democrats on Samos quickly realised they had to wrest away from their ideological adversaries. It is well known that Athenian oligarchs were fond of the terms *sôphrosynê* (literally 'sound mindedness', sometimes translated as 'self-control' or 'moderation') and *sôphrôn* ('sound-minded', 'moderate', or 'self-controlled'), which derive from the same

⁷¹ Bieler (1951); cf. Bertelli (1983) 251–2; David (1984) 23–5; Lévy (1976) 16–24; Faraone (1997) 56–7. The only extensive discussion of *σωτηρία* in Thucydides appears to be Allison (1997) 54–61. There is no interrogation of the term in, for example, the discussions of Athens' *stasis* and Peisandros' rhetoric in Price (2001) 304–29 or Yunis (1996) 114–16 (who translates it as 'survival': *ibid.* 114). Kagan (1987) 132, though he seems to anticipate a point I make below about Peisandros' rhetorical technique in the assembly (Thuc. 8.53), does not investigate the language of *sôtêria* behind it. It is noteworthy that there is no entry for *σωτηρία* in the index of Greek terms in Rengakos and Tsakmakis (2006), nor is there detailed discussion in Hornblower (1991–2008).

root as *sôzein*, *sôtér*, *sôtéria*.⁷² Most tellingly one episode of *Lysistrata* comically reflects overuse of the language of saving and safety in Athenian discourse, and a passage of Andokides makes a quip that is only intelligible if it was widely recognised that the democrats in the fleet on Samos had enthusiastically embraced the usage of the same vocabulary.⁷³

V. Thucydides and Σωτηρία in 411

In Thucydides the word *sôtéria* is found much more frequently in the latter half of the *History* than in the former.⁷⁴ Perhaps there is little to find surprising in this. The term first begins to be used insistently in the Melian Dialogue, appearing seven times in twenty-five chapters. Thereafter, it is found repeatedly in the narrative of the Sicilian expedition in the sixth and seventh books. But the book most numerous populated by instances of *sôtéria* is the last. The instances of the term *sôtéria* in Thucydides' eighth book, one exception aside, all appear in the narrative of the oligarchic revolution. Moreover, the word is used with particular emphasis by the oligarchic revolutionary Peisandros, where it appears in the only passage of direct speech in the entire book (8.53.3).⁷⁵ Only the most positivistic of historians would claim that Thucydides'

⁷² Words on the root *σωφρον-*, especially *σωφροσύνη* ('moderation', 'self-discipline'), not infrequently carry oligarchic/aristocratic overtones: see Rademaker (2005) 76–92; cf. de Vries (1943); North (1966). For *σωφροσύνη* as an oligarchic slogan in Athens (as reported by Thucydides), see Rademaker (2005) 216–18. In Athens the word had Spartan connotations: see Humble (2002).

⁷³ Ar. *Lys.* 497ff; Andoc. 2.12 (discussed below).

⁷⁴ *σωτηρία* in Thucydides: 1.65.1, 136.4; 2.13.5, 60.4, 61.4; 3.20.1; 4.19.1, 62.2, 96.7; 5.87, 88, 91.2, 101, 105.3, 110.1, 111.1; 6.60.3, 69.3 *bis*, 78.3, 83.2, 86.5; 7.8.1, 12.3, 61.1, 70.7, 71.3, 81.3; 8.33.4, 53.3 *bis*, 54.1, 72.1, 75.3, 81.1, 82.1, 86.3. The adjective *σωτήριος* is found at 3.53.3; 6.23.4; 7.64.2.

⁷⁵ On this unique feature of Thucydides' eighth book, see Rood (1998) 271 n. 64; cf. Hornblower (2008) 914.

exceptional use of direct speech at this point suggests that these are the very words Peisandros spoke before the assembly in 411, but it seems reasonable to infer that they represent accurately the language of the supporters of the oligarchic uprising, not least because of the appearance of the term elsewhere in the sources for the revolution of 411, but also because of Thucydides' own claim to have combined crafting the kind of speeches that men in the position of his speakers would on balance make with adhering as closely as possible to the full sense of the words that were actually spoken.⁷⁶ The high frequency of uses of the term *sôtêria* in the narrative of the oligarchic conspiracy suggests that Thucydides' choice of words here accurately reflects the political discourse of 412/11.

The term *sôtêria* first appears in Thucydides' narrative of the revolution as a word used by Peisandros, who had been sent from the fleet on Samos, where the revolution began, to address the assembly in Athens.⁷⁷ Thucydides describes a vehement debate at which numerous speakers spoke in defence of democracy (*antilegontôn ... peri tês démokratias*), the enemies of Alcibiades opposed overriding the laws in order to recall an exile, and the priestly houses of the Eumolpidae and the Kerykes protested against Alcibiades' return, bringing up his profanation of the mysteries and invoking the gods (8.53.2). In the face of this barrage of protest and abuse, Peisandros approached the opposing speakers one by one and asked them what hope the polis had of *sôtêria* in view of the fact that the Peloponnesians now had as many ships as Athens, more allies, and funding from Persia, unless

⁷⁶ Thuc. 1.22.1. For discussion of this notoriously difficult sentence: Hornblower (1987) 45–72. See further Bicknell (1990); Badian (1992); Swain (1993).

⁷⁷ Peisandros (*PA* 11770; *PAA* 771270) is usually identified as the son of Glauketes of the deme of Akharnai. According to *Ath. Pol.* 32.2 he came from a good family and was distinguished in intelligence and judgement. Recently, in 415, he had played a high-profile role, alongside Kharikles (*PA* 15407; *PAA* 983120), as 'inquisitor' into the mutilation of the herms; the two men had been appointed because they were especially 'well disposed' towards the *dêmos* (Andoc. 1.36). For further discussion, see Olson (1998) 153–4.

the King could be persuaded to switch sides and back Athens (8.53.2). Once each of his adversaries had admitted the point, Peisandros offered them the only plausible course of action: a ‘more moderate’ constitution with office-holding restricted to fewer men, the recall of Alcibiades, and a subordination of all concerns over the constitutional form of the polis to the imperative of *sôtéria* (8.53.3).⁷⁸

The assembly’s reaction was displeasure (8.54.1) at the idea of oligarchy (*oligarkhia*), but accepting that Peisandros had correctly argued that there was no other hope of *sôtéria*, out of fear—and with the expectation that they would later be able to change the constitution back again—the *dêmos* acquiesced. Peisandros was voted leader of a delegation of eleven men with full powers to negotiate with Tissaphernes and Alcibiades.

Over the winter Alcibiades, acting in his own interests, brought about the collapse of Athenian negotiations with Tissaphernes (8.56–57.1). Nevertheless, the revolutionaries on Samos judged that the plot had now advanced to a point at which they had already risked too much to turn back (8.63.4). They decided, therefore, to send Peisandros and five of the envoys back to Athens to settle matters there and to establish oligarchies in the subject cities along the way (8.64.1). By now the conspiracy at Athens was well underway. A proposal for abolishing pay for political office and for a franchise restricted to five thousand citizens had been made publicly (8.65.3). The business of the *boulê* was being shaped by members of the conspiracy, opponents were quietly murdered, and the usual operations of the legal system failed because it relied ultimately on citizen initiative: fear prevented anyone among the *dêmos* from investigating the assassinations or taking any other action (8.66.1–5).⁷⁹

⁷⁸ ‘More moderate’ translates the ancient Greek *σωφρονέστερον*. For the political implications of words on the root *σωφρον-*, see above, n. 72.

⁷⁹ For a reading of Thucydides’ narrative of the revolution emphasising these themes, see Taylor (2002). For criticisms, see Teegarden (2014) 24 n. 21 and, for a different approach but one that still stresses fear and the difficulties of social coordination, *ibid.* 17–25.

Immediately after arriving in Athens, Peisandros summoned the assembly and proposed the imposition of ten *syngrapheis* to draft and bring before the *dēmos* at an appointed time a plan for optimising the organisation of the city (8.67.1). When the time came, the assembly was summoned, unusually, to Kolonos (8.67.2), a site an energetic half hour's walk outside the city walls on the way towards the Academy, to the north-north-west beyond the Keramikos and the Dipylon Gate. The place was a cult site of Poseidon, the hero Kolonos (who may have had an equestrian statue there), and the Athenian cavalry.⁸⁰ There, the order of business presented by the committee (the *syngrapheis*) first proposed that with the constitutional safeguards suspended any citizen might present any resolution he wished. Once assent was gained, the new constitution was proposed. The assembly approved all the measures with no voices raised in opposition and the Four Hundred seized control of the Council House on the same day.

Thucydides does not report the language of *sôtēria* in the assembly at Kolonos, but then he offers no detailed account of the proceedings. However, the Aristotelian *Athenian Constitution* does report that the oligarchic revolution explicitly addressed the question of *sôtēria* and strongly implies that it shaped the agenda of the assembly at Kolonos—among the many ways in which the latter document disagrees with Thucydides.⁸¹ The Aristotelian account traces the first steps away from democracy in the decree of Pythodoros, which expanded the existing board of ten *probouloi* into a commission of thirty *syngrapheis*, over forty years of age, whose brief was to draft, on oath, whatever measures they believed best for *sôtēria* (περὶ τῆς σωτηρίας: *Ath. Pol.* 29.2). The second passage mentioning *sôtēria* tells us that it was made compulsory for the *prytaneis* to

⁸⁰ Kolonos: Eur. *Ph.* 1707; Soph. *OC* 58–60, 668–9, 707–11. For the temple accounts of Poseidon Hippios at Kolonos: *IG* i³ 405. Further discussion: Spence (1993) 188–9.

⁸¹ For discussion, see Rhodes (1981) 362–9.

put to the vote all proposals *peri tês sôtêrias*. This confirms the use of the term to describe the goal of the oligarchs' constitutional reforms and strongly suggests that the word was used in the assembly at Kolonos (29.4).⁸²

The oligarchs' language of *sôtêria* reappears in Thucydides once the new regime is in place. It is clear that the Four Hundred recognised from the first that the trireme crews on Samos could not be relied upon, an issue on which Peisandros must have been particularly well informed. Immediately upon assuming office (8.72.2), the oligarchs sent a deputation of ten men to Samos to reassure the Athenians there that the oligarchy had not been established to do harm to the polis or its citizens but for the *sôtêria* of the entire Athenian war effort (8.72.1).

It was from this point that supporters of democracy began to contest the revolution's claim to bring *sôtêria* to Athens.⁸³ When the news of the overthrow of democracy in Athens arrived, Thrasybulos, son of Lykos, and Thrasylllos

⁸² Rhodes (1972) 233 remarks that the repeated use of the phrase in 29.2 and 29.4 'can hardly, I think, be accidental'. Wilamowitz (1893) 1.102 with n. 7 suggested that *sôtêria tês poleôs* (in *Eccl.* 396–7) indicated a technical term for an extraordinary assembly procedure. Rhodes (1981) 374 is more cautious; cf. id. (1972) 231–5. Wilamowitz's argument is not persuasive. Although Thucydides uses *sôtêria* many times elsewhere, the fact that he does not use it in 8.67.2, the one place in which it would be most natural if it were a technical term for a special assembly in the fifth century, is surely decisive. Rhodes (1972) 233 notes that Thucydides characteristically 'eschews technical language', especially in speeches; cf. Hornblower (1987) 71. While it is true that the instances of *sôtêria* in *Ath. Pol.* are suggestive, it is best to abandon the idea that the phrase was a technical term, at least before the later fourth century. In Thucydides the usage of the word is clearly rhetorical and emotive. As I argue below, *Eccl.* 396–7 are an ironic historical reminder of the moment when the city actually faced an oligarchic revolution and convened an assembly about the 'safety of the city'.

⁸³ My view is thus different from David (1984) 23 n. 99 who thinks that the democracy only began to appropriate the language of *sôtêria* after 403. As Thucydides shows, the democrats on Samos began to reclaim the vocabulary immediately after the fall of democracy in 411. Note also that the democracy contests the oligarchs' claim to the linguistic territory of words on the stem *σωφρον-*: Thuc. 8.48.7 with Rademaker (2005) 218.

threw in their hands with the rowers and formed a counter-revolutionary movement committed to restoring the democratic constitution and continuing the war.⁸⁴ They proclaimed that their movement, sealed by oaths taken with each other and the Samians, was the only ‘refuge of *sôtêria*’ (*apostrophê sôtêrias*: 8.75.3). Moreover, Thrasyboulos still clung to the view that *sôtêria* could only be achieved through converting Tissaphernes to the Athenian cause (8.81.1). Therefore, the democrats on Samos elected Alcibiades as general and placed in him their hopes of *sôtêria* and revenge on the Four Hundred (8.82.1). It was in this context, Thucydides reports, that the ten envoys from the Four Hundred arrived on Samos and conveyed the oligarchs’ message that the revolution in Athens had been made not for the destruction of the polis but for its *sôtêria* (8.86.3). There can hardly be any doubt that the rhetoric of *sôtêria* was at the center of the political and ideological struggle in 411.⁸⁵

Yet even before this point in the spring of 411 the language of *sôtêria* had already become so prominent that it was reflected in the following passage of *Lysistrata*, which makes best sense if Peisandros’ favourite word is already in the background.⁸⁶ The only use of the noun *sôtêria* in

⁸⁴ Thrasyboulos (*PA* 7310; *PAA* 517010) of Steiria, son of Lykos; later, the democratic hero of Phyle: see Buck (1998). Thrasyllus (*PA* 7333; *PAA* 517480), no known patronym or demonym, later among the generals executed after the battle of Arginousai: see McCoy (1977).

