

Languages and Language Use in Classical Greek Historiography and the Alexander Tradition

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Thesis abstract

This thesis examines six ancient historians and one biographer who wrote about Greek contact with the Persian Empire. It explores how these writers explicitly discuss the Greek language in its varying dialects (Chapter One), minor bilingual figures like interpreters and envoys (Chapter Two), and major bilingual individuals who adopted foreign tongues in their own interest (Chapter Three). Previous work in this area has largely been historical in focus, seeking the ‘reality’ behind the text whilst underappreciating any literary aims of the historians. Some scholarship has attempted to move beyond this, at least for certain ancient historians (e.g. Herodotus), but no single study yet exists examining this phenomenon in Greek historiography more broadly, incorporating works at the permeable frontiers of and across the genre to arrive at a more integrated description and analysis.

The three thematic chapters are each divided into two sections: one on classical Greek historiography (Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon’s *Anabasis*); the other on the main surviving historians and biographers of Alexander (Diodorus, Curtius Rufus, Plutarch, Arrian – all from the Roman period). Throughout, I place language in its context by considering it alongside other, cultural, aspects of identity (e.g. *nomoi*). More generally, I seek to situate details of language and language use in their wider contexts: on a narrative level (why do such details occur where they do?), and on a historical level (how do such details fit into a broader contemporary cultural picture?).

Influenced by recent work on ancient identities as well as the ‘literary turn’ in ancient historiographical scholarship – that is, the appreciation that historians were writers crafting their own cultural products, not just chroniclers of events – this thesis employs the insights of narratology and philology to attempt to evaluate the historians’ approaches to language and identity on their own terms and in their own contemporary cultural, political, and literary contexts.

Notes and abbreviations

TRANSLATIONS

Adapted from the following:

Herodotus – Godley 1920

Thucydides – Crawley 1910

Xenophon – Brownson 1922

Diodorus XVII – Welles 1963

Curtius – Rolfe 1946

Plutarch, *Alexander* – Perrin 1919

Arrian – Brunt 1976; 1983

Translations of other ancient texts are adapted from current Loeb editions.

TRANSLITERATION

Transliteration of names follows Latinised English convention for relatively common names (Themistocles instead of Themistokles, Achilles instead of Akhilleus, etc.); less common Greek names are transliterated in non-Latinised form. Generally, Greek phrases are not transliterated, except for certain common terms when used on their own (e.g. *nomos*, *ethnos*, *paideia*, *genos*, *logos*, *koine*).

PUNCTUATION

Single quotation marks (‘...’) are used for translations of ancient sources. Double (“...”) are used for quotes from secondary scholarship longer than three words.

ABBREVIATIONS

- Journal abbreviations follow those of the *L'Annee Philologique*.
- Ancient source abbreviations follow the OCD.

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It is a pleasure, finally, to exhale gently and set down on paper all the debts I have accumulated over the years spent thinking about these ideas. No doctoral thesis is composed in isolation, and for the evolutions in thought that have resulted in this work I owe much to many people.

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In Oxford, I've been blessed to be part of several supportive communities that have allowed me to develop as a thinker and human being. My college, Brasenose, has always made me feel at home, and I thank Nicholas Purcell and Ed Bispham for support and hospitality of various kinds over the years. The postgraduate common room, the HCR, will forever have my heart as the source of many friendships that I know will endure beyond its walls.

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Moving from institutions to individuals, my work has benefitted from conversation and correspondence with scholars throughout Oxford and beyond. Katherine Clarke, Robert Parker, Tim Rood, and Peter Thonemann assessed the thesis at earlier stages and provided many helpful insights. Tim Rood and Lisa Hau examined the final version, and what you are about to read has profited greatly from their keen criticisms. I thank Robert Fowler, Peter Liddel, Luke Pitcher, Shane Wallace, and Nigel Wilson for correspondence on points of detail. Deborah Gera and Christopher Tuplin kindly sent me unpublished or hard-to-track-down papers. Ineke Sluiter and Nicholas Purcell provided insightful commentary on an early, oral version of Chapter 1.1. Ed Bispham, Kristin Heineman, Sarah Hendriks, Paul Jarvis, Guy Westwood, and Andrew Wong all read earlier versions of chapters and I thank them for their comments and encouragement.

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On a personal note, I could not have completed this thesis without the ongoing love and support of my friends and family in Oxford, New Zealand, and around the globe. I can't name them all, but hopefully I can single out those who have had the greatest impact in the course of my DPhil. Andy and Hannah, my flatmates of five years and fellow cat-parents, have formed my core Oxford family and it's been an absolute joy living and scholarising with them. Jack has been a constant confidant, and together with Andrew, Tori, Sven, Jason, Steve, Jana, and Alex, they've been my other Oxford family! Paul Jarvis has been a rock from afar, advising me on my work and/or questionable life choices, along with Sarah H, Kristin H, Sam B, Maddy S, Mike S, Gabby D, Keith M, Steph K, Nathan A, and Amy Leigh. Much love also to many other important people (and no doubt I am missing some!): Sangseraima, Dom, Meghan, Drew, Parisa, Luke, Vilija, Fiona S, Belinda, Christine, Ben P, Clarissa, Catherine, Ellie, Thea, Alice, Ben K, Leah, Harry, Juli, Kim, Brad, Chris, DB, Debbie, Alex, Tuuli, Abi, Emma H, Claire, Libby, Nada, and George. It's been one hell of a ride.

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Introduction

Scope

This thesis examines the metalinguistic depiction of Greek language and the representation of major and minor bilingual individuals in classical Greek historiography and the Alexander tradition. It is a study of the representation of languages and language use by historians; thus, it is not chiefly concerned with how the Greek historians themselves used their own language (i.e. style) – except when relevant for aspects of characterisation (see esp. Chapter 3) – but rather focuses on how they discussed languages and intercultural communication. More generally, the value of studying the representation in Greek historiography of such an important aspect of cultural identity should be clear. We note that the vast majority of intercultural interactions in ancient historiography are written as if conversations took place in a single, common language with no acknowledgement of the multilingual circumstances.¹ Only rarely are we made aware of the presence of interpreters or the bi- or multilingualism of an interlocutor. Selection and omission of material is part of the historian's task, so what does it mean when ancient historians do refer to these details? Language, after all, was a contentious issue in the ancient world, a key aspect of identity for Greeks and their depictions of non-Greeks. This suggests *prima facie* that we ought to pay attention to such ‘trivial’ references to languages and language use in the historians. It does not mean that all such details will have significance – but all carry that potential and are worthy of investigation.

¹ For this convention, see Lejeune 1948, 51; E. Hall 1989, 117-121. Cf. Balsdon's comment that "when the Heads of the American and Soviet states are shown in animated conversation, the camera is careful not to include the two skilled interpreters without whom there could be no conversation at all. In the same way in antiquity historians rarely concerned themselves with language problems" (Balsdon 1979, 138).

This thesis consists of three thematic chapters: 1) *The Greek Language*; 2) *Minor Bilingual Intermediaries*; and 3) *Major Bilingual Figures*. (My reasons for selecting these three themes will be discussed below.) Each chapter is split into two halves: the first section examines the classical historians (Herodotus' *Histories*; Thucydides' *History*; Xenophon's *Anabasis*); the second section studies the four main extant accounts of Alexander the Great (Book 17 of Diodorus' *Bibliothēke*; Curtius Rufus' *Historiae Alexandri Magni*; Plutarch's *Life of Alexander*; and Arrian's *Anabasis*). However, when illuminating for these authors' approaches to these topics more generally, I deal with other texts by the same author (or other books, in the case of Diodorus): for example, when covering Arrian's presentation of the Greek tongue, I include discussion of a scene with a Greek-speaker from Arrian's *Indica* (Chapter 1.2.4); more significantly, since major bilingual individuals do not appear in the more abbreviated account of Diodorus 17, and are discussed elsewhere for Plutarch's *Alexander* (in Chapter 1.2.3, regarding Alexander's 'bilingual' break into Macedonian), I have taken the decision to veer away from these authors' treatment of the Alexander tradition for Chapter 3.2.1 and 3.2.3 to compare instead their depictions of Themistocles' bilingualism in Diodorus' Book 11 and Plutarch's *Life of Themistocles*. These are substantial characterisations which allow for excellent comparison with Thucydides' Themistocles (discussed in Chapter 3.1.2); moreover, their manner of treating the legendary Persian exile of Themistocles displays concerns which are also relevant for their Alexander narratives. Regarding Alexander historiography, I will not be systematically examining the *Metz Epitome* nor Books 11-12 of Justin's *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*: while the other sources are 'secondary', building narratives from primary sources, Justin and the *Metz Epitome* are essentially 'tertiary' sources, summarizing a secondary source.²

² Justin is a collection of 'highlights' (*breue ueluti florum corpusculum*: Just. *Praef.* 4); on Justin, see Yardley 2003; Yardley and Heckel 1997. On the *Metz Epitome*, see Baynham 1995.

As such, the demands of both the topic and space preclude detailed discussion of these authors. Throughout the thesis, however, due consideration is given to their accounts when relevant.