⁸⁵ In this regard, is it accidental that when the hoplites in Piraeus marched in protest to Athens they assembled in the Anakeion (Thuc. 8.93.1), the shrine of Kastor and Polydeukes, who are known as *sôtêres* or ‘saviours’ (cf. above, n. 69)? On this passage and the Anakeion (probably on the northern slope of the acropolis: Paus. 1.18.1–2), see Hornblower (2008) 1024 *ad* Thuc. 8.93.1.

⁸⁶ *Lysistrata* was certainly first performed in 411: *Lys.* Hypoth. 1.33–4. But it is not known to which festival, the Lenaia or the City Dionysia, it belonged. On the basis of comparison with *Thesmophoriazusaë*, which was probably also first performed in 411, and the putative development of political themes, it is usually held that *Lysistrata* belonged to the Lenaia and *Thesmophoriazusaë* to the Dionysia: see Austin and Olson (2004) xli. According to *Ath. Pol.* 32.1, the oligarchs came to power on Thargelion 21. Their embassy to Samos followed soon after. Both events are

Lysistrata is found in the prologue scene, where its placement is surely programmatically significant. The plot of *Lysistrata* sees peace and the reconciliation of Athens and Sparta brought about by the collective effort of the women of Greece. The eponymous heroine's programmatic words in the opening lines of the play are: 'the *sôtêria* of the whole of Greece is in the hands of the women'.⁸⁷ The importance of *sôtêria* in the prologue of *Lysistrata* is confirmed some ten lines later: the heroine tells Kalonike that together the women of Boeotia, the Peloponnese and Athens will save Greece; and subsequent uses of the same set of vocabulary, which need not detain the argument here, confirm the point.⁸⁸ But the thematic importance of 'saving' is most emphatically stated in a short passage of dialogue between Lysistrata and the Proboulos in which the vocabulary under discussion is emphatically presented (*Lys.* 497–501):

therefore more than two months after the Dionysia in Elaphebolion and more than four months after the Lenaia in Gamelion. Ar. *Lys.* 497–501 (discussed below) shows irrefutably that the language of saving was already prominent enough to incur Aristophanes' ridicule; indeed, the whole theme of salvation is programmatic in the play (cf. Ar. *Lys.* 30). I find it impossible to believe, as Avery (1999) 140–6 does, that *Lysistrata* was produced before Peisandros first arrived in Athens, or that he had arrived (cf. Ar. *Lys.* 490–1) but had not yet said anything about revolution, which therefore remained secret: Gomme–Andrewes–Dover (1945–81) V.189; cf. Andrewes (1992) 472; *contra* Avery (1999) 138. The intense thematic focus on the oligarchs' rhetoric of *sôtêria* in Thuc. (and Ar. *Lys.*) makes the first view untenable, while the fact that constitutional change had been made public on Samos (Thuc. 8.48.1–3) makes the second incredible. This has implications for the likely chronology of Aristophanes' plays and the revolution. Wenskus (1998), presumably published too late for Avery (1999) to have read, rightly protests the widely-held assumption that *Lys.* cannot belong to the Dionysia of 411; cf. his chronology of winter 412/11 in Wenskus (1986) and the judicious analysis of Austin and Olson (2002) xxxiii–xliv.

⁸⁷ 29–30: ὄλης τῆς Ἑλλάδος / ἐν ταῖς γυναιξίν ἐστιν ἡ σωτηρία.

⁸⁸ Ar. *Lys.* 40–1, the last words of which are: κοινῇ σώσομεν τὴν Ἑλλάδα 'together we shall save Hellas'. Cf. 46 where the same verb is used of the instruments of Lysistrata's plan: seductive, female costume and accoutrements; cf. 141 where Lysistrata, pleading with Lampito not to desert her along with the other women, declares that the two of them could yet salvage (*ἀνασωσαίμεσθ'*) the whole project.

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ: ἀλλ' οὐδὲν δεῖ πρώτον πολεμεῖν.
 ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ: πῶς γὰρ σωθησόμεθ' ἄλλως;
 ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ: ἡμεῖς ὑμᾶς σώσομεν.
 ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ: ὑμεῖς;
 ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ: ἡμεῖς μέντοι.
 ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ: σκέτλιόν γε.
 ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ: ὡς σωθήσει κἂν μὴ βούλη.
 ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ: δεινόν <γε> λέγεις.
 ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ: ἀγανακτεῖς.
 ἀλλὰ ποιητέα ταῦτ' ἐστὶν ὅμως.
 ΠΡΟΒΟΥΛΟΣ: νῆ τὴν Δήμητρ' ἄδικόν γε.
 ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ: σωστέον ὦ τᾶν.

LYSISTRATA: But you don't need to fight the war in the first place.

PROBOULOS: But how else are we going to be **saved**?

LYSISTRATA: We will **save** you.

PROBOULOS: You?

LYSISTRATA: Yes, that's right, us.

PROBOULOS: That's outrageous!

LYSISTRATA: Look, you're going to be **saved** even if you don't want to be.

PROBOULOS: What you're saying is simply monstrous.

LYSISTRATA: I know you're annoyed about it but nevertheless it has to be done.

PROBOULOS: By Demeter, this isn't just!

LYSISTRATA: But, my dear fellow, you *have* to be **saved**.

A little later, in line 525, in a more temperate discussion with the *Proboulos*, Lysistrata returns once more to the use of vocabulary associated with saving and safety, explaining how, after the repeated failures of their husbands to bring peace, the women decided to collaborate to save the entire Greek world:

ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΗ: μετὰ ταῦθ' ἡμῶν εὐθὺς ἔδοξεν σῶσαι τὴν
Ἑλλάδα κοινῇ.

LYSISTRATA: So immediately after that we resolved to
save Greece by working together.

I think it is difficult, having looked at the use of the term *sôtêria* in Thucydides' account of the rise of the Four Hundred, to read these passages from *Lysistrata*, to see the density of the use of words to do with 'saving', and not to feel that Aristophanes must be echoing (and sending up) a contemporary current of Athenian political discourse. If so, the most probable explanation is that the vocabulary in these passages reflects (most proximately) the language of contemporary debate about the future of the polis emanating from Samos, where the oligarchic revolution began.

The other source that directly supports the view that *sôtêria* was highly prominent in the rhetoric of 411 is Andokides' speech *On his Return*, delivered no more than a few years after the restoration of democracy at Athens in 410.⁸⁹ At 2.11 Andokides recounts how he supported the democrats on Samos at the time of the Four Hundred, shipping spars from Macedon, as well as corn and bronze. The following chapter emphatically speaks of Andokides' part in saving Athens, using the verb *sôzein* three times (2.12):

⁸⁹ The regime of the Four Hundred collapsed in autumn 411, somewhat under three months into the archon year of 411/10, after the revolt of Euboia and after government had passed into the hands of the Five Thousand (Thuc. 8.97.1–2; *Ath. Pol.* 33.1–34.1 *init.*). The democracy was not restored until after the battle of Kyzikos in the spring of 410 and before the beginning of the archonship of Glaukippos, who was archon for 410/09; for the chronology, see Shear (2011) 72–3. The date of Andoc. 2 is uncertain but it must lie somewhere in the period 410–406. For a survey of opinions, see Missiou (1992) 26 n. 35. Recent views have favoured placing the speech in 407, after the return of Alcibiades: Albin (1961) 11; Dover (1968) 75; cf. MacDowell (1962) 4 n. 9.

καὶ οἱ ἄνδρες ἐκεῖνοι ἐκ τούτων παρεσκευασμένοι ἐνίκησαν μετὰ ταῦτα Πελοποννησίους ναυμαχοῦντες, καὶ τὴν πόλιν ταύτην μόνοι ἀνθρώπων ἔσωσαν ἐν τῷ τότε χρόνῳ. εἰ τοίνυν μεγάλων ἀγαθῶν αἴτια ὑμᾶς ἠργάσαντο ἐκεῖνοι, μέρος ἐγὼ οὐκ ἂν ἐλάχιστον δικαίως ταύτης τῆς αἰτίας ἔχομι. εἰ γὰρ τοῖς ἄνδρασιν ἐκείνοις τότε τὰ ἐπιτήδεια μὴ εἰσήχθη, οὐ περὶ τοῦ σῶσαι τὰς Ἀθήνας ὁ κίνδυνος <ἀν> ἦν αὐτοῖς μᾶλλον ἢ περὶ τοῦ μηδ' αὐτοὺς σωθῆναι.

And those men, equipped with these things, subsequently won a victory in a sea battle against the Peloponnesians, and they alone **saved** this city at that time. So if they achieved things that were the cause of much good for you, I might justly have not the smallest part in that being brought about. For if what was needful had not been brought to those men at that time, the danger facing them would not have been so much over **saving** Athens as over not **being saved** themselves.

The density of usage of the verb *sôzein* is striking, but even more impressive is the ironic twist that Andokides gives the last clause: ‘the danger *facing them* [*autois*] would not have been so much over saving Athens [*peri tou sôsai tas Athênas*]. The clever switch of the sense of *kindynos* from the active (i.e. hazarding an attempt to save the city) to the passive (i.e. being at risk of not being saved) (*peri tou mêd' autous sôthênai*) and the force of the pronoun *autois* (i.e., to paraphrase in colloquial English, ‘their *real* problem would have been’, rather than, in more formal language, ‘the risks inherent in the situation would have been’) suggest that Andokides is alluding to the terms in which the democrats on Samos presented their struggle.⁹⁰ His ironic play on words only

⁹⁰ Cf. 2.8–9 where Andokides places his political disgrace and banishment and Athens’ need for being saved (*σφύζεσθαι*, 9) in the period from his exile down to the oligarchic revolution in mordant counterpoint.

makes sense if his audience knows that the democrats of Samos had loudly proclaimed that the salvation of Athens lay in their hands, not in those of the oligarchs.

VI. Σωτηρία and the Rhetoric of Revolution of 411

Strabo describes the temple of Zeus Soter that served the three harbours of Piraeus as a building graced by several little colonnades decorated with wall-paintings by famous artists and a courtyard of votive statues.⁹¹ Navigation being inherently risky, even more so in the ancient world than today, any successfully completed voyage could be looked upon as an achievement of *sôtêria*, in the sense of ‘deliverance’ or ‘escape’ from the dangers of the high seas.⁹² But this was not the only sense of the word in classical Greece. Though it often connotes exiting an inherently dangerous situation (i.e. ‘escape from danger’), it may also mean enjoying a condition of safety. On the last day of every year, Skirophorion 30, the Athenians made sacrifice to Zeus Soter, presumably marking a safe completion of the old year and praying for safe passage into the new one.⁹³ No crisis was required or expected. In its strongest sense *sôtêria* is the opposite of death and destruction, as an ancient commentator on Aristophanes observed;⁹⁴ but in its less insistent senses, it refers variously to situations in which risk is evaded, forestalled, or just mercifully absent.⁹⁵ Hitherto I have largely left the term *sôtêria* untranslated. But to

⁹¹ Strabo 9.1.15. See Garland (1987) 137–8.

⁹² Thus LSJ s.v. I.3 offers the meaning ‘safe return’. Cf. Thuc. 7.70.7: the Athenians fight at Syracuse *περὶ τῆς ἐς τὴν πατρίδα σωτηρίας*.

⁹³ Lys. 26.6.

⁹⁴ Σ Ar. *Ach.* 71. Note the rhetorical paradox in Lysias’ *Funeral Oration* (2.68): the Athenians risk their lives for their own *sôtêria* and die for the freedom of their enemies.

⁹⁵ Compare Demosthenes’ emotive description of the ‘common voice of the fatherland calling for someone to speak about *sôtêria*’ (Dem. 18.170) with the evocative address to the goddess Peace in Aristophanes, *Pax* 595: ‘To the farmers you were their porridge and *sôtêria*’ (i.e. before the Peloponnesian War broke out).

understand why the oligarchs seized on it in 411 it is now necessary to explore its semantic dimensions.