Valid questions may arise over my selection of historians and periods: for example, why skip Polybius, Appian or Cassius Dio? Besides obvious limitations of space, I have chosen the classical and extant Alexander historians for several reasons. First, each text offers substantial engagement with Greek contact with the Persian Empire. This offered ancient historians many opportunities to explore multicultural and multilingual interaction, and their different approaches to similar challenges can be enlightening. Second, there are some 600 years between Herodotus and Arrian, providing a vast cross-section of ancient historiography for comparison. Even within extant Alexander historiography alone, the historians range from the late Republic (Diodorus) to high Empire (Arrian), and across different genres: universal history (Diodorus), biography (Plutarch), and monographs in both Greek and Latin (Arrian; Curtius). Moreover, the four major extant accounts of Alexander's expedition deal with similar events, so we may see keenly how different historians can treat the same material, often based on the same sources (especially in the case of Diodorus and Curtius). Third, the Alexander historians – both first generation (e.g. Nearchus, Ptolemy) and the surviving accounts – betray their strong debts to the first three historians of the Greek tradition, and so comparison on these matters seems a valuable exercise.

Scholarship on Languages in Historical Narrative

Much excellent scholarship has examined what has been called the 'Fremdsprachenproblematik', or 'foreign language problem' – the place of foreign

languages and linguistic diversity in ancient Greek and Roman texts.³ Traditionally, work has focused on assessing the historical accuracy of such representations and, consequently, the historians' reliability. This is especially true for Herodotus, given his wide-ranging comments on language. Since the nineteenth century, his linguistic remarks have often been seen as a 'two-fold *Fremdsprachenproblem*': on the one hand, scholars have attempted to use Herodotus as a source for the study of non-classical ancient languages and, on the other, to establish the level of his linguistic knowledge to evaluate his general reliability.⁴ In the early twentieth century, Diels attempted to rehabilitate Herodotus' reputation as fundamental to the beginnings of Greek 'philology', but failed to counter the narrative driven by Meyer – emphasising Herodotus' errors and lack of knowledge of foreign languages – which for the most part still persists today.⁵ Studies of interpreters of foreign languages in the ancient world have also focused on determining their historical status and role, with little attention paid to the literary contribution of the ancient authors quoted.⁶ Other studies on the awareness of linguistic diversity and multilingualism in the ancient world have also tended towards examination of the historical reality.⁷

These are all necessary and hugely beneficial approaches, without which this study could not have been carried out. Such methods, however, have often tended to minimise the influence of the writers themselves. One cannot use these historians simply to mine for anecdotal nuggets: it is essential to understand their historiographical aims and agendas before employing them effectively as historical evidence. Thus, whilst not chiefly

³ Werner 1992.

⁴ Milette 2008 has a useful overview of scholarship on Herodotus and language (145-151).

⁵ Meyer 1892; Diels 1910.

⁶ Peretz 2006; Wiotte-Franz 2001; Rochette 1997; Franke 1992; Gehman 1914a, b; cf. Mairs 2011.

⁷ De Luna 2003; Adams et al. 2002; Rochette 1995; 1996; 1997a; 1997b; 1998; 2000; 2001; 2003; Strobach 1997; Dubuisson 1981a; 1981b; 1982; 1983; 1985a; 1985b; 1986; 1992; Lejeune 1940-1948; cf. Adams 2003a, who is often admirably concerned with authorial concerns.

concerned with seeking the historical ‘reality’ of language contact, this thesis will illuminate study in that area. Furthermore, this dissertation does not deal with the philological issue of the influence of Latin on an author's Greek, or vice versa.⁸ It is a literary and cultural examination of classical Greek historiography and the Alexander tradition, and is primarily intended as a contribution to our knowledge of the historians themselves and their historical works. I believe, however, that there will be implications for our interpretation of Greek cultural history in the classical and Roman periods.

Since the recent ‘literary turn’ of scholarship in ancient historiography, there has appeared some fine work on the representation of languages in various genres and authors. Edith Hall's seminal study demonstrated the importance of language as a marker of identity on the Athenian tragic stage.⁹ Colvin, likewise, has examined Aristophanes' representation of Greek dialects.¹⁰ Several studies have problematised the presentation of languages in Homer.¹¹ In the realm of historiography, most of the attention has focused on Herodotus, with studies from Campos Daroca, Harrison, Munson, and Milette demonstrating well the plurality of approaches to languages in the *Histories*.¹² In the field of Alexander studies, study of language has focused on the historical status of the Macedonian tongue.¹³ Little attention has been paid to the metalinguistic presentation of language in the extant sources.¹⁴ Some work has been done on the historical role of interpreters on the campaigns.¹⁵ Anson has analysed the supposed ethnic prejudice in the sources towards Eumenes, the ‘Greek among Macedonians’, with attention to linguistic issues.¹⁶ Most,

⁸ For recent studies on such matters, see Dubuisson 1985b; Adams 2003a, 417-526; Ward 2007.

⁹ E. Hall 1989.

¹⁰ Colvin 1999.

¹¹ Mackie 1996; Ross 2005; Stevens 2005, 259-271.

¹² Campos Daroca 1992; Harrison 1998; Munson 2005; Milette 2008.

¹³ Most recently, see Engels 2010; Panayotou 2007; Anson 2004.

¹⁴ See now James 2018; James (forthcoming).

¹⁵ Gehman 1914a; Franke 1992b; Bosworth 1996a; Rochette 1997; Wiotte-Franz 2001; James (forthcoming).

¹⁶ Anson 2004; 2015.

however, tend to overlook references to languages, in implied agreement with Harrison that the surviving sources for Alexander's reign reveal "little of the practical awareness concerning language of Xenophon, very probably due to the distance in time from the events".¹⁷ No systematic study of the presentation of languages in the extant sources, however, has yet been conducted. This is also true of Greek historiography more generally – there is currently no sustained examination of how and why ancient historians present languages, and communication between languages, as they do. I make no claims to comprehensiveness in this area; this thesis is modestly intended as a first step in this direction.

Methodology

I attempt here to place the representation of languages by these authors in their historical and literary context, by asking four central questions:

- How does the representation of languages and language use by these historians and biographers reflect their contemporary historical, cultural, and political contexts?
- How is it influenced by their literary predecessors?
- How do these references operate in the narrative as literary devices?
- How does the depiction of languages and their use in the central texts compare with other works by the same authors (or, in the case of Diodorus, the rest of his universal history)?

My approach, then, could be described as both 'historicist' (in its concern for contemporary context), and 'narratological' (in its concern for the workings of narrative). The tools of traditional classical philology are employed throughout in close readings of the ancient

¹⁷ Harrison 1998, 14.

texts. In the case of the Alexander historians, for example, cross-comparison helps isolate what is unique to a particular author; I am not primarily concerned with *Quellenforschung*, however. My focus is on the effect and purpose of the presence of explicit references to languages and their use in the extant narratives. As such, my approach reflects a broader trend in the recent study of ancient historiography which aims to analyse the scholarly contributions and authorial priorities of historians long thought to be little more than compilers of earlier accounts.¹⁸

Themes

The three chapters listed above comprise case studies of language use in the historians. The order of the chapters reflects a kind of ‘acculturation’, as it were: the first chapter is ‘home territory’, examining the representation and significance of historians’ explicit references to Greek language. The second deals with the depiction of bilingual intermediaries, those liminal, usually anonymous figures acting as bridges between languages and cultures. My focus is on when and why such figures are mentioned, and the reasons for drawing attention to differences in language. The ultimate, third chapter makes the final ‘transition’ to bilingualism, exploring the treatment and characterisation of major historical figures who are presented as familiar with more than just their native tongue for their own interests. Other themes to which I could have dedicated chapters include ‘glosses’ or translations of foreign terms; inscriptions in foreign languages; or ‘ethnographic’ representations of non-Greek peoples and their languages. Whilst I have not focused on such topics, they do emerge intermittently in my discussions. Moreover, there is occasional overlap between chapters, and certain passages could just as well have been discussed in other chapters. A

¹⁸ For a brief survey, see Marincola 2007a. Examples include Stadter 1980; Bosworth 1988b; Sacks 1990; Gowing 1992; Marincola 1997; Baynham 1998; Pelling 2002; Green 2006; Sulimani 2011; Hau 2016.

thematic format necessitates such choice of emphasis; nevertheless, I firmly believe there is significant value in the illuminating comparison of different authors on the same topic. This is facilitated by the internal structure: there is an author-by-author approach within each chapter, and such detailed comparison of seven ancient writers is one of the chief contributions of this thesis.

Language and *Nomos*

One key aspect of my approach throughout is not to study language in a vacuum, but in association with the representation of other aspects of identity, whether ethnic, cultural, or religious. Most often, language is depicted alongside ‘customs’ (*nomoi*).¹⁹ From Herodotus onward, languages and *nomoi* are central to ethnographic writing and commonly linked; along with religious practices and shared descent or ‘blood’, they form key aspects of ethnic identity in the ancient world.²⁰ Thus, there is another key question to be asked: in these historical works, how does language relate to other aspects of cultural identity, or *nomoi*? As I will demonstrate throughout the thesis, sensitivity in this regard helps illuminate the role and significance of language for these historians.