The use of *sôtêria* in Thucydides, let alone in classical Greek, has never been adequately explicated.⁹⁶ In a thoroughgoing recent treatment of the oligarchic revolution of 411, Hefner glosses *sôtêria* as ‘die siegreiche Beendigung des Krieges’.⁹⁷ Clearly, at a very general level, Athens’ victorious conclusion of the war would entail salvation and security, but the breadth of this definition obfuscates enormous complexity of meaning. In Gomme, Andrewes, and Dover’s *Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, the meaning of *sôtêria* is only once discussed, in the context of the Melian Dialogue (5.88). The authors translate the word there as ‘safety’ but express doubt in a footnote, remarking that perhaps here ‘survival’ would be ‘more adequate’.⁹⁸ The important point, made only implicitly by Gomme, Andrewes, and Dover, is that *sôtêria* is a semantically elastic term: it may convey a vague sense of ‘safety’ but under the right conditions it may also assume the more concrete connotations of ‘material security’ and even ‘survival’.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ To my knowledge, the only extensive treatment of the term in Thucydides is Allison (1997) 54–61. Allison sees a ‘Periclean’ definition of *sôtêria* as ‘common safety’ and the ‘preservation of assets’ collapsing into a desperate hope for ‘survival’ and ‘salvation’ as Athens is defeated in Sicily. As she rightly points out, until Nicias in Book 6 Pericles is the only politician to use the term, and Thucydides distinguishes between the senses ‘escape from danger’ and ‘preservation of what exists’ (59). She also speculates that had Thucydides written more, we might have seen more of *elpis* and *sôtêria* linked in a ‘thematic oxymoron’ (61). However, she does not explore the pragmatic dimensions (uses, effects, social functions) of *sôtêria*, nor does she look beyond the text of Thucydides; contrast my analysis below.

⁹⁷ Hefner (2001) 64.

⁹⁸ Gomme–Andrewes–Dover (1945–81) IV.160 *ad* Thuc. 5.88. The authors cite the previous chapter (5.87) as an instance in which they say *sôtêria* encompasses ‘material security—crops, homes, lives, all that is endangered by war (without necessarily indicating what was to be the result of this one—total destruction).’

⁹⁹ Cf. Henderson (1987) *ad* Ar. *Lys.* 29–30: the word may carry the highly emotional meaning ‘salvation’, but it may also have the ‘milder’ tone of ‘escape from danger’.

The difficulties in understanding the meaning of *sôtêria* may be traced to the entry in LSJ, where the description of the semantic dimensions of the word is incomplete. There is no mention of the important sense of ‘soundness’ or ‘good condition’ in classical Greek, derived from the meaning of the adjective *σῶς* in the sense that Chantraine rightly translates as ‘en bon état’.¹⁰⁰ It seems this lacuna has had serious consequences for the way the word has been understood in Thucydides and in the history of the fifth and fourth centuries.

The most important distinction to be grasped is that the force of *sôtêria* is frequently felt to be very different when applied to individuals as opposed to collectives, institutions, or abstractions like a constitution. This point may be illustrated by examining the use of the word in Aristophanes. In the *Wasps* the monomaniacal juror Philokleon is encouraged, with obvious exaggeration as to the seriousness of his predicament, to gnaw his way through the net restraining him from reaching *sôtêria*.¹⁰¹ By contrast, in a parody of a prayer at the foundation of the avian city in *Birds*, the audience hears an imprecation for ‘the health and *sôtêria* of the polis’.¹⁰² The important distinction is that when *sôtêria* is used of individuals it more usually implies imminent danger—and frequently danger that is, or is apprehended

¹⁰⁰ For *σωτηρία* meaning bodily health: LSJ s.v. II.5; Beekes (2010) vol. II s.v.; Chantraine (1968) 1084, s.v. The closest that LSJ comes to appreciating the sense of ‘good condition’ is s.v. II.1 where the entry lists the meaning of the ‘maintenance’ of buildings and roads found in Arist. *Pol.* 1321b21. However, as discussed below, ‘good condition’ is clearly the sense that the word has in Thuc. 7.12.3 (the nuance seems to have escaped the attention of the standard commentaries on Thucydides).

¹⁰¹ Ar. *Vesp.* 369: ταῦτα μὲν πρὸς ἀνδρός ἐστ’ ἄνοντος εἰς σωτηρίαν. / ἀλλ’ ἔπαγε τὴν γνάθον.

¹⁰² Ar. *Av.* 879: διδόναι Νεφελοκοκκυγιεῦσιν ὑγίειαν καὶ σωτηρίαν. Similar phrasing (e.g. ἐφ’ ὑγίειαι καὶ σωτηρίαι τῆς βουλῆς καὶ τοῦ δήμου τῶν Ἀθηναίων) is found occasionally in Athenian decrees from the second half of the fourth century (e.g. *IG* ii² 223.B5; 354.44; 410.14; 437.5; 456.B2, etc.), but *Av.* 879 shows that it is significantly older than the epigraphic evidence would suggest. For the only (probably) epigraphic example from the fifth century, see above n. 72.

as, mortal—than it does when it is used of collectives, institutions, or abstract entities, in which cases its semantic range shows significantly greater elasticity and may extend to connotations of ‘security’ and even ‘serviceability’.

In Thucydides *sôtêria* is used in connection with individuals, groups and abstract entities. For an example of the word’s use with reference to an individual, we may turn to Themistocles’ supplication of King Admetos. The Athenian exile informs the king that refusing his supplication would be tantamount to a death sentence, literally ‘depriving him of the *sôtêria* of his soul’: the defining genitive specifies that ‘safety’ here means ‘survival’.¹⁰³ Similarly, but without any need for qualification, in the Athenian rout at the battle of Delion, *sôtêria* is applied to the Athenian hoplites distributively, and in that sense it clearly implies escape from mortal danger: ‘they fled wherever they severally had some hope of *sôtêria*’.¹⁰⁴

When *sôtêria* is used of an entity like a *polis*, the sense of imminent, mortal danger is frequently less acute. In a passage of Pericles’ final speech where the orator describes the asymmetrical relationship of the survival of individual citizens and the civic community, the Athenians are told that while the *polis* can bear the disasters afflicting an individual, no man can withstand a disaster engulfing the city; therefore, citizens should not, when stricken by private sufferings, throw away the *sôtêria* of the collective.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, when in the fourth book of Thucydides Hermokrates uses the word at the congress at Gela, it is difficult to feel (even without the benefit of hindsight) that there is a sense of crisis as strong as that prevailing at the investment of Potidaia, the siege of Plataia, or in the case of the blockade of the Spartan forces on the island of

¹⁰³ Thuc. 1.136.4: *σωτηρίας ἂν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀποστερήσαι*.

¹⁰⁴ Thuc. 4.96.7: ‘Some fled towards Delion and the sea, others to Oropos, others to Mount Parnes’ (*οἱ δὲ ὡς ἕκαστοὶ τινα εἶχον ἐλπίδα σωτηρίας*).

¹⁰⁵ 2.60.4: *καὶ μὴ ... τοῦ κοινοῦ τῆς σωτηρίας ἀφίεσθε*. Cf. 2.61.4, where the same phrase recurs.

Sphacteria.¹⁰⁶ At Gela there is no blockade or threat of starvation, and Hermokrates' use of *sôtêria* might be thought to carry a meaning closer to 'safety' or 'security' rather than 'escape' from a situation of imminent and grave danger (unless, that is, Hermokrates exaggerates, and ratchets up the rhetoric as Peisandros will later do at Athens). The use of the term by Euphemos at Kamarina is illustrative. Arguing that the real threat to Sicilian security is Syracuse, Euphemos calls the cities of Sicily, in reply to Syracusan propaganda (*antiparakaloumen*), to a more real *sôtêria* and at the same time begs them not to throw away that *sôtêria* which they have from one another (6.86.5).¹⁰⁷ In the latter sense, *sôtêria* is the counterweight to Syracuse's power provided by mutual support and alliance; it clearly means a continuing condition of safety or security, not an escape from immediate danger. Finally, in Nicias' letter sent from Syracuse, the word *sôtêria* is used in a fundamentally different sense in evaluating the deteriorating state of the Athenian fleet, which had once been excellent in regard to both the dryness of the triremes' hulls and the *sôtêria* of the crews.¹⁰⁸ Here, the word means the 'fitness for service' of the crews either in respect of their health or perhaps in regard to having a full complement of personnel.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Thuc. 4.62.2. Cf. Potidaia: 1.65.1; Plataia: 3.20.1; Sphacteria: 4.19.1.

¹⁰⁷ πολὺ δὲ ἐπὶ ἀληθεστέραν γε σωτηρίαν ἡμεῖς ἀντιπαρακαλοῦμεν, δεόμενοι τὴν ὑπάρχουσαν ἀπ' ἀλλήλων ἀμφοτέροις μὴ προδιδόναι ... Cf. 6.83.2. In this sense, *sôtêria* is equivalent to *asphaleia*: see Allison (1997) 58 on this passage.

¹⁰⁸ Thuc. 7.12.3: τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἠκμαζε καὶ τῶν νεῶν τῆ ξηρότητι καὶ τῶν πληρωμάτων τῆ σωτηρία.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. *IG* i³ 125 (above, n. 72): Athenian hostages in Sicily. Pritchett (1991) 272–3 with n. 386 argues that the money provided by Epikerdes of Kyrene was for paying for food for the prisoners in Sicily; *contra* Merritt (1970), who believes the money in Sicily was ransom (but the sums are surely too small for that). If Pritchett's interpretation is right, *sôtêria* in the inscription does not refer to *saving* the men from captivity but to *preserving* them from hunger. Note that LSJ s.v. II.5 misleadingly implies that the meaning 'bodily health' is attested only much later in imperial Greek from the second and third centuries CE.

In Thucydides *sôtêria* is most often used of collectives and it does most often mean ‘survival’, as it does on Melos, with all that that translation implies about the imminence of danger and the existential threat that it poses; but the same word sometimes carries further senses of ‘security’, ‘safety’, and ‘soundness’ that are significantly less insistent on the feeling of crisis. While in the context of a besieged city, or an aged Athenian juror confined to his home with nets, to draw on the examples mentioned above, *sôtêria* carries a claustrophobic sense of being trapped and facing imminent doom (comically exaggerated in *Wasps*, naturally), its wider sense of ‘being safe and sound’, in peacetime or through a defensive alliance, is less threatening.¹¹⁰ The possibility of equivocation between these meanings makes the word a useful rhetorical tool. Returning to the oligarchic coup of 411, it will become clear that the semantic range of *sôtêria* was instrumental in Peisandros’ rhetoric for just this reason.

When Peisandros addressed the assembly seeking support for his plan to obtain Persian money with a remodelling of the democratic constitution, he was attacked by opposition from various quarters. In response, he questioned his opponents in turn (*ἡρώτα ἕνα ἕκαστον παράγων ἀντιλεγόντων*), asking each what hope he had (*ἤντινα ἐλπίδα ἔχει*) of *sôtêria* for the polis (*σωτηρίας τῆ πόλει*: 8.53.2) in the present circumstances. Imagine for a moment that this is an accurate report of Peisandros’ very words: how would they have struck the assembly and the popular leaders ranged against him? Athens is not in immediate danger, though the city is short of funds: the fleet is operational, the Athenians have control of the Hellespont and Euboea, and the fortifications continue to be proof against the Peloponnesian army at Dekeleia (cf. Thuc. 8.71.1). In this situation, the force of Peisandros’ use of *sôtêria* might well have been heard to equivocate between ‘deliverance’ and mere ‘safety’ or ‘security’. Peisandros’

¹¹⁰ A similar pattern is found in Xenophon’s *Anabasis*: e.g. individual survival (5.3.6); collective safety (7.8.19); salvation (3.2.8). My thanks to Emily Baragwanath for bringing this to my attention and sharing unpublished work.

words ‘What hope of *sôtêria* ... for the polis?’ will have produced a sense that the civic community was under threat, but not necessarily an imminent or existential threat. But in the mouth of Peisandros, the word *sôtêria* was insidious. When combined with the word ‘hope’ (*elpis*) *sôtêria* would have assumed a tragic resonance. The two words are quite frequently found in combination in Euripides, especially in the plays probably dating to a few years either side of 411.¹¹¹ And a yet greater feeling of urgency, brilliantly created by Peisandros, will have emerged from his tactic of cross-questioning his opponents one by one.¹¹² For each one, confronted with the concept of *sôtêria* individually, the connotations of being trapped, being in mortal danger, and of there being only one way of escape will have come to the fore of cognitive response to the word.

Then, Peisandros tightens the screw: the political system must be more moderate and involve fewer men, so that the King’s trust may be won: ‘let us in the present situation not spend so much time deliberating about the constitution (*politeia*) but rather about *sôtêria*.’ Where *sôtêria* coupled with another abstract noun like *politeia* would normally convey the sense of ‘safety’ or ‘security’ of a group or abstract entity, Peisandros’ insistence that that is exactly what the assembly should not spend time debating encourages his audience to hear the sense of ‘survival’ in his use of *sôtêria*, especially when it is used flatly and without any defining or limiting terms. The result reported by Thucydides is that the *dêmos* was instructed clearly by Peisandros’ words (*σαφῶς δὲ διδασκόμενος*) that there was no other *sôtêria* (*μὴ εἶναι ἄλλην σωτηρίαν*), only this one. The insistence with the negation of the adjective *allos* (other), that there is only one *sôtêria* and no alternative, places in abeyance the sense of

¹¹¹ There are numerous instances in which Euripides construes or connects *sôtêria* with either the noun *elpis* or a denominative adjective: *Heracl.* 452; *HF* 80, 84; *IT* 487, 1413; *Hel.* 1031; *Or.* 1173, 1188 (closely connected to *ἐπίδα* in 1186).

¹¹² Kagan (1987) 132 notes the effectiveness of this but does not examine how Peisandros’ tactics worked so well. Cf. n. 73 above.

‘security’ or ‘safety’ and emphasises the senses of ‘escape’ and ‘survival’. And so the democrats voted for the end of democracy, provided that it would bring about an alliance with Tissaphernes and save the city (Thuc. 8.54.1).

As we have observed above, after the Four Hundred were imposed upon the polis, word was sent to Samos that the constitutional change had been made not to injure the city and its citizens but for the *sôtêria* of the whole situation (8.72.1: *epi sôtêriai tôn sympantôn pragmatôn*). But even before the embassy arrived, the democrats on Samos had begun to appropriate the rhetoric of *sôtêria*, in the first instance with tragic resonance (8.75.3: *apostrophên sôtêrias*).¹¹³ Subsequently, Thrasybulos persuaded the assembly on Samos to recall Alcibiades because their sole *sôtêria* (*monên sôtêrian*) lay in his persuading Tissaphernes to switch his support from the Peloponnesian to the Athenian fleet (8.81.1). The assembly on Samos quickly elected Alcibiades general and in him placed their hope of *sôtêria* and revenge on the Four Hundred (8.82.1); again, the phrase (*elpida ... tês ... sôtêrias*) probably had a tragic ring. When the envoys from Athens arrived, their pronouncement to the effect that the revolution had been made not for the destruction of the city (*oute epi diaphthorai tês poleôs*) nor for its betrayal to the enemy (*outh' hina tois polemiois paradothei*) but for its *sôtêria* (*all' epi sôtêriai*) fell on deaf ears (8.86.3). The men of the fleet were in no mood to listen to these or any other blandishments (8.86.4). According to Thucydides, if Alcibiades had not restrained them, they would have voted to man their ships and attack the Piraeus (8.86.5).¹¹⁴

The reader of the eighth book of Thucydides is confronted by an intricately woven knot of linguistic paradox and political irony of the kind that Thucydides describes in the context of the *stasis* on Corcyra (3.70–83), especially in the excursus in which he elaborates the principle that faction produces reversals of the ordinary

¹¹³ Cf. Eur. *Or.* 724 for the similar sounding phrase *καταφυγή σωτηρίας*.

¹¹⁴ On this and Thucydides' other counterfactual claims, see Tordoff (2014).

meanings of words for the purpose of self-justification (3.82.4); ‘die Umwertung der Werte’ cashed out as ‘die Umwortung der Worte’, as one scholar neatly encapsulates it.¹¹⁵ The city, though not in fact in immediate danger, had been persuaded by Peisandros to abandon democracy as though its very survival hung in the balance. The fleet, again in no immediate danger of destruction by the Peloponnesians, and having originally approved the constitutional reshaping of Athens in pursuit of a surer source of pay, now found itself cast into outlawry and rebellion. In response, the *dêmos* on Samos rallied around the slogan of *sôtêria* in a struggle for the defence of democracy and main survival, creating a situation of *stasis* (civil war) that in turn threatened and, Thucydides implies (cf. 8.86.5), came very close to destroying the Athenian empire and its democracy.

Many years later Isocrates (*Areop.* 7.51) would declare that Athenians are concerned about their constitution *and* the *sôtêria* of the city. His words echo a long tradition of rhetoric running back to 411 when Peisandros had offered Athenians the choice between democracy and *sôtêria*, as Thucydides reports (8.53.3)—in the only passage of direct speech in his eighth book, to underline the point one final time. Opponents of Athenian democracy used moments of crisis to offer the polis a choice between democracy and escape from imminent danger; democratic leaders fought hard to resist what they saw as a false dichotomy, stressing the compatibility of democracy and *sôtêria*.

¹¹⁵ Kraus (1987) 188. This is a much discussed topic: see esp. Loraux (1986), repr. in Rusten (2009) 261–92; Price (2001) 39–50. On the ‘transvaluation’ of language in the *stasis* on Corcyra, see Hogan (1980); Wilson (1982). For further discussion: Allison (1997) 163–82; Cogan (1981) 152–4; Connor (1984) 95–105; Crane (1998) 44, 286; Edmunds (1975); Macleod (1979), repr. in id. (1983) 123–39; Orwin (1994) 175–84, esp. 177–8; Parry (1981) 15–21; White (1984) 59–92, esp. 87 for the structural and thematic importance of the episode to Thucydides’ whole project.

VII. The Rhetoric of Σωτηρία after 411

After the events of 411, the *sôtêria* of the polis became a rhetorical commonplace to be ardently evoked and ironically subverted. In Lysias (12.74) Lysander may be heard to echo the words of Peisandros as he triumphantly presses home his victory over the democracy, perhaps coached by Theramenes, as Bieler proposes.¹¹⁶ Plutarch preserves a suggestive anecdote about Theramenes. When Theramenes was negotiating peace with Sparta in 404, a young demagogue called Kleomenes asked him why he was doing the opposite of Themistokles by surrendering to the Spartans the walls Themistokles had built. Theramenes replied that Themistokles built the walls for the *sôtêria* of the citizens; now he, Theramenes, was handing them over to the same end (Plut. *Lys.* 14.8). The story attests to the central rhetorical importance of *sôtêria* in the crisis at the end of the Peloponnesian War and to the semantic malleability of the term. Similarly, soon after the return of the democrats, the speaker of Lysias 34 urges Athenians not to pay any heed to men who go around asking what *sôtêria* there will be without obedience to Sparta (34.6), probably echoing Lysander and before him Peisandros.¹¹⁷ He adds that risking their lives against Sparta now is the only hope of *sôtêria* (34.9).¹¹⁸

The echoes of the rhetoric of *sôtêria* in Aristophanes' *Assembly Women* are not the only ones to be heard in the early fourth century. The vocabulary continued to be contested by radical democrats and their opponents. Shortly before the outbreak of the Corinthian War, Lysias' defence of the sons of Eukrates, brother of Nicias, states that Eukrates chose to die under the Thirty, striving for the Athenians' *sôtêria* (Lys. 18.5). Similarly, in the early 390s

¹¹⁶ Cf. Lys. 12.68–9; Bieler (1951) 183.

¹¹⁷ Note the sense of history in 34.1 in the way that the speaker connects this present threat to the two episodes of oligarchy: *πρότερον δὲς ἤδη*.

¹¹⁸ Similarly, a few years later Andoc. 1.81 speaks of the democrats being more concerned to save the city through reconciliation than to exact vengeance. Cf. Lys. 2.64.

Alcibiades' son ironically describes the civil war as a time of such chaos that neither side had any hope of *sôtéria* (Isoc. 16.16); the illogicality of his words presumably echoes the exaggerated claims of both sides to be able to give their followers salvation. In *On the Peace*, in 392/1 Andokides with a mordant twist of the now standard democratic trope tells his audience that peace means *sôtéria*, while war is what leads to the overthrow of democracy.¹¹⁹ Roughly contemporaneously, Lysias' speech against Epikrates finds room for the same vocabulary (27.3), and his *Funeral Oration* too deploys the language of *sôtéria*, this time with a different ironic spin: after defeat in the Peloponnesian War it became clear that Athens' power was the security (*sôtéria*) of Greece because the years that followed soon saw the rise of Persian naval power (2.58–9).¹²⁰ The same speech draws attention to the rhetoric of *sôtéria* at the time of the return of the democrats (2.66) and the reconciliation agreement (2.64); and it praises the deaths in the cause of *sôtéria* of Athenians fighting at Corinth (2.68). The different shades of meaning are revealing: security from Persian naval activity; rescuing the city from the Thirty; not pursuing vengeance to destructive excesses in 403; and fighting for Athenian *sôtéria* at the Isthmus, in a war in which Attica never suffered a land invasion. A few years later, after the death of Thrasyboulos in Asia, the prosecutor of Ergokles accuses him of throwing away the city's hope of *sôtéria* (Lys. 28.15 *bis*) through corruption and embezzlement. The context in which this allegation is made traces Athens' history from Phyle down to the present (389/8) and compares the effect of Ergokles' actions on the city to that of the actions of the Thirty (Lys. 28.12–15).

Clearly, by 388 the sense of history bound up in the word *sôtéria* was long and well established. In 392/1, it will have evoked, as Andokides understood (3.12), memories of

¹¹⁹ 3.12: τὴν μὲν εἰρήνην σωτηρίαν εἶναι τῷ δήμῳ καὶ δύνανται, τὸν δὲ πόλεμον δήμου κατάλυσιν γίνεσθαι.

¹²⁰ The damning reference is to Konon's victory in 394 at Knidos, where the Spartans were indeed defeated, but by a Persian fleet commanded by an Athenian.

the struggles of 411 and 404–403. For Aristophanes writing *Assembly Women* the ironies of history must have been manifold. The rhetoric of saving the city had been at the forefront of debate both in the revolution of the Four Hundred and at the fall of Athens. But whereas in 404 the city was indeed facing the question of its very survival, as Aristophanes anticipated when producing *Frogs*,¹²¹ in 411 the democracy was overthrown but the city survived and the war against Sparta continued, despite the attempts of the oligarchs to conclude peace with Agis (Thuc. 8.70.2–71.3). The offstage assembly in *Assembly Women* in which myopic and indigent politicians address the assembly about *sôtéria* when the city is not in fact in immediate, existential danger from external military threat and when there was no oligarchic revolution in the offing, only peace with Sparta, is testament to the pernicious exaggerations and distortions of political rhetoric, which had in the past succeeded in subverting the democracy even as its practitioners claimed to be saving the city. *Assembly Women* remembers the rhetorical contortions of Peisandros twenty years earlier in a bitter juxtaposition with the present situation of Athens in the Corinthian War. As the popular joke ran in the Austro-Hungarian Empire over two millennia later, ‘the situation is desperate, but not serious’ (‘Die Lage ist verzweifelt, aber nicht ernst!’). Aristophanes would surely have enjoyed it.

VIII. Conclusions

In this paper, I have argued that in Aristophanes’ *Assembly Women* the vocabulary of safety, saving, and salvation is neither accidental, nor a function of comic plot structure, nor a specious device by which Aristophanes introduced a play about female conspiracy and revolution without any great relevance to its immediate political circumstances. In fact, the thematic emphasis on *sôtéria* in the play is an historical echo—and it is not the only historical echo in

¹²¹ Ar. *Ran.* 1435–6: ἀλλ’ ἔτι μίαν γνώμην ἐκάτερος εἴπατον / περὶ τῆς πόλεως ἦντιν’ ἔχετον σωτηρίαν.

Assembly Women—of the desperate rhetoric of the years after 413, later described by Thucydides, ridiculed at the time by Aristophanes, especially in *Lysistrata*, and all too frequently dredged up by orators under the restored democracy. I have argued that Aristophanes was motivated to revisit themes he had treated twenty years earlier by the explosion of a neuralgic discourse in 392 about revolution and oligarchy and a new and deep concern with Athens' history, and that the cause of this was the peace settlement with Sparta that Andokides and his delegation had negotiated.¹²²

Naturally, history and memory had been issues of the highest importance to the returned democracy from the reconciliation of 403 onwards. But reactions to the possibility of peace with Sparta in 392/1 gave history and memory a new and sudden prominence in the immediate deliberative business of the assembly. The result was a bitter contest for control of Athens' past as the means to directing the city's present and future. In those circumstances, Aristophanes conceived a play that remembers the Athenian experience of revolution in 411, then the first in nearly a century, and contrasts ironically the historical moment of *Assembly Women* in 391 with the violent and disastrous events of twenty years before.

Criticism of Aristophanes' *Assembly Women* has focused on a small handful of now fatigued questions, among them the following. How did Aristophanes write, in the late 390s, a drama that bears such a striking resemblance to some aspects of the fifth book of Plato's *Republic*, when the latter almost certainly postdates the former?¹²³ Is the society imagined in *Assembly Women* really some kind of cipher for Sparta?¹²⁴ If not, how is its place as the first literary account

¹²² For the suggestion that Aristophanic comedy begins to take a historical turn from around the time of *Lysistrata*, see Henderson (2012).

¹²³ The best recent account is Nightingale (1995) 172–92; I make some refinements and new arguments in Tordoff (2007).

¹²⁴ Most dogmatically, Dettenhofer (1999); cf. Carrière (1979) 97; David (1984) 26–7.

of communism in Western thought to be explained? Perhaps as an aspect of ancient Greek misogyny?¹²⁵

Fresh ground has been broken by reading the play as an exploration of the theoretical limits of Athenian egalitarian democracy.¹²⁶ Yet none of the lines of enquiry has yet detected the importance of memory in *Assembly Women*, and consequently the significance of history, especially the history of Athens' constitutional evolution, has been missed. As a gesture in the direction of future research, I suggest that a set of anguished Athenian discourses of the early fourth century may have had considerably more influence on Aristophanes' imagination when he wrote *Assembly Women* than scholarship has yet appreciated. For instance, we might draw attention to the following: the confiscation and recovery of property in 404–403; the new sacrifices, written into the sacred calendar by Nikomakhos, and large-scale public feasts, such as Konon's hecatomb with which the entire city was invited to celebrate the victory at Knidos; polis maintenance of the orphans of fallen democrats in the decree of Theozotides; the codification and inscription of the laws, in a process that had begun at the time of the first oligarchy in 411; the status of written and unwritten law, and of laws and decrees (*psêphismata*) in Athens; and the new institution of pay for assembly participation.¹²⁷ But discussion of those topics is the work of another day.