Nevertheless, there is often some ambiguity about whether languages are themselves *nomoi*; that is, whether language is a *nomos* or something distinct. Take Herodotus: in Munson’s book on languages in the *Histories*, for example, she states that “languages are, like other *nomoi*, mysterious in their origin but observable and synchronically comparable

¹⁹ Terms other than *nomoi* are also used: ἔθνη; τρόποι; ἐπιτηδεύματα, etc; for convenience, I generally refer to ‘customs’ in general as *nomoi*. Herodotus’ Athenians’ famous formulation of identity (8.144.2), for example, separates blood (ὁμαϊμόν), language (ὁμόγλωσσον), religion, i.e. sanctuaries and practices (θεῶν ἱδρύματα τε κοινὰ καὶ θυσίαι), and ‘customs’ (ἡθεὰ τε ὁμότροπα).

²⁰ See e.g. Harrison 1998; Munson 2005; Hall 1989; Thomas 2000; Hall 2002; Birgalias 2005.

by one who studies differences and affinities among men in all areas of culture”.²¹ She goes on to say that “Herodotus’ recurring reminders of a people’s different or special speech confirms that language constitutes a branch of the ethnographer’s study of *nomoi*, *diaita*, and *ethea*”.²² The assertion that discussion of a people’s language operates as part of a larger discourse on *nomoi* appears broadly true; Herodotus often comments on a people’s language in ethnographic discussions. However, a comprehensive review of Herodotus’ text shows that – of some 119 references to *nomos* in the *Histories* – languages and dialects are never explicitly labelled *nomos*.²³ For Herodotus, it seems, language is not a *nomos*; indeed, at times he explicitly distinguishes between language and *nomoi*. Herodotus’ description of the Caunians, for example, clearly differentiates their language from their *nomoi* (1.172.1): ‘While the Caunians’ γλῶσσα has become like the Carian, or the Carian like theirs (for I cannot accurately decide), in their *nomoi* they diverge widely from the Carians, as from all other men.’ The μέν/δέ construction (γλῶσσαν μὲν/νόμοισι δέ) plainly distinguishes between the γλῶσσα of the Caunians, which is like the Carians’, and the *nomoi*, which are not. Evidently, language is not counted among *nomoi* in Herodotus.²⁴

Beyond Herodotus, language and *nomos* remain generally distinct entities, whilst still being mentioned in the same breath. Thucydides often couples (and distinguishes between) language and *nomoi*.²⁵ Xenophon’s rare ethnographic passages tend to focus on *nomoi*; he

²¹ Munson 2005, 23.

²² Munson 2005, 25 (citing Diels 1910, 82; Cardona 1970, 20–24). Myres (1953, 45) also assumes language is a *nomos* in Herodotus.

²³ Powell counts 121 instances, as he includes MSS variants at 1.216.4 (instead of νόος, though he labels it *falsa lectio*), and 3.99.1 (more likely νόμαιον).

²⁴ On four occasions, however, specific language use is described with a cognate of *nomos*: νομίζω (1.142.3; 2.42.4; 4.117; 4.183.4). Thus, while Herodotus never explicitly labels a language *nomos*, his use of νομίζω suggests that specific language use can be a kind of *nomos*. Cf. Ostwald 1986, 103: “The use of a given language could in itself be considered conventional social behaviour, or so the appearance of forms of νομίζω in several authors’ works implies”. Similarly, certain naming practices are described with the same verb (1.173.4; 2.4.2; 6.138.4; 7.192.2).

²⁵ E.g. Thuc. 1.138.1; 3.94.5; 6.5.1; 7.57.2; 7.63.3.

never comments on the foreign tongues he encounters.²⁶ In the Roman period, Polybius mentions ‘ἔθη and γλῶττα’ (Plb. 2.17.5); Dionysius of Halicarnassus couples ‘φωνή and ἐπιτηδεύματα’ (e.g. *Ant. Rom.* 1.89.4); Curtius speaks of ‘*lingua* and *mores*’ (e.g. 4.13.4; 5.5.19; 6.3.8); Plutarch writes ‘γλῶττα, νομοί, and δίαται’ (*Mor.* 941c); and Arrian, ‘γλῶσσα and νόμος’ (*Ind.* 7.3.3). Occasionally, however, the lines between language and *nomos* become blurred. Strabo, for example, once links language and customs (here, ἔθη) in traditional fashion, but also suggests language *is* an ἔθος: the Dorians have ‘changed their language and their *other* customs’ (8.1.2: παρατρέψαι τὴν γλῶτταν καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ἔθη). Diodorus also includes a passage which seems to suggest he considered language in the realm of *nomoi*: (17.110.4-5):

There dwells here down to our time a settlement of Boeotians who were moved in the time of Xerxes’ campaign, but still have not forgotten their ancestral *nomoi*; for they are bilingual, and have become like the natives in the one language (ὄντες γὰρ οὗτοι δίφωνοι τῇ μὲν ἑτέρᾳ διαλέκτῳ ἐξωμοιώθησαν τοῖς ἐγχωρίοις), while in the other they preserve most of the Greek vocabulary, and they maintain some Greek practices (τῇ δ’ ἑτέρᾳ πλείστας τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν λέξεων διετήρουν καὶ τῶν ἐπιτηδεύματων ἕνια διεφύλαττον).

While the γὰρ seems to link ‘ancestral *nomoi*’ with the Boeotians’ preservation of language, it could also anticipate the ἐπιτηδεύματα; or, as with Herodotus’ νομίζω (see n. 24 above), it may refer to a specific kind of language use, that is, their particular variety of bilingualism or retention of words. In any case, again language and *nomos* are coupled.

Throughout Greek and Roman literature, then, ‘language and customs’ go together as central elements of cultural identity. Thus, any proper understanding of how historians wrote about language must be sensitive to their use of *nomoi* too, and the benefits of such awareness will be amply demonstrated in the coming chapters.

²⁶ E.g. Xen. *Anab.* 1.2.15; 4.3.17; 4.6.14-15; 5.4.28; 5.4.34; 5.5.5; 7.3.37; 39; 41. See Gera 1999.

Chapter 1.1: The Greek Language

Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon

Introduction

Recent years have seen much written about the place of Greek language in the formation of Greek identity. The landmark works of Edith Hall and Jonathan Hall, for example, have shed much light on the shaping of ‘Greekness’ in opposition to the ‘Other’.²⁷ Ink continues to be spilt on these issues.²⁸ Such scholarship has illuminated much about archaic and classical Greek perceptions of their own modes of speech, and they often cite the metalinguistic evidence of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon. Scholarship on Greek identity under Rome has also advanced significantly in this regard, particularly regarding the imperial period of the ‘Second Sophistic’.²⁹ However, often the evidence is taken out of its original narrative context and much nuance lost. The significance of language, like all elements of identity, differs among individuals, and although we can extrapolate from a broader corpus, it is still important to consider historians as individual representatives of the culture from which they emerged, rather than its spokesmen. They considered big ideas in depth, and clearly had their own views on issues such as religious expression, the nature of power, political institutions, and war. It must not be assumed that their views on language were any different in this respect, without close analysis of their presentation.

Indeed, the particular forms of Greek that the classical historians were composing reflects these different perspectives on the language. They wrote in varieties of Ionic (Herodotus) and Attic (Thucydides, Xenophon), but these dialects are not ‘pure’ reflections of

²⁷ E. Hall 1989; J. Hall 1995; 1997; 2002.

²⁸ E.g. Konstan 1997; Malkin 1998; Tuplin 1999; Anson 2009; Demetriou 2012.

²⁹ E.g. Bowersock 1969; Bowie 1970; Swain 1996; Romeo 2002; Dandrow 2009; Morton 2010; Schmitz and Wiater 2011; Kemezis 2014; Hau et al. 2018.

vernacular – they are ‘artificial’, literary constructions which contain many non-Ionic or non-Attic forms.³⁰ Each historian uses the language in his own way. Herodotus’ Ionic text, for example, includes many other dialect forms: oracles typically appear in epic diction, though some contain elements of Doric,³¹ and he occasionally uses dialect glosses to illuminate the narrative (e.g. 7.231: ὁ τρέσας, a technical term in Laconian).³² However, owing to the messy manuscript tradition, it is not always clear what he actually wrote, and what we have is the product of significant corruption and emendation over the centuries.³³ What we can say is that he followed early Greek prose writers from Ionia and elsewhere who wrote in Ionic, and that epic was a major influence.³⁴ Herodotus was from Halicarnassus, a Doric city (Hdt. 1.144; 7.99), and Doric may well have been his native dialect, though there is evidence for Ionic being spoken by the fifth century;³⁵ his origin, however, was less important for his choice of literary dialect than the widespread use of Ionic in scientific prose across the Greek world.³⁶ Ionic thus served as a kind of ‘standard’ prose language; similarly, Herodotus’ use of epic vocabulary reflects its universality in the Greek world.³⁷

Thucydides, on the other hand, wrote in a form of Attic. By making his literary dialect reflect his native one, Thucydides was probably influenced by the Attic literary output of oratory from the likes of Antiphon, whose rhetorical ability he praises (8.68), as well as the contemporary intellectual trend towards questioning received *nomoi*, like that of writing

³⁰ Colvin stresses that “every genre of ancient Greek literary output was marked by a characteristic (and, on a simplistic view, ‘artificial’) mixture of dialect forms” (2009, 35).