¹²⁵ Zeitlin (1999).

¹²⁶ Ober (1998) 122–55.

¹²⁷ I discuss the issues alluded to here in my forthcoming book on Aristophanes' late plays. The confiscations of property under the oligarchy, the recovery of property, and the issues of public property at Athens (which I also believe to be important in Aristophanes' imaginative vision in *Assembly Women*) are all very complex subjects. Confiscation: Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.1; cf. Lys. 25.22. Recovery: Xen. 2.4.38; Lys. *Against Hippotherses* F 165.34–47 Carey (= *P. Oxy.* 1606, fr. 2); discussion: Carawan (2013) 67–90. Public property: recently, Papazarkadas (2011); Rousset (2013). Nikomakhos and the sacrificial calendar: Lys. 30; recent discussion: Carawan (2013) 233–50. Konon's *hestiasis* in 393: Athen. 1.3d. Theozotides' decree for the orphans: *SEG* 28.46; discussion: Shear (2011) 230, 254–5; Stroud (1971). Codification and inscription of the laws: Carawan (2002), (2010), (2013), esp. 183–93; Clinton (1982); Dow (1960), (1961); Munn (2000) 227–8, 269–73; Ostwald (1986) 405–20, 477–80, 511–

For the present, I hope to have convinced the reader that *Assembly Women* is not disengaged from its political background but is in fact highly topical in the context of the events of 392/1; that it is not a fatigued rehash of Aristophanes' earlier plays about women, or indicative of Aristophanes' declining powers; and that it is innovative above all in its new engagement with a sense of Athens' history, in which regard it represents, in a comic framework, a project analogous, if never directly comparable to, Thucydides' history of the Peloponnesian War. I hope I have also given readers a case study of the language of politics under Athenian democracy and shown how a close reading of comedy, oratory, and historiography can illuminate the dynamics of ideological struggle over the use and appropriation of words in debate at democratic Athens.

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24; Shear (2011) 70–118, 173–80, 227–62; Rhodes (1991); Robertson (1990). For the prominence of this in *Eccl.* 1012, 1015–20, 1049–51. On assembly pay, an innovation of the restored democracy, see David (1984) 29–32; Hess (1962).

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COMEDY AND HISTORY, THEORY AND EVIDENCE IN DURIS OF SAMOS*

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Abstract. This paper offers a brief investigation of what the fragments of the third-century BCE author Duris of Samos reveal about the relationship between comedy and history. I argue that his citations of comic poetry match his stated concern for vividness in historical narrative. I also consider the light shed on Greek historical writing in the fourth and third centuries by Duris' practice of using comedy as historical evidence. Given his interest in multiple genres and his connection to the Peripatetics, it would not be surprising if Duris turned to comedy more frequently than his predecessors had done.

In the *Life of Thucydides* attributed to Marcellinus, the author notes three other figures who shared that name.¹ These are Thucydides, son of Melesias (Pericles' rival); a Pharsalian Thucydides, son of Meno, mentioned by Polemon; and an Athenian poet named Thucydides, son of Ariston, from the deme Acherdous, mentioned by

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¹ Abbreviations not found in LSJ: *BNJ* = I. Worthington, ed., *Brill's New Jacoby* (Brill Online, 2007–); *BoC* = J. Rusten, ed., *The Birth of Comedy: Texts, Documents and Art from Athenian Comic Competitions, 486–280* (Baltimore, 2011); *Jacoby* [vol.] = commentary or notes for *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, 3 vols. with multiple parts (Leiden and Berlin, 1923–58); *PCG* = Rudolf Kassel and Colin Austin, edd., *Poetae Comici Graeci*, 8 vols. (Berlin, 1983–). Translations are mine unless noted.

Androtion in his *Atthis*.² But the biographer then concludes by specifying that the historian Thucydides

συνεχρόνισε δ', ὡς φησι Πραξιφάνης ἐν τῷ Περὶ Ἱστορίας, Πλάτωνι τῷ κωμικῷ, Ἀγάθωνι τραγικῷ, Νικηράτῳ ἐποποιῷ καὶ Χοιρίλῳ, καὶ Μελανιππίδῃ. καὶ ἐπεὶ μὲν ἔζη Ἀρχέλαος, ἄδοξος ἦν ὡς <ὁ> αὐτὸς Πραξιφάνης δηλοῖ, ὕστερον δὲ δαιμονίως ἐθανμάσθη.

was a contemporary, as Praxiphanes says in his *On History*, of Platon the comic poet, Agathon the tragic poet, Niceratus the epic poet as well as Choerilus, and Melanippides. And while Archelaus was alive, he (sc. Thucydides) was unknown for the most part, as the same Praxiphanes makes clear, but later he became greatly admired.³

² Marcellin. *Vit. Thuc.* 28: μὴ ἀγνοῶμεν δὲ ὅτι ἐγένοντο Θουκυδίδα πολλοί, οὗτός τε ὁ Ὀλόρου παῖς, καὶ δεύτερος δημαγωγός, Μελησίου, ὃς καὶ Περικλεῖ διεπολιτεύσατο· τρίτος δὲ γένει Φαρσάλιος, οὗ μέμνηται Πολέμων ἐν τοῖς Περὶ Ἀκροπόλεως, φάσκων αὐτὸν εἶναι πατὴρ Μένωνος· τέταρτος ἄλλος Θουκυδίδης ποιητής, τὸν δῆμον Ἀχερδούσιος, οὗ μέμνηται Ἀνδροτίων ἐν τῇ Ἀτηίδι, λέγων εἶναι υἱὸν Ἀρίστωνος. The Greek text can be found after the preface in the Jones-Powell Thucydides OCT (1942); for a brief discussion of the work and an English translation of varying reliability, see Burns (2010).

³ Marcellin. *Vit. Thuc.* 29–30. I hesitate to begin an article by disagreeing with both Felix Jacoby and Charles Fornara, but it seems clear to me that in the passage quoted here Marcellinus does in fact refer to the historian Thucydides, not the fourth man listed by that name (the Athenian poet mentioned by Androtion). Four factors: (1) the initial δέ in chapter 29 does not correspond to any μέν and thus could mark a transition. This is abrupt, but that is a common feature of Marcellinus' prose. (2) In chapter 28 (above, n. 2), Marcellinus mentions each of the other Thucydideses, then appends a short relative clause; this pattern would be broken if the lengthy roster of poets in chapter 29 belonged to the last Thucydides in the list. (3) The fragment of Androtion (*BNJ* 324 F 57) must end before *συνεχρόνισε*, since Androtion cannot have cited Praxiphanes, who lived two generations later. (4) The poet Thucydides never became famous, as far as we can tell; even if he did, why would Praxiphanes bother with this information (including the elaborate synchronism) in a work *On History*? (*pace* Jacoby *IIIb* II.145–6 (n. 704 online), who is correct to note that we are dealing with a

In 1878 Rudolf Hirzel argued that this particular list of figures results from the fact that Praxiphanes' treatise took the form of a dialogue, with all these authors—Thucydides included—as characters. This helps to explain the otherwise odd reference to Archelaus, king of Macedon from 413 to 399, whose court would have served as the dramatic setting. The suggestion gains added strength from the fact that Praxiphanes, a pupil of Theophrastus, wrote at least one other dialogue.⁴

If Hirzel was correct, this sole surviving reference to Praxiphanes' *On History* opens up several intriguing avenues for those wishing to explore the relationship between history and comedy. The most fascinating, if least discoverable, is to wonder what Thucydides and Platon might have had to say to each other.⁵ This comic poet enjoyed a long career, roughly contemporaneous with Aristophanes. We would love to know more about his political comedy, given some of the attested titles: *Ambassadors*, *Greece* or *Islands*, *Metics*, *Symmachia*, in addition to a series of so-called 'demagogue-comedies' in which (like Aristophanes' *Knights*) a single Athenian politician was ridiculed. Unlike Aristophanes,

digression, but does not consider the structural clues indicating that the digression is confined to chapter 28; cf. Fornara (1983) 131–2). Burns (2010) 18 leaves the identification ambiguous, though his translation of *δαίμωνίως*, 'as divine,' certainly implies Thucydides the historian: cf. Marcellin. *Vit. Thuc.* 2–3, where his lineage is traced back to Zeus.

⁴ Hirzel (1878); accepted by Brink (1946), Wehrli (1957, with further comments). In the course of a long article the previous year, Wilamowitz (1877) had shown that the list of figures did not derive from a chronological synchronism, but he had tried to argue for a historical stay at Archelaus' court (353–61). As Hirzel pointed out (46), it is difficult to see why Praxiphanes' treatise would have mentioned such an 'event'. The anonymous *Vita* of Thucydides (also found in the Codex Palatinus (E) with Marcellinus) states that Thucydides spent his time in exile on Aegina, where it is said he wrote his history (7); later, however, the author notes one tradition that Thucydides died in Thrace (10). For the evidence concerning Praxiphanes, see Wehrli (1957) 93–115; Brink (1946).

⁵ On Platon, see Pirrotta (2009); *BoC* 333–53; Sommerstein (2000); Rosen (1995).

however, Platon attacked his targets as themselves, without disguise, for we have fragments from three such plays: *Peisander*, *Hyperbolus*, and *Cleophon*.⁶ The last of these three figures came to prominence only after the point at which Thucydides' history ends, but we might imagine Praxiphanes' Platon asking the historian why he chose to diminish the role played by Hyperbolus, especially the occasion of his notorious ostracism in the years between the Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian Expedition.⁷ A fragment from Platon's *Peisander* presents an even more intriguing potential scene for the dialogue:

γυνή γάρ, ἣν μὲν αὐτήν
 ἀεὶ κολάζης, ἐστὶ πάντων κτημάτων κράτιστον,
 εἴαν δ' ἀνῆς, ὕβριστόν <ἐστι> χρῆμα κακόλαστον.

For a woman, if you keep on punishing her, is the greatest of all possessions; but if you let up, she's an insolent and unbridled thing.

As Sommerstein has noted, the husband here could represent Athens and the wife his empire. He further points out that these lines may allude to a sentiment which Thucydides puts into the mouth of Cleon during the Mytilenean debate, that 'a man naturally despises one who is subservient, but marvels at one who does not yield.'⁸ This can only remain speculative, but perhaps Praxiphanes used

⁶ Sommerstein (2000) 439 credits Platon with taking this crucial step, and he also notes (443) that Platon was apparently the only comic poet to write more than one piece of this type.

⁷ Thucydides mentions Hyperbolus only once, for a notice of his death in 411 (8.73.3); Hornblower (2008) 969 notes the various means by which Thucydides expresses his contempt, including the possible echo of Aristophanes' *μοχθηρός* (*Eq.* 1304). Plutarch cites Platon twice (*Alc.* 13.9, *Nic.* 11.6 = *PCG* V F 203) for the *bon mot* that in this case the punishment of ostracism did not deserve the victim: see Pirrotta (2009) 308–9.

⁸ Platon, *PCG* V, F 105; Thuc. 3.39.5; Sommerstein (2000) 440. Cf. Pirrotta (2009) 227–9.

echoes between Platon and Thucydides as pivots upon which to turn a discussion of how history and poetry go about representing the words and deeds of men.⁹

The notice concerning Praxiphanes reminds us that by the early third century, Greek intellectuals were explicitly theorising about the writing of history and, especially, its position within the constellation of literary genres (both poetry and prose). Indeed, although our extant classical historians engaged in this activity very rarely, the fragments of the fourth-century historians Theopompus and Ephorus already reveal serious thought about history as a genre.¹⁰ Praxiphanes' treatise shows that the question was now being dealt with outside historiography, as a stand-alone topic for investigation.¹¹ Since almost nothing survives of this work other than brief notices, we can best pursue our own investigation by asking whether this sort of theorising had any effect on the contemporary writing of history. Thucydidean historical writing had never been the only game in town. Praxiphanes' choice of Thucydides as his representative historian was partially dictated by dramatic-setting concerns, but it must also hold some significance for his definition of and attitude toward historical writing itself. Furthermore, such theorising took place within the context of even larger intellectual projects in Athens and Alexandria. Praxiphanes was a Peripatetic, and though it is best not to think in terms of a 'Peripatetic school' of historical writing, Aristotle and his pupils encountered the problem of investigating the past in numerous works (e.g. the series of *politeiai* of various cities), and their thoughts on the matter may have had some impact on authors outside

⁹ Platon himself may have been useful to Praxiphanes (again, beyond the dramatic-setting concerns) if his *Laconians* or *Poets* did indeed include poets championing their own genres: see *BoC* 341–2.