³¹ E.g. 4.157; 159; Colvin 1999, 60-61.

³² Colvin 1999, 60.

³³ See Bowie 2007, 22-27.

³⁴ On Herodotus’ style, see Adrados 2005, 135-140.

³⁵ Thumb-Scherer 1959, 245, 249; Jeffery 1961, 353; Abe 2014-2015, 147-150.

³⁶ Willi 2010, 103.

³⁷ Adrados 2005, 136.

prose in Ionic.³⁸ When he began his *History*, Ionic held primacy in prose, and this comes through in the Athenian historian's 'Ionicising' style; his is an 'international' version of Attic.³⁹ Thucydides occasionally reproduces other dialects' idioms, as well as non-Attic inscriptions (though it is unclear whether he would have revised these).⁴⁰ Xenophon, like Thucydides, employs an 'internationalised' Attic which, however, varies across his oeuvre: the *Anabasis*, *Cyropaedia*, and *Agésilas*, for example, contain many more non-Attic forms than the *Hellenica* and Socratic works. Huitink and Rood suggest that "most dialectisms show up in works which do not deal with Athenian affairs, which are generically adventurous and which may well represent attempts to appeal to an audience across the Greek-speaking world"; thus, rather than expecting 'proper' Attic (as many have done over the years), perhaps we should consider Xenophon's style in these works as "one possible development of the 'international' and 'expanded' version of Attic adopted by Thucydides".⁴¹ Each historian sought 'Panhellenic' forms of Greek which arguably serves as evidence for the 'internationalisation' of Greek preceding the *koiné*.⁴² Nevertheless, their styles are idiosyncratic and reflect individual views on language.

Our focus shall not be on style, however; this chapter will concentrate on the historians' explicit, metalinguistic references to 'the Greek language' as well as the regional 'dialects'; how do they describe their own language and its regional modes? At this point it is worth clarifying the distinction between 'language' and 'dialect', since in this thesis I typically use these terms conventionally and somewhat anachronistically: what we call the 'Greek language' was not standardised until the Hellenistic *koiné* (though note our comments

³⁸ Willi 2010, 103, 111-115; Colvin 2014, 163-164.

³⁹ Colvin 2014, 163-164.

⁴⁰ E.g. 4.40; 5.63.3; 77; 79; Colvin 1999, 62-67.

⁴¹ Huitink-Rood (forthcoming), Introduction ~5: Xenophon's Diction.

⁴² Colvin 2009; Huitink-Rood (forthcoming).

above on the evidence for standardisation in the classical historians), and earlier ‘Greek’ consisted of the regional variations which Greeks acknowledged had something in common.⁴³ In Colvin’s words, “the history of Greek from the introduction of the alphabet until the *Koine* is the history of the dialects”.⁴⁴ Anna Davies, in an influential article from 1987, argued that “even though there was no standard language in Greece before the *koine*, an abstract notion of Greek as a common language which subsumed the dialects was present among Greek speakers at a relatively early stage, i.e. from the fifth century B.C. onwards”.⁴⁵ Indeed, frequent references show that “different forms of local speech are all labelled Greek and that Greek (Ἑλλάς) can represent them all”;⁴⁶ that is, Attic, Doric, Ionic and Aeolic were ‘Greek’, just as ‘Greek’ could refer to one or all of those local forms. Greeks were aware by the fifth century at least that their regional varieties of speech had ‘Greekness’ in common, in contrast to non-Greek varieties, as evident from the Hellene/*barbaros* distinction. ‘Greek’ seems to be a kind of “cover term for a number of linguistic forms which if necessary can be further defined”.⁴⁷ This ‘further definition’ seems to be a matter of authorial choice: when a historian mentions someone’s speaking ‘Attic’ or ‘Ionic’, as opposed to ‘Greek’, he has made a choice to emphasise ‘Attic-ness’ or ‘Ionian-ness’ over ‘Greekness’ (or vice versa). It is these narrative choices with which this chapter is concerned: since ‘Greek’ is the dialects and the dialects are ‘Greek’, what circumstances lead a historian to refer explicitly to one or the other?

The first section will consider Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon’s *Anabasis*; the second, Diodorus, Curtius Rufus, Plutarch, and Arrian. The format is author-by-author,

⁴³ There is some evidence for the emergence of regional standards within the dialects, however (Colvin 2014, 93).

⁴⁴ Colvin 2010, 200.

⁴⁵ Davies 2002, 156 [reprinted version of 1987 article].

⁴⁶ Davies 2002, 166.

⁴⁷ Davies 2002, 167.

first exploring an historian's treatment of 'the Greek language' before moving on to 'dialects'.

1. Herodotus

Introduction

Herodotus was writing about wars heavily defined by cultural difference at the beginning of another war in which the ethnic, cultural, and political unity of the Hellenic peoples was being put to the test. This context, taking in the mid-fifth century and the early stages of the Peloponnesian War, is now understood as important background for Herodotus' 'vision'.⁴⁸ In studying the origins of the Persian Wars, their profound effects, and the peoples involved, Herodotus was also engaged in examining what it meant to be 'Greek', politically, ethnically, culturally, and geographically.⁴⁹ Throughout the *Histories*, Herodotus questions perceived Greek wisdom on these issues as a key part of his project. The extended and brutal encounter with the 'Other' in the early fifth century was crucial to the formation of classical Greek identity, something Herodotus understood. While he in many ways reflects contemporary Greek thinking, he was also an innovative thinker himself, the product of years of travel and inquiry. In this section, I wish to examine his presentation of one key aspect of Greek identity and an understudied component of Herodotus' depiction of the Persian Wars – language.

How did the Greeks perceive their shared language? What did it mean to share a common language at that time? What was its value, culturally and practically? Herodotus explores these issues in his account of the conflict with Persia. His presentation of the Greeks during

⁴⁸ Konstan 2001, 34; generally, see Fornara 1971; Stadter 1992; Thomas 2000; Thomas 2004.

⁴⁹ On the geographic question, see Rood 2012.

the Persian invasion is famously fractured, a medley of warring city-states forced into a tenuous, temporary alliance against a common enemy. The temptation to fragment is ever apparent in Herodotus' text. Nevertheless, the small number of Greek states that formed the Hellenic League did eventually succeed in fending off the Persians in a moment that would endure in Greek cultural memory for centuries. I will suggest that Herodotus' presentation of 'the Greek language' operates within this framework to a certain extent, by depicting the 'Greek language' – an abstract, metalinguistic notion which can incorporate, as we have seen, one or all dialects – as a key marker in a rhetorical construction of a common 'Greek' identity, something of great practical, potential utility in unifying the different Greek peoples against the barbarian invader – but whose value was consistently undercut by political realities.

Greek Language

The Pelasgian discussion (1.56-58)

Herodotus first mentions the common Greek language in Book 1 during the programmatic Croesus *logos*, when he describes the origins of the two chief Greek powers, the Athenians and the Spartans (1.56-58).⁵⁰ This is a notoriously difficult section to interpret; I am guided here by the interpretation of Fowler, which seems most accurate.⁵¹ Herodotus argues that the Greek *ethnos* (τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν) had used the same language from inception (1.58: τὸ δὲ Ἑλληνικὸν γλώσση μὲν ἐπεῖτε ἐγένετο αἰεὶ κοτε τῇ αὐτῇ διαχρᾶται, ὥς ἐμοὶ καταφαίνεται εἶναι), i.e. after the Hellenes split away from the Pelasgians ([τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν] ἀποσχισθὲν μέντοι ἀπὸ τοῦ Πελασγικοῦ). This last sentence is often interpreted as referring to the Athenians alone, mirroring the description of 1.57: there, Herodotus claims that the Attic

⁵⁰ On the 'programmatic' nature of Book 1 and the Croesus *logos*, see Immerwahr 1966, 81-88; Fornara 1971, 18; Lateiner 1989, 259 n. 45; Evans 1991, 49; Moles 1996, 259; Bichler 2000, 244-255.

⁵¹ Fowler 2013, 90-94. See also McNeal 1985; Sourvinou-Inwood 2003.

*ethnos*⁵² was originally Pelasgian (1.57.3: τὸ Ἀττικὸν ἔθνος ἐὸν Πελασγικόν) and argues that the Pelasgians – thus the Athenians – originally spoke a non-Greek tongue, to judge from contemporary Pelasgians (1.57):

If, as I said, one may judge by these, the Pelasgians spoke a non-Greek tongue (εἰ τούτοισι τεκμαιρόμενον δεῖ λέγειν, ἦσαν οἱ Πελασγοὶ βάρβαρον γλῶσσαν ἰέντες). [3] If, then, the whole Pelasgian *ethnos* spoke a non-Greek tongue, then the Attic *ethnos*, being Pelasgian, at the time when it changed to be part of the Hellenes also replaced its language (εἰ τοίνυν ἦν καὶ πᾶν τοιοῦτο τὸ Πελασγικόν, τὸ Ἀττικὸν ἔθνος ἐὸν Πελασγικὸν ἅμα τῇ μεταβολῇ τῇ ἐς Ἑλληνας καὶ τὴν γλῶσσαν μετέμαθε).