¹⁰ See especially Vattuone (2014) on Theopompus; Parmeggiani (2014a) and (2011) 99–146 on Ephorus.

¹¹ Theophrastus too wrote a work *On History*, in one book (Diog. Laert. 5.47), but no secure fragments survive: see Podlecki (1985); Wehrli (1947) 69–71. On Aristotle and history, see Bertelli (2014); Fornara (1983) 93–8; Walbank (1960) 216–20.

the school.¹² In fact, we know that Callimachus wrote a work *Against Praxiphanes*, and it has been suggested that the relationship between poetry and history was a theme in their argument.¹³

Our inquiry is made more difficult by the fragmentary nature of the evidence. Not only do we have next to nothing from the theoretical treatises themselves, but very little continuous historical narrative survives from the mid-fourth until the first century BCE, despite the flourishing of historical writing during this period.¹⁴ Fortunately, later extant authors provide enough quotations and paraphrases of these lost historical works to allow us to gain some insight into the relationship of history and comedy. This is especially the case for the third-century historian Duris of Samos. As we will see shortly, his fragments reveal a particular interest in poetry generally. Furthermore, we can place him squarely within the same intellectual milieu in which Praxiphanes and others were debating the question. In this paper, I will offer a brief investigation of what the fragments of Duris reveal about comedy and history. In addition, I will consider how Duris' practice of using comedy as historical evidence sheds light on the changing methods of Greek historical writing in the fourth and third centuries.

Duris' historical works include a Macedonian history, which seems to have run from 370 (the death of the Macedonian king Amyntas, father of Philip) to the battle of Corupedium in 281, a history of the Sicilian tyrant Agathocles (r. 317–289), as well as a local history of Samos. Like most of the Hellenistic historians, he has had a mixed reception at best. Cicero referred to him as *homo in historia*

¹² Walbank (1960), responding to the attempt of Fritz (1958) to revive the notion of a Peripatetic theory of 'tragic history'. For Theophrastus' 'historical' work, see Podlecki (1985).

¹³ Fuhrer (1996) 119; on the work, Brink (1946).

¹⁴ Strasburger (1977) for overview. To top it off, only some of the work of two comedic poets survives intact, and the representativeness of both Aristophanes and Menander has increasingly come into question in recent scholarship (see n. 41 below).

diligens—though in the context of pointing out an error he made. Didymus wrote that Duris was unable to prevent himself from telling marvels, even as he recorded one such story.¹⁵ Scholars at various points of the twentieth century made Duris a central figure in the modern chimera of ‘tragic history’. But Frances Pownall and others have recently tried to show that there was more to Duris than simply eliciting strong emotions from his readers.¹⁶ Rather than emotional response, one of the concerns Duris highlighted was that of the vividness of the historian’s account. In his most well-known fragment, preserved by the Byzantine patriarch Photius, Duris criticises Ephorus and Theopompus for the lack of *mimesis* and pleasure in their work, complaining that they cared only for the writing itself. Vivienne Gray has convincingly argued that Duris here does not elevate entertainment over the truth, but rather calls for historical narrative to possess a mimetic quality, a vividness which impresses the reality of events on the reader’s mind.¹⁷ Poetry could be especially helpful in moving beyond a bare recounting of the facts, because it not only created a more exciting and entertaining narrative but also allowed the historian to set the scene with more detail.¹⁸ We can see this in at least two fragments of Duris.

¹⁵ Cic. *Att.* 6.1.18 = *BNJ* 76 F 73. Did. *in D.* 12.50 = *BNJ* 76 T 7.

¹⁶ Pownall *BNJ* 76 ad F 1; Baron (2013) 247–55; Knoepfler (2001). Already Strasburger (1966) 78–85 = (1982–90) II.996–1003 had called for Duris’ attempt to formulate a ‘theory of history’ to be taken seriously. For a full-scale study of the historical fragments, see Landucci Gattinoni (1997); Naas and Simon (2015) contains a range of essays on Duris’ life and literary output.

¹⁷ Phot. *Bibl.* 176 = *BNJ* 76 F 1. Above all see Gray (1987) with previous bibliography, despite the reservations of Halliwell (2002) 289–90. Cf. Strasburger (1966) 78 = (1982–90) II.996: ‘Wir können mutatis mutandis von “Realismus” sprechen’; Fornara (1983) 124–34; Landucci Gattinoni (1997) 51–5; Knoepfler (2001) 35 (‘la représentation la plus concrète et vivante possible de la réalité’); Cozzoli (2004); Baron (2016).

¹⁸ Landucci Gattinoni (1997) 131 writes of Duris employing poetry ‘per integrare e arricchire’ his narrative; Halliwell (2002) 291 finds *mimesis* for Duris to be ‘partly a matter of contextual coherence ... an important means for drawing the reader, whether of history or poetry, into a

Athenaeus cites the third-century historian Demochares as a witness for the Athenians' flattery of Demetrius Poliorcetes. However, he then turns to Duris for a verbatim quotation of the ithyphallic hymn they composed for the king around 290 BCE. I take this to mean that Duris was not satisfied simply to describe the Athenians' obsequious behaviour (like Demochares perhaps), but that he quoted the hymn itself, in order to (in part, at least) create a more vivid scene for the reader.¹⁹ On another occasion, Athenaeus cites Duris for a long and detailed description of the luxurious lifestyle of Demetrius of Phalerum (despite the sumptuary laws he imposed upon the Athenians). At the end of the passage, Duris quoted two lines from a dithyramb composed by a poet of the time showing that the tyrant was addressed as 'sun-like'. The lines in this case were perhaps not just illustrative but may have subtly mocked Demetrius, either for allowing such ridiculous flattery or through play on the adjective *heliomorphos* (literally 'sun-shaped', in which case Demetrius' round shape, a product of his gluttony, may have been the target).²⁰ It is easy to see how Athenian comedy would have been attractive to a historian with such working methods.

There is no evidence that Duris himself was a pupil of Theophrastus, as is often claimed; the only direct connection rests on an unnecessary emendation of Athenaeus.²¹ Duris' brother Lynceus, however, was a student at the Lyceum at Athens, thus it would not be surprising if Duris' thought-world circled in the same orbit. As it turns out, Lynceus was, among other things, a comic poet and a

heightened visualisation and grasp of the force of the situations depicted'. Cf. Pédech (1989) 258, Duris worked in 'scènes et tableaux'; Strasburger (1961) 29–31 = (1982–90) II.817–19; Wehrli (1947) 63, stressing the striving for *psychagogia*.

¹⁹ Ath. 6.253d–f = *BNJ* 76 F 13; Baron (2011) 100–4; Landucci Gattinoni (1997) 126–9.

²⁰ Ath. 12.542c–e = *BNJ* 76 F 10, with Pownall's commentary; Landucci Gattinoni (1997) 122–5.

²¹ Pointed out by Dalby (1991), accepted by Pownall *BNJ* 76 T 1 and F 1; see also Baron (2011) 91–3.

student of the genre. Athenaeus preserves almost all our evidence for Lynceus, including the only securely attested fragment of his comedy, from a play entitled *Centaur* (4.131f); elsewhere, he records that Lynceus wrote a treatise on Menander in at least two books (6.242b–c).²² Unfortunately, Athenaeus' citation of the latter work does not touch upon Menander's comedy but rather describes two Athenians who achieved a reputation for being funny by different means.²³ Thus, we do not know what, if anything, Lynceus had to say about comedy as a genre. But we can conclude that he had a broad array of literary interests and, as Dalby notes, he was associated closely with the development of three new genres (the literary letter, philosophical and scientific literature, and the anecdote).²⁴

A general sense of broad interests and a willingness to operate in different literary genres also emerge from the surviving material from Duris. History, in fact, was just one part of his scholarly output: Jacoby's fragments include evidence for a number of specialised treatises, including works with titles such as *On Tragedy*, *On Euripides and Sophocles*, and *Homeric Problems*.²⁵ This interest in poetry carried over into Duris' historiography—if that is the correct way to think about the relationship. The first table below gives the fragments which definitely or likely derive

²² On Lynceus see Funaioli (2004), Dalby (2000). *Centaur*: PCG V, pp. 616–17 = Ath. 4.131f (Dalby, F 1, *BoC* 573). On the Menander treatise: Lowe (2013) 346. Link of Lynceus to school: Ath. 8.337d = Dalby, F 32.

²³ Dalby F 35. Note also one of Lynceus' letters, addressed to the comic poet Posidippus (Ath. 14.652c = Dalby, F 17), and an anecdote concerning the comic poet Alexis (8.344c = F 33).

²⁴ While most of the fragments centre around food, this is at least in part due to Athenaeus. Even through this culinary haze, we can see that Lynceus' work included historical figures (Ptolemy II, Demetrius Poliorcetes, Demosthenes), and it reveals some of the same interests we find in local history (i.e. the culinary information is in a sense ethnographic). Funaioli (2004) fully investigates the evidence for Lynceus' comedic output.

²⁵ The last of which is cited by name in the Homeric scholia once (F 30), but may be the source of five other fragments (88–92).

from his historical works *and* contain citations of poetry. The second table lists other fragments of Duris which concern poetry in some manner (these not necessarily from the historical works).

Fr.	Work	Cover-Text	Content
10	<i>Macedonica</i>	Athenaeus	quotes a line of poetry from Seiron (? perhaps Castorion) of Soli, describing Demetrius of Phalerum as <i>heliomorphos</i>
13	<i>Macedonica</i>	Athenaeus	quotes the ithyphallic hymn composed by Athenians for Demetrius Poliorcetes
15	<i>Macedonica</i>	Athenaeus	cites two passages from Homer for ancient kings' drinking habits
22	<i>Samian Annals</i>	Diogenes Laertius	cites lines of Pherecydes concerning wisdom and Pythagoras
23	<i>Samian Annals</i>	Porphyry	cites an inscription on a dedication of Arimnestus, son of Pythagoras, at Samos
35	(<i>Macedonica?</i>)	Athenaeus	cites lines of a fourth-century comic poet Heraclides
38	(<i>Macedonica?</i>)	Plutarch	cites a two-line oracle inscribed on a figurine found at Chaeronea before the battle
60	(<i>Samian Annals?</i>)	Athenaeus	cites poetry of Asius to explain customs at Samos
66	(<i>Samian Annals?</i>)	Photius (Lex.)	offers an explanation for a phrase concerning Samians found in Aristophanes' <i>Babylonians</i>
71	(<i>Samian Annals?</i>)	Plutarch	may cite the beginning of a paean to Lysander

Table 1. Fragments from Duris' historical works which cite poetry.

This constellation of fragments is striking, considering that only 96 survive in total from Duris' works. We see that Duris: (1) cited poetry as evidence for, or in conjunction with, historical facts; (2) commented on poetry or its use by others; (3) was cited by others in their comments on poetry.

Fr.	Work	Cover-Text	Content
17	Agathocles	Photius and Suda	a scholiast to Aristophanes, <i>Wasps</i> 1035 cites Duris for the story of Lamia
20	Agathocles	Suda	explains why 'Eurybatos' referred to a scoundrel by referencing Homer's <i>Odyssey</i>
26	(<i>Samian Annals?</i>)	Athenaeus	mentions a paean to Lysander sung at Samos (no lines quoted, but cf. F 71)
27	<i>Peri Nomôn</i>	Etymologicum Magnum	explains the poetic verb <i>thôréssesthai</i> , 'to make/get drunk' (cf. Aristophanes, <i>Acharnians</i> 1134)
47	?	Scholia to Apoll. Rhod.	reason for Prometheus' punishment; perhaps arguing against the Hesiodic version, which the scholiast cites first
58	(Agathocles?)	Scholia to Theocritus	reason why Polyphemus established a sanctuary to Galateia; criticises Philoxenus' account
65	(<i>Samian Annals?</i>)	Harpocration	Aspasia was the cause of two wars, as can be learned from Duris and Theophrastus and Aristophanes' <i>Acharnians</i>
72	?	Athenaeus	Plato always had the mimes of Sophron in his hands
73	(<i>Samian Annals?</i>)	Cicero	told the story of Alcibiades throwing Eupolis overboard on the way to Sicily
83	?	Proclus	Plato was not a good judge of poets

Table 2: Other fragments of Duris which concern poetry in some way (content or cover-text)

Unfortunately, only six of these fragments take us directly to the particular poetic genre of comedy, and three of these do not give us much with which to work. Two such fragments survive through scholia on Aristophanes. One (F 17) concerns the figure of Lamia, the legendary Libyan half-woman/half-monster who ate other women's children after a jealous Hera killed hers. She must have come up in the course of Duris' discussion of Agathocles' campaigns in

North Africa, as the citation indicates.²⁶ The question is how the commentator on Aristophanes' *Wasps* ended up turning to Duris for information on Lamia. Given the prevalence of poetry in his historical fragments, it is not out of the realm of possibility that Duris referred to Aristophanes, who mentions Lamia several times, but we cannot be certain.²⁷ The other fragment in this category (F 27) reveals that Duris provided an explanation of a poetic verb for drinking, which is found in Aristophanes. But the scholiast attributes this to one of Duris' minor works, so it tells us little about his historical method.²⁸ The third such fragment survives in Cicero, who cites Duris for the erroneous notion that Eupolis died at the hands of Alcibiades on the way to Sicily (F 73).

However, the remaining three fragments seem to indicate that Duris did more with comedy than merely liven up his account. In the first (F 65), we may see Duris turning to the Athenian comic tradition for evidence to support an anti-Periclean narrative of Athenian history. Under his entry for 'Aspasia', the second-century CE lexicographer Harpocration states:

δοκεῖ δὲ δυοῖν πολέμων αἰτία γεγονέναι, τοῦ τε Σαμιακοῦ καὶ τοῦ Πελοποννησιακοῦ, ὡς ἐστὶ μαθεῖν παρὰ τε Δούριδος τοῦ Σαμίου καὶ Θεοφράστου ἐκ τοῦ δ' τῶν Πολιτικῶν, καὶ ἐκ τῶν Ἀριστοφάνους Ἀχαρνέων.

It seems that she (Aspasia) was responsible for the outbreak of two wars, the Samian and the Peloponnesian, as one can learn from Duris of Samos,

²⁶ Duris either wrote a separate work on Agathocles or dedicated a number of books of his Macedonian history to events in the West: see Landucci Gattinoni (1997) 133–68.

²⁷ Ar. *Vesp.* 1035, 1177; *Pax* 757 (lines repeated from *Wasps*); *Ec.* 76–8. The Old Comedy poet Crates wrote a *Lamia* (PCG IV, FF 20–25), as did Euripides (a satyr-play?).

²⁸ θωρήσσεσθαι, Ar. *Ach.* 1134.

from Theophrastus in Book 4 of his *Politics*, and from the *Acharnians* of Aristophanes.²⁹

Whatever her historical role, Pericles' Milesian wife was a favourite target of Athenian comic poets, and her relationship with the statesman aroused the Greek male predilection for blaming wars on women. Eupolis called her 'Helen', and in the *Acharnians* Dicaeopolis includes her as one of the causes of the Peloponnesian War.³⁰ The structure of Harpocration's citation makes it difficult to know exactly what use Duris made of Aristophanes, and whether it was he or Theophrastus who expanded Aspasia's mischievousness to include the Samian revolt against Athens in 440 (though the next fragment, as we will see, leans the scales toward Duris).³¹ But, given the nature of these Attic lexica, the collocation of the three authors is unlikely to be the work of Harpocration. This increases the possibility that Duris himself cited Aristophanes as evidence for his version of events.

In F 66, an entry in the Photian Lexicon, three different explanations are given for a phrase from Aristophanes' lost *Babylonians*, 'How marked with letters the Samian people are'.³² Duris' explanation, as reported by the lexicographers, is that the Athenians tattooed their Samian prisoners of war with an owl—a symbol of Athenian power, and a practice normally reserved for slaves. Plutarch, with some variations (*Per.* 26.4), refers to the story—though not citing Duris—as part of the Samian revolt of 440 which was put down with

²⁹ *BNJ* 76 F 65 = Harp. s.v. 'Aspasia', with Pownall, *BNJ* ad loc.

³⁰ Olson (2002) 210. Eupolis: *PCG* V, F 267; Ar. *Ach.* 525. Duris elsewhere recounted a tradition blaming the Third Sacred War on a Theban woman named Theano (*BNJ* 76 F 2 = Ath. 13.560b). On Aspasia, see now Kennedy (2014) 68–96.

³¹ As does Plut. *Per.* 24–5, where Duris may lie behind the narrative. Cf. Jacoby IIC.127; Olson (2002) 210 postulates a lost play of Old Comedy as the source of Aspasia's responsibility.

³² *PCG* III.2, F 71. On the play, see Fois (1998), Welsh (1983) with further bibliography.

great difficulty by Pericles and the Athenian fleet.³³ The lexicographers' entry makes it clear that the phrase used by Aristophanes was well-known but also the subject of debate. We do not know whether Duris entered that debate. But it seems likely, as Jacoby suggested, that Duris used the line of Aristophanes as contemporary evidence to support his narrative of Athenian brutality against Samos.³⁴ That narrative survives in Plutarch, who rejects it as overly dramatic and biased, but nonetheless describes how, according to Duris, Pericles had the participants in the Samian revolt crucified in the agora at Miletus for ten days before executing them and leaving their bodies unburied.³⁵ Although only this one fragment survives, Duris may have found Aristophanes, and the *Babylonians* in particular, more broadly useful for constructing a narrative critical of Athenian treatment of her allies.³⁶ We see clear evidence of such a procedure—citing poetry with the express purpose of proving his point—in F 60, where Athenaeus introduces the citation by stating explicitly that Duris 'cites the poems of Asius as evidence that ...'.³⁷

Duris' use of Aristophanes to buttress his historical narrative is striking, especially if we consider the silence of

³³ See Landucci Gattinoni (1997) 228–33; Stadter (1989) 249–50.

³⁴ Jacoby IIC 127 ('als Beweis'); cf. *ibid.* 126, on F 60, where Jacoby writes that Duris 'gibt gern dichterische Belege', though he places this unnecessarily in a Peripatetic context. On F 58 (126), he also notes that poetic evidence adds an interesting element to the typical rationalisation of myth found in Duris, taking him beyond arguments based on *εἰκός*.

³⁵ *BNJ* 76 F 67 = Plut. *Per.* 28.1–3. Duris probably did exaggerate Pericles' brutality (or reported a tradition which had done so), since survival for ten days on the cross is highly unlikely, but see Stadter (1989) 258–9; Shipley (1987) 116–17. Fois (1998) 115 n. 18 notes the judgements of some eminent scholars.

³⁶ Cf. Landucci Gattinoni (1997) 232–3; Lewis (1988) 45–9.

³⁷ *BNJ* 76 F 60 = Ath. 12.525e–f: *παρατίθεται ὅτι* (see LSJ s.v. *παρατίθημι*, B.5); Giovanelli-Jouanna (2007) 222. Other fragments may indicate similar operations on the part of Duris, again with poetry more generally, but their lack of context restricts this to speculation: FF 15, 23, 71.

earlier historians of Athenian events. Thucydides completely avoids citing Athenian drama, even where it might have supported him—say, referring to Aristophanes' *Acharnians* for the hardship felt by Attic country-dwellers as a result of Pericles' evacuation order, hardship which Thucydides goes out of his way to address.³⁸ We may consider his avoidance of comedy as strict adherence to his stated methodology—since lines composed by Aristophanes and uttered on the Athenian stage represent neither the deeds nor the words of generals or politicians during the war—or, more critically, as reaction to the muddier picture painted of Pericles in Athenian comedy.³⁹ But a modern historian operates just as Duris did. Our portrayals of men like Cleon and Alcibiades would be incomplete without reference to Aristophanes. How much more might we be able to say about Pericles' policies and reputation if we had a full play of Cratinus (*Dionysalexandros*)?⁴⁰ Or about the middle years of the Peloponnesian War if we could read Eupolis (*Demes*)? Or about Hellenistic Athens if long

³⁸ Thuc. 2.14–17. In the same vein, one could imagine a historian using Aristophanes' *Frogs* to complement the picture of Alcibiades in the final years of the Peloponnesian War—but comedy is absent from Xenophon too. Herodotus presents a different situation for comedy, at least, which was not officially produced until 487/6 (*BoC* 16–18). But in this case too, I find it striking that as broad as his notion of evidence was, Herodotus does not refer directly to Aeschylus' *Persians* when recounting the battle at Salamis, nor to the poetry of Simonides for the battle at Plataea; nor does he actually cite Phrynichus' famous tragedy for the historical event of the Persian destruction of Miletus (as noted by Ford (2007) 817). That is, notwithstanding Herodotus' relationship, familiarity, and engagement with poetic traditions, he does not cite *literary* poetry as historical evidence for the events of the Persian Wars. On Herodotus' use of poetry, see Chiasson (2012); Boedeker (2001); Verdin (1977).

³⁹ Biles (2016) examines the portrait of Cleon in Aristophanes and Thucydides; see in particular 127 n. 52 for brief comments on the issue I deal with here.

⁴⁰ See e.g. McGlew (2002) 42–56, combining the fragmentary evidence from Cratinus with Plutarch's biography in order to examine opposition to Pericles' policies.

stretches of Philippides survived?⁴¹ Duris was not breaking new ground here. Ephorus appears to have explicitly cited the comic poets Aristophanes and Eupolis to buttress his claims about the power of Pericles' oratory; if Diodorus was using him in the way most scholars believe he was, Ephorus did so not as part of a digression, but in his explanation for the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War.⁴² It has also been suggested that Theopompus, in his famous digression on Athenian demagogues in Book 10 of his *Philippica*, was influenced by the political comedy of Aristophanes, Eupolis, and others, though unfortunately there is no direct evidence to confirm this.⁴³ But given the evidence for Duris' interest in multiple genres, his explicit statement about the need for vividness in historical writing, and his connection to an intellectual community engaged in theoretical discussion of generic relationships, it would not be surprising if he turned to comedy more frequently than his fourth-century predecessors had done.

My final example combines the two issues of narrative vividness and historical evidence. It also introduces a new element to the discussion of comedy and history by showing

⁴¹ Even through the highly fragmentary evidence we can see that political and topical humour persisted in Middle and New Comedy, and it is possible that neither Aristophanes nor Menander are as representative as they are often portrayed. See Webster (1970) 24–34, 37–49, 100–10; Philipp (1973); Habicht (1993); Dobrov (1995); Olson (2007) 223. Examples of political content in Middle and New Comedy from Olson (2007): C2 ('an allegorical play about contemporary events' by Heniochus), E29 (Platon, F 201, probably early 380s), E30 (Eubulus, F 106.1–9), E31 (Timocles), E32 (Philippides). Lape (2004) demonstrates the political role of even Menander's comedy.

⁴² Diod. 12.40.6 = *BNJ* 70 F 196. See Parmeggiani (2014a) and Parker *ad loc* (Comm. II) for Ephorus' introduction of the comedic evidence. On Diodorus and Ephorus, see Sacks (1990) 9–22; Parmeggiani (2011) 357–73; cf. Parker, *BNJ* 70, 'Biographical Essay' section 2.F. In his overview of comedy's impact on Greek historical writing in terms of literary portraiture, Strasburger (1961) 16 = (1982–90) II.804 argues that the historians of the fourth century and later turned to Old Comedy due largely to the lack of biographical details in Thucydides.

⁴³ See Lenfant (2003) 399 with n. 61; Connor (1968) 102–3.

that Duris drew upon Middle Comedy in addition to the fifth-century comic poets.

The *Deipnosophistae* of Athenaeus, composed around 200 CE, represents a gold mine for fragments of Attic comedy—especially Middle Comedy—as well as a major source for lost Hellenistic historians.⁴⁴ A passage in Book 12 brings these two fragmentary genres together, thus requiring a brief analysis of Athenaeus’ text in order to try to delineate what Duris wrote:⁴⁵

ἐν δὲ τῷ ἐπιγραφομένῳ τοῦ Θεοπόμπου συγγράμματι
Περὶ τῶν ἐκ Δελφῶν Συληθέντων Χρημάτων, Χάρητι,
φησί, τῷ Ἀθηναίῳ διὰ Λυσάνδρου τάλαντα ἑξήκοντα, ἀφ’
ᾧν ἐδείπνισεν Ἀθηναίους ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ θύσας τὰ ἐπινίκια
τῆς γενομένης μάχης πρὸς τοὺς Φιλίππου ξένους. ᾧν
ἠγγέλτο μὲν Ἀδαῖος ὁ Ἀλεκτρυῶν ἐπικαλούμενος· περὶ οὗ
καὶ Ἡρακλείδης ὁ τῶν κωμωδιῶν ποιητῆς μέμνηται
οὕτως·

Ἀλεκτρυόνα τὸν τοῦ Φιλίππου παραλαβὼν
ἄωρὶ κοκκύζοντα καὶ πλανώμενον
κατέκοψεν· οὐ γὰρ εἶχεν οὐδέπω λόφον.
ἕνα κατακόψας μάλα συχνοὺς ἐδείπνισεν
Χάρης Ἀθηναίων τόθ’· ὡς γενναῖος ἦν.
τὰ αὐτὰ ἱστορεῖ καὶ Δούρις.

Theopompus says in his treatise *On the Money Stolen from Delphi*, ‘Sixty talents went to Chares the Athenian via Lysander. With this money he entertained the Athenians at a victory feast in the marketplace after the battle with Philip’s mercenaries. Adaeus, called the

⁴⁴ Middle Comedy: Nesselrath (2010) 434. On Athenaeus and the Hellenistic historians, see Gorman and Gorman (2007); Lenfant (2007); Zecchini (1989).