The Athenians, then, used to speak a barbarian tongue – and only changed their language when they became part of the Hellenic *ethnos*.⁵³

The implication of 1.58, however, is that the same must have been true of the Dorians, too: when the Hellenic *ethnos* first split away from the Pelasgians, Herodotus argues, it was small and weak, but grew to a multitude of peoples, Pelasgians and other barbarian nations swelling its ranks; the Pelasgian *ethnos*, on the other hand, being barbarian, never attained any great size in his view (ἀπὸ μικροῦ τεο τὴν ἀρχὴν ὀρμώμενον αὐξήται ἐς πλῆθος τῶν ἐθνέων, Πελασγῶν μάλιστα προσκεχωρηκότων αὐτῷ καὶ ἄλλων ἐθνέων βαρβάρων συχῶν. πρὸς δὴ ὧν ἔμοιγε δοκέει οὐδὲ τὸ Πελασγικὸν ἔθνος, ἐὸν βάρβαρον, οὐδαμὰ μεγάλως αὐξηθῆναι). The ‘Hellenes’ here cannot refer to the Athenians only; that interpretation “makes nonsense of the remark about the accession of many other *ethne*” as Fowler puts it; rather, Herodotus “is thinking of how the original tiny nucleus of Hellenes, i.e. the Dorians, gradually expanded to include Aiolians (who are called Pelasgians at 7.95) and Ionians (who are called Pelasgians from the Peloponnese at 1.146 and 7.94), and then

⁵² For the varying use of *ethnos* and *genos* in Herodotus, see Jones 1996.

⁵³ What else was involved in ‘becoming Greek’ is unclear; see Thomas 2000, 119-120.

other groups....all in addition to the Pelasgians. The last sentence in ch. 58 clearly contrasts Greeks and barbarians, not Athenians and barbarians; and so does the rest of the chapter”.⁵⁴ Once established, it seems, the Greek *ethnos* was an “immutable essence”: its language never changed, and though the group did evolve and grow larger as others joined, the “vital step, the evolution from Pelasgian to Greek, was not a matter of imperceptible change by degrees. It simply happened, and after that you were either one or the other”.⁵⁵ Notably, language is the primary marker of Greekness in these chapters, the defining feature in moving away from the barbarian, Pelasgian essence to become ‘Greek’.

The polemical form of Herodotus’ Pelasgian discussion reveals the contentiousness of such issues of identity in his time.⁵⁶ Not only Athenian autochthony and the historical development of the Hellenes, but also the beginnings of the ‘Greek’ language and its relation to the Greek *ethnos* seem to be controversial. Herodotus’ assertion that the Hellenes had spoken the same tongue since their beginning (1.58) seems to imply rival narratives about their linguistic development, given the passage’s polemical context: his comment ‘as it appears to me’ (ὥς ἐμοὶ καταφαίνεται εἶναι) supports this view, along with the emphatic μὲν (τὸ δὲ Ἑλληνικὸν γλῶσση μὲν ἐπεῖτε ἐγένετο...). Indeed, his uncertainty over the specific language that the Pelasgians had spoken, his strongly argued case for their ‘barbarian tongue’, and his argument for the Athenians’ ‘replacing their language’ when becoming Hellenes all seem to suggest that the exact point of linguistic transition between Pelasgian and Hellenic was contentious. Herodotus asserts his view that, as long as the Hellenes had existed after breaking away from the Pelasgians, their language had existed unchanged.

⁵⁴ Fowler 2013, 93. Herodotus’ comment that ‘in ancient times’ the Dorians were Hellenic, the Ionians Pelasgian (1.56) seems to refer to a stage more recent than that described in 1.58; see Fowler 2013, 92-93.

⁵⁵ Fowler 2013, 93.

⁵⁶ See Thomas 2000, 119-122; Fowler 2013, 90-94.

Indeed, Herodotus' assertion is also a definition of sorts for the Greek tongue. As we have noted, 'Greek' was an abstract notion in Herodotus' day, and the appellation could refer to different forms of regional speech just as much as it could refer to all.⁵⁷ As early as Homer's *Iliad*, the notion of a common tongue is arguably visible in its lack of visibility, by contrast to the linguistic diversity on the Trojan side (*Il.* 2.802–6; 4.433–38; cf. 2.867–69). There is no reference to linguistic diversity amongst the Achaeans; indeed, the silent unity of the Greek forces is contrasted with the loud cries of the Trojan allies (*Il.* 3.1–9; 4.433–38).⁵⁸ Archaic lyric offers a similarly implicit picture of linguistic community in contrast to barbarians: Hipponax (fr. 27 W) and Anacreon (fr. 313a Page *SLG*), for example, use σόλοικοι as a derogatory term for non-Greeks (comparable to *barbaros*).⁵⁹ Herodotus, on the other hand, is more explicit, offering clear metalinguistic expressions: 'the Greek language' (Ἑλλάς γλῶσσα; Ἑλληνική γλῶσσα) or the 'language of the Greeks' (τῶν Ἑλλήνων γλῶσσα), and famously his Athenians label the Greeks ὁμόγλωσσοι (8.144.2).⁶⁰ By comparison, his slightly later contemporary Thucydides' discussion of the origins of Greek (1.3) is somewhat more vague than Herodotus' and throughout his work he typically speaks of Greek in terms of regional dialects.⁶¹ Indeed, before Herodotus there is only one sure reference to an explicit metalinguistic term for 'Greek speech': in the *Agamemnon*, Cassandra says 'I know Greek speech' (Aesch. *Ag.* 1254: Ἑλλήν' ἐπίσταμαι φάτιν).⁶² Most

⁵⁷ Davies, in her 1987 'abstract notion' article, does not cite Hdt. 1.56–58.

⁵⁸ Lejeune 1948, 52; Rotolo 1972, 398; Petrocelli 2001, 70–71; Munson 2005, 2 n.6; Ross 2005; cf. Aesch. *Pers.* 386; 406. The *Odyssey* refers to linguistic diversity on Crete (*Od.* 19.172–77), including both Greeks and barbarians, as well as several references to 'men of foreign speech' (ἄλλόθρονοι): *Od.* 1.183; 3.302; 14.43; 15.453; cf. ἀγριόφωνος at *Od.* 8.294.

⁵⁹ Cf. M. Ant. 1.10.

⁶⁰ 'The Greek language': 2.56.3; 137.5; 143.4; 144.2; 154.2; 4.78.1; 108.2; 110.1; 155.3; 192.3; 6.98.3; 8.135.3; 9.16.2; 'language of the Greeks': 1.110.1; 2.30.1; 59.2; 112.1; 153.1; 3.26.1; 4.52.3; 9.110.2. The Greeks are twice labelled ὁμόγλωσσοι (7.9β.2; 8.144.2).

⁶¹ See below, Chapter 1.1.2.

⁶² The pseudo-Euripidean *Rhesus* has a Trojan report hearing 'non-Greek speech' (294: γῆρυν οὐχ Ἑλληνικὴν), which presupposes a category of 'Greek speech'. Its date is most likely early fourth century BCE, however (Fries 2014, 22–47). A similar expression to Herodotus' also appears in the *Dissoi*

surviving evidence for metalinguistic acknowledgement of a ‘Greek language’ in the fifth century, then, comes from Herodotus. The ‘abstract notion’ of Greek as common language subsuming the dialects in the fifth century seems more concrete in Herodotus than any other extant writer.

This is important background for Herodotus’ clear assertion in the Pelasgian discussion that the Hellenic *ethnos* had always spoken the ‘same language’ (1.58: γλώσση...τῇ αὐτῇ). It is not that such an idea was new, *per se*, but that the argument and explicit assertion of ‘Greek’ as connected historically and inextricably to the Greek *ethnos* and defined against the barbarian ‘Other’ suggests that Herodotus deemed it an important issue with possible wider implications for his conception of the Greek/Persian conflict. For that reason alone, it is worth examining his presentation of the Greek tongue in the *Histories*. As I will suggest, Herodotus’ argument for the common linguistic heritage of the Greek *ethnos* – in explicit contrast to the barbarian Pelasgians – will have resonance throughout the Persian invasion narrative, where the motif of a shared Greek cultural and linguistic identity recurs as a possible rhetorical and symbolic point to exploit for the practical purpose of uniting the fractured Greek groups, temporarily, against the barbarian invader.

Greek language in the Persian invasion narrative

Let us now examine how Herodotus treats the notion of the ‘Greek tongue’ during the Persian invasion narrative. Herodotus’ narrative famously depicts a tenuous, temporary alliance between Greek states ever at risk of fragmentation. I am not arguing against the

Logoi (6.12: Ἑλλάς φωνή), probably also dated to early fourth century (Conley 1985; cf. Robinson 1984, 34–41). Later, Plato follows suit (e.g. *Crat.* 409e; 410a: Ἑλληνική φωνή).

grain of this tendency in Herodotus' narrative – merely gathering those passages in which the 'Greek tongue' is in play and suggesting how they fit together.

In this section of the *Histories*, key passages suggest the potential value of the shared Greek language in resolving intra-Greek disputes peacefully in order to fight off the Persian invaders collectively. It is an ideal consistently failed, except for a brief moment during the battle at Mycale – and even then Herodotus undermines it (see below). I do not speak here of charging the Greeks with the failure to unite as a single 'Greek nation', in any nationalistic modern sense; there is no evidence the Greeks would ever have desired such a situation.⁶³ I speak only of a 'utopian', rhetorical ideal that seems to emerge from Herodotus' text at several points. The Greek tongue is not presented as the only potentially unifying facet of identity for the Greeks, but Herodotus does seem to depict its significant value as a practical, potential unifying factor.

Mardonius' comment (7.9β)

The first key passage is a remark from Mardonius, the Persian commander; this comment, I shall argue, holds significance for the rest of the narrative of the Persian invasion.⁶⁴ It is found in the Persian council scene before the invasion of Greece, which Immerwahr noted is essentially a "summary of the whole work".⁶⁵ In this scene, Mardonius is contrasted with Artabanus – "bad counselor against good, rash youth against prudent elder".⁶⁶ He is

⁶³ Walbank 1951; Finley 1975.

⁶⁴ Sears 2009 makes this argument in relation to Mardonius' choice of emissaries but does not link it to common language to the extent that I do here.

⁶⁵ Immerwahr 1966, 128: "The scene gives a complete description of the causes of the Persian Wars, and from this point of view it is a summary of the whole work."

⁶⁶ Lattimore 1939, 31.

occasionally depicted elsewhere, however, as a useful, ‘practical’ adviser (e.g. 8.100).⁶⁷

Here are his comments at 7.9β:

“Yet the Greeks are accustomed to wage wars, as I learn, and they do it most senselessly in their wrongheadedness and folly. When they have declared war against each other, they come down to the fairest and most level ground... [2] Since they speak the same language, they should end their disputes by means of heralds or messengers, or by any way rather than fighting (τοὺς χρῆν ἐόντας ὁμογλώσσους κήρυξί τε διαχρεωμένους καὶ ἀγγέλοισι καταλαμβάνειν τὰς διαφορὰς καὶ παντὶ μᾶλλον ἢ μάχησι).

Exploiting this shared language through formal communication is held up as a method of avoiding intra-Greek conflict.⁶⁸ While his speech is generally full of “gushful and delusive flattery, with such painfully gaping holes in his argument and insight”,⁶⁹ many scholars admit that his comments here – concerning the Greek way of war and solving disputes through diplomacy – are surprisingly useful. Regarding the former aspect, Pelling observes that “Mardonius is abusing an accurate insight: but both the abuse and the insight are important, and the insight plays on the destructive internal squabbling which will be so typical of the Greek side”.⁷⁰ Given Mardonius’ overall characterisation in this scene, Forsdyke labels it “ironic” that one aspect of his speech – that concerning the Greeks solving disputes through messengers in their common language – does “appear to be insightful”.⁷¹ Munson, in noting that Mardonius “combines misunderstanding with brilliance”, argues that his observation concerning Greek infighting and diplomacy “marks one of those great polemic moments that leave no doubt as to what the *Histories* are about, whom they address, and what solution they prescribe”.⁷² She suggests, citing 8.144.2, that Mardonius’ reference to a common language “defines for the audience a conventional aspect of their Panhellenic cultural identity”, whilst also being intended by Mardonius “as

⁶⁷ Lattimore 1939, 31-32.

⁶⁸ Sears argues that Mardonius’ comment appears “rational and prudent”, in contrast to much of Herodotus’ characterisation of him (2009, 23). On emissaries in Herodotus, see Lanski 2013.

⁶⁹ Pelling 1991, 132.

⁷⁰ Pelling 1991, 134. On its lack of value as evidence for Greek warfare, see most recently Konijnendijk 2016.

⁷¹ Forsdyke 2006, 235.

⁷² Munson 2001, 146.

a practical consideration”.⁷³ Indeed, it is this very ‘practical’ value of Greek as a common language which Herodotus occasionally highlights and also shows to be failed by the Greeks in their perpetual disunity of alliance against Persia.

Just as in the Pelasgian discussion, again we see Herodotus bringing up the ‘abstract’ notion that the Greeks share a language. Soon, we shall discuss a passage from earlier in the *Histories* in which Herodotus claims that the Ionians do not speak one language but many variations (1.142), which I shall argue he includes to bolster his argument that the Ionians are divided in many ways. I want to emphasise that, whether Herodotus plays up a sense of common Greek language or chooses to emphasise regional variation, these are literary choices. They carry particular narrative and characterising effects. Mardonius’ comment in itself does not necessarily mean that shared language offers the potential for unity; Herodotus’ audience was well aware that Greeks were constantly at war with each other despite sharing a language, so there is rich irony. Speaking is simply a way to avoid violence in resolving disputes. However, we must consider the context of the imminent Persian invasion, and that a key motif of the final books is whether the Ionians will resolve their dispute with the rest of the Greeks and fight together against the barbarian; in this context, then, Mardonius’ comment about the resolution of intra-Greek disputes through common language may hold more significance within Herodotus’ broader narrative than Mardonius means in the context of his speech. Implicit in his remark is that shared language should mean diplomacy instead of military conflict, but as long as the Ionians are on the Persian side, they are taking up arms against the rest of the Greeks. Such conflict resolution is utopian indeed, as the *Histories* well show; but it is an ideal which seems to pop up

⁷³ Munson 2001, 146. Perhaps with this statement, as How and Wells suggest, Herodotus is “putting his own ideas into the mouth of Mardonius” (How and Wells 1912, *ad loc.*)

several times in the Persian invasion narrative. It will be recalled in subsequent passages in which this shared Greek tongue is implied to be a practical, potential tool of temporary military unity which the Greeks for the most part fail to exploit during the Persian invasion.

Appeals to the Ionians (I) – Themistocles (8.22)

Several scholars have suggested that Mardonius' remark looks ahead to the Athenian definition of Greek identity at 8.144.2, in which *homoglossia* figures; I agree, and will discuss this below.⁷⁴ I would also suggest, however, that Mardonius' words foreshadow two attempts – by Themistocles and then Leotychidas – to turn the Ionians on the Persian side to the Greek cause; that is, intra-Greek conflict resolution through shared language, for the purpose of temporary military unity against a non-Greek invader. Various persuasive techniques are employed, including appealing to aspects of shared identity (e.g. kinship). Both these appeals exploit the *homoglossia* shared by Ionians and other Greeks, in either written (Themistocles) or oral form (Leotychidas), though only Leotychidas self-consciously notes his exploitation of this shared language. Each appeal allows for the possibility that the enemy will learn of it, but also anticipates the other possibility that it will escape the Persians' notice – this suggests an awareness of the exclusivity of the language shared by Ionians and other Greeks, something explicitly declared in Leotychidas' appeal (discussed below). Thus, there are two implications worthy of our interest: despite the different variations of speech among the Ionians (1.142), there occurs here once more some sense of a common language between Ionians and other Greeks; additionally, the fact of the appeals themselves draws attention to the potential of the Greek tongue as a practical, unifying factor between Greeks in war against non-Greeks.

⁷⁴ E.g. Colvin 1999, 60; Munson 2001, 146; Pelling 2006b, 110.

Ultimately, Mardonius' comment on the resolution of Greek disputes through shared language is proven (at least temporarily) valid.

In the wake of Artemision, Themistocles engraves a message to the Ionians on the rocks at various watering holes, urging them to join the Greeks (8.22):

Here he engraved on the rocks words which the Ionians read (ἐπελέξαντο) on the next day when they came to Artemision. This was what the writing said: "Men of Ionia, you commit injustice in fighting against your forefathers and bringing slavery upon Hellas (οὐ ποιέετε δίκαια ἐπὶ τοὺς πατέρας στρατευόμενοι καὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα καταδουλούμενοι). [2] It would be best for you to join yourselves to us, but if that should be impossible for you, then at least now take a neutral stance on our behalf, and entreat the Carians to do the same as you. If neither of these things may be and you are fast bound by such constraint that you cannot rebel, yet we ask you to fight poorly on the day of battle, remembering that you sprang from us and that our quarrel with the barbarian sprang from you in the beginning' (ἐθελοκακέετε μεμνημένοι ὅτι ἀπ' ἡμέων γέγονατε καὶ ὅτι ἀρχῆθεν ἢ ἔχθρη πρὸς τὸν βάρβαρον ἀπ' ὑμέων ἡμῖν γέγονε). [3] To my thinking Themistocles wrote this with a double intent (ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρα νοέων), namely that if the king knew nothing of the writing, it might induce the Ionians to change sides and join with their own [i.e. the Greeks], while if the writing were maliciously reported to Xerxes, he might thereby be led to mistrust the Ionians and keep them out of the sea-fights.