⁴⁵ Ath. 12.532e–f (Theopompus, *BNJ* 115 F 249; Duris, *BNJ* 76 F 35; Heraclides, *PCG* V.558–9, F 1); the translation is that in *BoC* (572), except that they omit the reference to Duris at the end. On the difficulties in delineating fragments of lost historians, see Baron (2011). Athenaeus is by far the most important source of Duris fragments: see Giovanelli-Jouanna (2007).

Cock, was their leader.’ Heraclides the poet of comedy mentions him thus:

Catching Philip’s Cock
crowing at the wrong time and wandering astray,
he cut him in pieces; for the Cock didn’t yet have his
crest.

Having cut up a single bird, Chares entertained
a great throng of Athenians then. That’s how noble
he was.

Duris too relates the same things.

A historical event of the 350s BCE—Chares’ victory over Philip’s general Adaeus—is recorded in an author of the second century CE, with the help of three intermediary sources: two contemporary with the event (the comic poet Heraclides and the historian Theopompus), one a couple generations later (Duris). At what point did the history and the comedy first come together? Four possibilities arise:

1. Theopompus told the story and adduced the lines of Heraclides—Duris included this whole package in his work—Athenaeus quoted Duris;
2. Theopompus told the story and adduced the lines of Heraclides—Duris included this whole package in his work—Athenaeus quoted Theopompus, and noted that he had also read Duris;
3. Theopompus told the story—Duris included that story and added the lines of Heraclides—Athenaeus quoted Duris (or both historians);
4. Theopompus and Duris each told the story—Athenaeus quoted Theopompus, added the lines of Heraclides, and noted that he had also read Duris.

Option 1, though it would easily explain the end of the passage (‘Duris too says the same things’), appears unlikely for two reasons: Athenaeus’ usual practice, and the immediate context. Antonio Chávez Reino and Gabriella Ottone have argued that Athenaeus gathered material from Theopompus by reading his works directly. They point to

the specificity of most of Athenaeus' citations of the latter—including title and book number—and the fact that the few occasions where such specificity is lacking are also marked by the presence of an intermediary source, with a specific citation, in the immediate vicinity.⁴⁶ In our current example, Athenaeus cites a minor work of Theopompus by name, while he seems to tack on Duris at the end (but see below). For comparison, when Athenaeus reports the story of Arcadion the Achaean and Philip (6.249c–d), he writes, 'Theopompus includes him in his narrative, as does Duris in the fifth book of his *Macedonica*', a procedure which seems to indicate direct use of Duris, who had mentioned Theopompus in his text. To this general impression of Athenaeus' working methods we can add local contextual clues. Our passage about Chares and Adaeus 'the Cock' follows three other citations of Theopompus, the last of which also deals with Chares. Thus the most economical interpretation is that the first part of our passage, at least—up to the mention of Heraclides—forms part of a cluster of Theopompus citations.⁴⁷ If so, two questions remain: who introduced the lines of Heraclides to the story? And why does Athenaeus mention Duris?

Option 4—that Athenaeus himself has done the work of adding the lines of Heraclides to a citation of Theopompus (and reference to Duris)—also appears unlikely, even given the presence of *οὐτως*, which Lenfant has argued indicates a

⁴⁶ Chávez Reino and Ottone (2007) 154–6 (use of Theopompus), 156 n. 56 (examples of differing modes of citation). Although he does not address the issue explicitly, comments throughout Flower (1994) indicate that he envisions Athenaeus consulting Theopompus directly: see e.g. 19, 36 n. 41, 85.

⁴⁷ Beginning at 531e: Theopompus FF 31, 105, 213, and 249. See Pelling (2000) 174–5 on fragmentary clusters in Athenaeus. His other citation of Theopompus' work *On the Money Stolen from Delphi* also lessens the likelihood of Athenaeus' taking the additional detail of Heraclides' poetic lines from it: Jacoby comments that Athenaeus 'ein stark verkürztes Exzerpt, eigentlich nur eine Reihe von Notizen gibt' (IIB.389, on FF 247–8 = Ath. 13.604f–605d).

verbatim citation.⁴⁸ We cannot prove or disprove Athenaeus' direct use of Middle Comedic texts, but Nesselrath thinks it most likely that he relied on 'the great lexica and glossaries of the early empire' such as Favorinus and Zopyrion-Pamphilus.⁴⁹ That seems almost certain in this instance, since these are the only lines known from the comic poet Heraclides. If it had still been possible to read an entire play of his in the Severan age, it would be an incredible stroke of misfortune if these five lines were the only piece to make its way into the mass of Greek literature which survives from the Roman imperial period.

At the same time, the lines of Heraclides are clearly meant to illustrate how extravagantly the Athenian general Chares celebrated his victory. If the odds are against Athenaeus himself making this connection, then we must decide between Theopompus (Option 2) or Duris (Option 3). Though Option 2 is possible and could find support in the seemingly tacked-on reference by Athenaeus—'Duris too relates the same things'—in my opinion this points

⁴⁸ Lenfant (2007) 46–53. Jacoby leaned in this direction, ending Theopompus' fragment with the mention of Adaeus (*FGrHist* 115 F 249) and, in the apparatus criticus for Duris (*FGrHist* 76 F 35), printing 'Zusatz des Athenaios?' with regard to the lines of poetry. *BoC* follows this reading, at least implicitly: they omit the reference to Duris and put the first part of the passage in quotation marks, as if Athenaeus added the lines of Heraclides to his citation of Theopompus. Pownall also seems to follow this track, stating that Athenaeus cites Duris here 'only as a secondary authority' (*BNJ* 76 ad F 35). Olson wisely avoids the issue in his Athenaeus Loeb edition by not printing any quotation marks at all; Gulick, on the other hand, in the previous Loeb edition had ended Theopompus' quotation at 'mercenaries', implicitly attributing to Athenaeus (or Duris) the introduction of Adaeus 'the Cock' into the story of Chares' military victory. Only Landucci Gattinoni (1997) 94 argues as I do, though for different reasons (see below, n. 54).

⁴⁹ Nesselrath (1990) 66–79, quote at 79; Nesselrath (2010) 424–8; Olson (2007) 30. Note that this necessitates envisioning different relationships with different authors and genres on Athenaeus' part, a conclusion I am perfectly prepared to accept. Just because Athenaeus relied on previous compilations for his knowledge of Middle Comedy does not mean the same must be true for well-known historians such as Theopompus and Duris.

rather to Option 3.⁵⁰ If the lines of Heraclides were already in Theopompus, it is difficult to explain why Athenaeus mentions Duris here at all. The reference does not move the conversation forward, since the following anecdote is taken from a different historian and concerns archaic Athens. Moreover, we have already seen the direct evidence for Duris' use of comedy. On the other hand, among the more than 400 surviving fragments of Theopompus, not a single one preserves him citing comedy; this includes the 54 fragments provided by Athenaeus, all but a handful deriving from Theopompus' historical works, and in more than half of which Athenaeus quotes the historian verbatim.⁵¹ For Duris, meanwhile, four out of the twenty-four other times Athenaeus cites him, lines of poetry are included (see Table 1). Overall, then—despite the ambiguous nature of Athenaeus' citation—Duris is more likely than Theopompus to have added the lines of comedy. We can imagine a plausible scenario: Athenaeus read Theopompus and excerpted the anecdote about Chares' victory and feast; later, he found the same story in Duris, with the lines of Heraclides added, and made a note of this in his Theopompus excerpts; when he composed the *Deipnosophistae*, he cited his 'main source'—Theopompus—with the addition of the poetry and alluded to Duris with the note about 'the same things.' Again, the story of Arcadion and Philip mentioned earlier provides a nice parallel.⁵²

⁵⁰ Giovanelli-Jouanna (2007) 219–21 classifies this reference as 'allusion'—as opposed to verbatim citation or reformulation (paraphrase or summary)—but does not further analyse this category and leaves the delimitation of the fragment open. Cf. Zecchini (1989) 75–6: Athenaeus' reference to Duris marks either verification, or the fact that he was writing from memory.

⁵¹ The absence of comedy from Theopompus is especially striking given his treatment of Athenian demagogues in Book 10 of the *Philippica* (*BNJ* 115 FF 85–100).

⁵² Ath. 6.249c–d (Theopompus, *BNJ* 115 F 280; Duris, *BNJ* 76 F 3; Phylarchus, *FGrHist* 81 F 37), trans. Olson (2006–12). Arcadion parodies Hom. *Od.* 23.269, replacing 'the sea' with 'Philip' (see Giovanelli-Jouanna (2007) 235).

ἀλλ' οὐκ Ἀρκαδίων ὁ Ἀχαιὸς κόλαξ ἦν· περὶ οὗ ὁ αὐτὸς ἱστορεῖ Θεόπομπος καὶ Δοῦρις ἐν πέμπτῃ Μακεδονικῶν· οὗτος δὲ ὁ Ἀρκαδίων μισῶν τὸν Φίλιππον ἐκούσιον ἐκ τῆς πατρίδος φυγὴν ἔφυγεν. ... ἔτυχεν δ' οὖν ποτε ἐν Δελφοῖς ἐπιδημοῦντος Φιλίππου παρεῖναι καὶ τὸν Ἀρκαδίωνα· ὃν θεασάμενος ὁ Μακεδὼν καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος, “μέχρι τίνος φεύξῃ”, φησὶν, “Ἀρκαδίων;” καὶ ὅς· “ἔς τ' ἂν τοὺς ἀφίκωμαι οἳ οὐκ ἴσασι Φίλιππον.” Φύλαρχος δ' ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ καὶ εἰκοστῇ τῶν Ἱστοριῶν γελάσαντα τὸν Φίλιππον ἐπὶ τούτῳ καλέσαι τε ἐπὶ δεῖπνον τὸν Ἀρκαδίωνα καὶ οὕτω τὴν ἔχθραν διαλύσασθαι.

Arcadion of Achaea, however, was no flatterer. The same Theopompus offers an account of him, as does Duris in Book 5 of the *History of Macedon*: This Arcadion hated Philip and went into voluntary exile from his native land. ... It happened once, then, that Philip was visiting Delphi, and Arcadion was there as well. The Macedonian saw him and called him over, and said: ‘How long are you going to remain in exile, Arcadion?’ And he replied: ‘Until I come to people who know nothing of Philip.’ Phylarchus in Book 21 of his *History* reports that Philip laughed at this and invited Arcadion to dinner, and that this is how they ceased being enemies.

The lack of a specific citation of Theopompus here probably indicates that Athenaeus first recorded the story during his reading of Duris (who cited Theopompus); later, when reading Phylarchus, Athenaeus found the story again with an additional note about Philip’s reaction.⁵³

⁵³ Chávez Reino and Ottone (2007) 156 n. 56. Note that Athenaeus introduces the Phylarchus citation with no verb or adverb whatsoever. Such instances, in my view, should—without devaluing the painstaking work performed by the authors in that volume—caution against implementing the formulae in Lenfant (2007) too mechanistically.

To return to the lines of Heraclides: if Duris did cite them verbatim, there are several possible reasons for his doing so. They fit Duris' own prescription that the historian produce vividness in his narrative. As with F 13, discussed earlier, where Duris seems to have gone beyond another historian's bare narrative by quoting a poem verbatim, here he has improved upon Theopompus (one of his known targets for criticism in this area) by using lines from the comic stage to illustrate Chares' achievement. There is also perhaps an element of erudition, as with the dinner guests of Athenaeus' work. But we should not allow either of these factors to obscure how this fragment also matches the pattern of Duris introducing poetry as evidence.⁵⁴ In doing so, Duris followed a procedure strikingly similar to that of the modern historian, relying on contemporary literary evidence in order to document a historical event. His use of a poet of Middle Comedy reminds us that even though Aristophanes, Eupolis, and Platon were no longer excoriating politicians on the stage, comic poets of the fourth century could still allude to political events, and later historians and scholars considered them valuable evidence for Athenian affairs.⁵⁵

Heraclides himself, while not writing history, was in his own way remembering the past, or describing the present using the terms in which he hoped it would be remembered. This brings us back to our starting point, Praxiphanes' imagined conversation between the historian and the comic poet, Thucydides and Platon, each exemplars of their generation. They differed in their aims, methods, forms of delivery, and audience expectations, but—at least in the case of political comedy—they shared similar subject

⁵⁴ Landucci Gattinoni (1997) 94 proposes that Duris introduced the lines merely for *variatio*.

⁵⁵ The same is true for New Comedy, as, for example, Plutarch's citation of Philippides' lines attacking Demetrius Poliorcetes help demonstrate: Plut. *Demetr.* 12.4 and 26.3 = Olson (2007) E32. Strasburger (1961) 17 = (1982–90) II.805 notes the possibility that 'the finer technique of type-portrayal in Middle and New Comedy' influenced contemporary historians.

matter: war and peace, citizen and polis, the power of words, the consequences of actions. In this sense, then, two genres which seem on the surface to have little in common may have had something to say to each other after all. While the theoretical treatises of Praxiphanes and others do not survive, we can at least glimpse the practices of Greek historians after the Classical period and see that comedy had its uses for those writing history.

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