No trace of these writings has been found, nor are they likely to have existed.⁷⁵ Herodotus' report is likely an "imaginative reconstruction, largely based on subsequent events".⁷⁶ Indeed, the account aligns with various strands of Herodotus' narrative: for instance, this episode is part of the motif regarding the potential betrayal of the Persians by the Ionians fighting on their side, visible throughout Herodotus' Persian Wars narrative.⁷⁷ It goes back to the Ionian Revolt.⁷⁸ During the invasion narrative, the motif recurs with Artabanus' warning to Xerxes that the Ionians in the Persian army, when it came down to it, could be

⁷⁵ Herodotus' presentation is closer to a speech than a Greek prose inscription; for this and other problems, see West 1985, 285-287; Lateiner 1989, 20; Pritchett 1993, 159-160; Bowie 2007, 113-114.

⁷⁶ West 1985, 286.

⁷⁷ See e.g. Pohlenz 1937, 12-18; Immerwahr 1966, 230-233; Pelling 1991, 136.

⁷⁸ Precedent could perhaps be found in the Persians' urging the Ionian tyrants to attempt to 'separate' their respective citizens from the 'allied forces' at Lade (6.9.3; they are unsuccessful: 6.10); see Jacoby 1913, 409. That passage also employs the 'men of Ionia' (ἄνδρες Ἴωνες) address, found in both Themistocles' and Leotychidas' appeals (and elsewhere: 4.98.2; 4.133.2; 136.3; 5.109.1; 6.11.2).

unwilling to fight against ‘their forefathers’ (7.51.2: ἐπὶ τοὺς πατέρας) – the same terminology of Themistocles’ appeal at 8.22.1.⁷⁹ Then at Artemision the split in the loyalties of the Ionians is apparent: when they see the Greeks encircled, those Ionians serving ‘under compulsion’ are distressed, while others rejoice and compete amongst themselves to capture an Athenian ship and be rewarded by Xerxes (8.10.2-3). This is the ‘Ionian motif’ background to Themistocles’ appeal before Salamis.⁸⁰

The specifics of the appeal are of interest. Reflecting Artabanus’ earlier comments above about the Ionians fighting against their forefathers (7.51.2), Themistocles’ appeal focuses on the kinship of the Ionians with other Greeks, specifically the Athenians: he begins by saying ‘you do wrongly to fight against your forefathers’, and ends by urging the Ionians at least to ‘fight poorly, remembering that you sprang from us and that our quarrel with the barbarian sprang from you in the beginning’. These comments look back intratextually, not only to Artabanus’ prediction, but also to Herodotus’ discussion of Ionian descent from the mainland in Book 1 (1.143-148); the ‘quarrel’, moreover, recalls the ‘beginning of evils’ that was the Athenians’ sending ships to the Ionian Revolt (5.97.3). His reference to ‘the barbarian’ also draws attention to the common Greekness of the Ionians and other Greeks, in contrast to non-Greeks (cf. Aristagoras’ appeal to common Greekness, discussed below). Ultimately, however, of the Ionians at Salamis only ‘a few fought poorly, according to Themistocles’ instructions, but the majority did not’ (8.85.1).⁸¹ Themistocles’ appeal to shared ancestry evidently failed.

⁷⁹ Blösel 2004, 173. Cf. Mardonius’ speech to Xerxes on the eve of the invasion, where he refers to the Ionians, Aeolians, and Dorians in Asia Minor – under Persian dominion – as the ‘sons’ of the Greeks they are about to fight (7.9α.1).

⁸⁰ His petition is also directly anticipated at 8.19.1, where he explains his initial idea to unite with the Ionians and Carians. Cf. also Plut. *Them.* 9.2.

⁸¹ ἐθελοκάκειον here looks back to Themistocles’ instructions at 8.22 (ἐθελοκακέετε).

Earlier attempts at ‘kinship diplomacy’ in the *Histories* had varying success. We might compare Aristagoras’ appeals to Sparta and then Athens in Book 5: in both, alongside freeing the Ionians from slavery, the ease of defeating the enemy, and potential riches, he appeals to shared kinship (5.49; 97). At Sparta, since there is no specific common descent, he can only appeal – in Hornblower’s words – to “Greekness of a general sort”:⁸² he labels the Ionians ‘of the same blood’ as the Spartans (cf. 1.56-58) and appeals to the common ‘gods of the Greeks’ (5.49.3). Aristagoras’ appeal is ultimately unsuccessful when Cleomenes learns of the journey’s exact distance (5.50); it is unclear what effect, if any, the ‘Greekness’ appeal would have had on the Spartan king.⁸³

At Athens, however, Aristagoras had more success. After employing the same appeals he had used in Sparta (5.97.1), he includes an important ‘addition’ (5.97.2: ταῦτά τε δὴ ἔλεγε καὶ πρὸς τοῖσι τάδε): being in Athens, the mother city of his own Miletus, he appeals to its citizens to save the Ionians, their own ἄποικοι. It is effective, and Herodotus remarks wryly (5.97.2) that it is easier to persuade thousands (i.e. in Athens) than one man (in Sparta). His successful appeal, then, is based primarily on kinship; Themistocles’ appeal to the Ionians is based exclusively on kinship, yet it is unsuccessful. This may be interesting for considerations of Greek identity: although we might be tempted to see the Ionians’ rejection of Themistocles’ appeal as a rejection of the significance of kinship, another possibility is that the appeal was too narrow and Athenocentric, depending as it does on the shared ancestry between Ionians and Athenians, rather than all Greeks.⁸⁴ That had worked for Aristagoras in Athens, however, and conversely, his broader ‘Greekness’ appeal in Sparta

⁸² Hornblower 2013, 164; cf. 21-23; 276: “a reference to the kinship which existed between all Greeks”; see also J. Hall 2002, 35.

⁸³ Cf. also the Persian appeal to kinship with the Argives through Perseus (7.150).

⁸⁴ Bowie labels it an “appeal to the ultimate unity of the Greek nation” (2007, 110), but his later comments (114-115) make it clear he (rightly) interprets Themistocles’ words as referring to Athenian-Ionian ancestry rather than that of the Ionians and all Greeks; *pace* Steiner 1994, 153.

had failed. In this respect, it may be significant that Leotychidas' ultimately successful appeal in Book 9 is somewhat broader, appealing to a common 'Greek' cultural identity. The success of these appeals seems to work in reverse to those of Aristagoras.

While Themistocles does not specifically refer to the fact of common language, it is implicit in his reference to 'the quarrel with the barbarian'.⁸⁵ The remark does highlight a sense of common cultural identity between the Ionians and other Greeks, with all that implies (including language) – but it is not explicitly drawn out, as it will be in Leotychidas' case. The idea of the common Greek tongue, however, may be implicit in the very idea to send a message to the Ionians through public inscription.⁸⁶ Themistocles knows that the Ionians will understand the language, but he also knows (as does the reader) that the Persians have the means to interpret it: we have already seen the Persian King's use of interpreters with Greeks (3.38; 3.140) as well as those Greeks in Xerxes' retinue (e.g. Demaratus). According to Herodotus, Themistocles cleverly allows for the possibility that Xerxes (and his interpreters) will also discover the message, leading them to distrust the Ionians; Herodotus labels this a 'double intent' (8.22.3). Certainly, the message came across: the next day, the Ionians 'read' the words (8.22.1). The appeal fails; but Herodotus has nevertheless raised the possibility of the Greek language as a potential unifying tool – or even weapon – for τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν against the barbarian.

The Athenians' 'definition' of Greekness (8.144.2)

The Athenian defence against Spartan fears of medism on grounds of ethnic solidarity (8.144.2) is perhaps the most famous ancient passage concerned with Greek identity, and

⁸⁵ In Books 7-9, the singular term is used to refer to the Persians collectively: see s.v. Powell 1938.

⁸⁶ Steiner argues for the 'barbarianness' of the medium of writing here, but is unconvincing (1994, 153).

certainly the most overt: as Hall notes, “in the extant literary corpus there really are few statements that define Hellenic identity quite so explicitly”.⁸⁷ This has led to the passage often being held up as “*the* Greek definition of Hellenic identity”.⁸⁸ It is important, however, not to remove it from its narrative context in Herodotus’ text.

In response to Spartan fears of Athenian medism, Herodotus’ Athenians cite their chief motivation as revenge against the Persians for burning temples; their secondary motivation, however, is that they would never betray the Greeks on grounds of their common blood, language, religion, and way of life (8.144.2):

“And then there is the Greek *ethnos* which is of the same blood and language, and we have the shrines of gods and sacrifices in common, and the likeness of our way of life (αὐτίς δὲ τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ἐὸν ὁμαίμον τε καὶ ὁμόγλωσσον καὶ θεῶν ἰδρύματά τε κοινὰ καὶ θυσίαι ἤθεά τε ὁμότροπα), to all of which it would not befit the Athenians to be traitors”.

Although this passage is often taken at face value and out of context in general treatments, Herodotean scholars have shown convincingly that the Athenians’ constructed ideal of common ‘Greekness’ comes with a heavy dose of irony. First, the Athenians’ denial that they would ever ‘enslave Hellas’ is ironic from a people who were in Herodotus’ day ruling an empire of Greeks, something to which the end of the *Histories* itself looks forward.⁸⁹ Moreover, on an intratextual level, the Athenians are soon after threatening the Spartans that they will medise (9.11); Herodotus is “making the Athenians contradict themselves”.⁹⁰ Via Themistocles, the Athenians had also earlier threatened to abandon the Greeks at Salamis (8.62); as Bowie notes, “this shows again how fragile was the notion that because one belonged to the Greek race one’s allegiance naturally lay with the Greeks”.⁹¹ When the

⁸⁷ J. Hall 2002, 190.

⁸⁸ J. Hall 2002, 190, who in n. 78 lists all the scholars who have taken it as such.

⁸⁹ Fornara 1971, 84-86; Raaflaub 1987, 239-240; Boedeker 1988; Moles 1996; 2002; Thomas 2001, 215; Pelling 2006b, 113.

⁹⁰ Fornara 1971, 86.

⁹¹ Bowie 2007, 232.

Spartans come to the Athenians, moreover, they are thinking only of a prophesied threat to the ‘Dorians’ (8.141.1), increasing the irony of the Athenian appeal to τὸ Ἑλληνικόν.

Ironies abound, but is there more to the Athenians’ speech? As we have noted, some scholars have linked this passage with Mardonius’ remark in Book 7, both mentioning Greek *homoglossia*. Like the broader significance of Herodotus’ comment about Greek diplomacy through common language, perhaps we can read the Athenians’ speech as his appeal “to Greeks generally and to Athens in particular to recognize the traits that united the two sides as opposed to the conflicting interests that had made them enemies”.⁹² Indeed, this passage has been seen as Herodotus’ “own definition of ‘Greekness’”.⁹³ Hall expands on this, arguing that the particular choice of criteria – especially the ‘relegation’ of kinship “to the same level as broader cultural criteria” like language and religion – is an Herodotean innovation.⁹⁴ Whether or not we accept this fully, we have already observed most of our evidence for metalinguistic acknowledgement of a ‘Greek tongue’ in the fifth century comes from Herodotus, and his focus on language in the Pelasgian discussion (and indeed Psammetichus’ experiment at 2.2) makes clear the fundamentalism of language to his conception of broader – not only Greek – cultural identity. It seems evident that, despite the irony of this speech – “a clear expression of an ideal of Panhellenic solidarity, self-consciously cast in terms of ethnic identity”⁹⁵ – it is an ‘ideal’ with a lot of currency for a Hellas at war. It arguably speaks beyond the text to Herodotus’ Peloponnesian War-era audience. Within Herodotus’ narrative, however, as with other key passages concerned with the common Greek language, the Athenian ‘definition’ of Hellenic identity is a

⁹² Konstan 2001, 34.

⁹³ E.g. Gould 1989, 5.

⁹⁴ J. Hall 2002, 189-194; cf. 1995, 92; 1997, 44-45. Cf. also Tribulato 2016, 192: “Herodotus was the first Greek author to consider language among the elements which forge ‘Greek national identity’”.

⁹⁵ Konstan 2001, 33.

rhetorical ideal, advertising the potentially unifying capability of Greek cultural identity – and one consistently failed by political realities.⁹⁶

Appeals to the Ionians II – Leotychidas (9.98)

Themistocles' appeal to the Ionians had been a failure, but the next appeal – from Leotychidas – is more successful. In the time between the two, however, much had changed – the Ionians had begun to toy with the idea of defecting from Persia. This happens in several stages, continuing the aforementioned 'Ionian motif', beginning with internal Persian fears of Ionian defection (8.90; 97; 130.2) before the Ionians send embassies to Sparta and Aegina in an attempt to rouse the Hellenes to 'free Ionia' (8.132.1: ἐλευθεροῦν τὴν Ἰωνίην); the Hellenes refuse out of fear. This is the background picture of the Ionians before Leotychidas' appeal at Mycale: a slow transition from performing heroic deeds for the Persians to requesting Greek help in a potential revolt.

Immediately before the battle of Mycale and Leotychidas' appeal, anti-Persian Samian envoys come to the Hellenes on Delos, urging them to attack and lead an Ionian revolt. In Herodotus' description of these events, the language and religion shared between Ionians and other Greeks is evident, a reminder of the cultural facets that can unite Greeks when politically germane to do so. Hegesistratus, the Samian spokesman, speaks 'at great length' (ἔλεγε...πολλὰ καὶ παντοῖα), arguing that the Ionians will revolt the moment they see the Greeks, and how the Persians will not stand their ground – and, if they do, they will be easy prey (9.90.2). Herodotus' description of Hegesistratus' final words employs aspects of common identity (9.90.2-3):

⁹⁶ The expression 'Hellenic *ethnos*' (τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν) from 8.144.2 occurs chiefly in contexts of 'idealised' ethnic unity at other pivotal moments of the Persian invasion narrative: the Athenians as 'saviours of Hellas' rallied the rest of τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν (7.139.5-6); cf. also the hope of τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν 'becoming one' (ἓν...γένοιτο) at 7.145.

θεοὺς τε κοινούς ἀνακαλέων προέτραπε αὐτοὺς ῥύσασθαι ἄνδρας Ἑλληνας ἐκ δουλοσύνης καὶ ἀπαμῦναι τὸν βάρβαρον. [3] εὐπετέες τε αὐτοῖσι ἔφη ταῦτα γίνεσθαι· τὰς τε γὰρ νέας αὐτῶν κακῶς πλέειν καὶ οὐκ ἀξιομάχους κείνοισι εἶναι.

Invoking their common gods, Hegesistratus urged them [the Greek generals] to deliver these Greek men [i.e. the Ionians] from slavery and drive the barbarian away. [3] That, he said, would be an easy matter for them, for the Persian ships were unseaworthy and no match for theirs.

This passage picks up the recurrent motifs of Ionian freedom/slavery and the Greek/barbarian antithesis.⁹⁷ In doing so, it closely mirrors Aristagoras' appeal to the Spartans in Book 5 (5.49.3):

νῦν ὧν πρὸς θεῶν τῶν Ἑλληνίων ῥύσασθε Ἴωνας ἐκ δουλοσύνης ἄνδρας ὁμαίμονας. εὐπετέως δὲ ὑμῖν ταῦτα οἶά τε χωρέειν ἐστί.

'Now, therefore, we entreat you by the gods of the Greeks to save your Ionian kinsmen from slavery. This is a thing which you can easily achieve.'

Both Aristagoras and Hegesistratus appeal to 'common, Greek gods' and urge the Hellenes to save their people from 'slavery', something that should be 'easy'.⁹⁸ There are differences of context, of course: in the words of Flower and Marincola, "now a Spartan king answers the summons, and now the Athenians follow through on their assistance to Ionia".⁹⁹ Regarding the specifics of the appeal too, there are significant divergences. Aristagoras had asked that the Spartans save his own 'Ionian men' (Ἴωνας... ἄνδρας);¹⁰⁰ Themistocles, too, had appealed to the Ionians on the basis of common (Ionian) blood (8.22). Now, however, Herodotus – in indirect speech – has Hegesistratus label the Ionians as 'Greek men' (ἄνδρας Ἑλληνας). That is, the 'Greek' identity of the Ionians is here emphasised over their 'Ionian' identity.

⁹⁷ It may also evoke the Athenian conquest of Samos in 440 BCE (Fornara 1971, 86 n.18). On themes in Book 9, see Flower and Marincola 2002, 35-44.

⁹⁸ Cf. the 'ease' aspect employed by Aristagoras at Athens too (5.97.1) On appeals to the 'Greek gods', cf. Socles against tyranny (5.92η.5; cf. 5.93.1); see Harrison 2000, 214-215.

⁹⁹ Flower and Marincola 2002, 263, who note the 'echoes' of Aristagoras' appeal in Hegesistratus'.

¹⁰⁰ Aristagoras' full comment is 'Ionian men of the same blood'; for discussion, see Hornblower 2013, *ad loc.*

We will see in a later discussion of Histiaeus of Miletus (Chapter 3.1.1) how sensitive Herodotus can be to Greek/Ionian terminology, only labelling the revolting Ionians ‘Greeks’ during Histiaeus’ capture scene; I argue there that such deployment of vocabulary speaks to Histiaeus’ seizure as signalling the end of the revolt, itself part of the wider Greek/barbarian conflict at the heart of the *Histories*. This notorious antithesis is on display in Hegesistratus’ appeal: the use of ‘Greek’ balances the reference to ‘the barbarian’ (a word lacking from Aristagoras’ Spartan appeal, by contrast). Unlike Aristagoras’ appeal, however, Hegesistratus’ words are Herodotean paraphrase, and I would suggest that this change from ‘Ionians’ to ‘Greeks’ signals the imminent, temporary military union of the Greek *ethnos* (Ionians and other Greeks) at Mycale, the brief alliance that helps defeat the Persians. Just as the Ionians had eventually joined the Hellenic *ethnos* and become ‘Greek’ (1.56-58), here they are described by Herodotus as ‘Greek’ immediately before the moment of Greek unity. As I will show, common Greek identity (especially language and religion) is a part of this depiction: at Mycale, the ‘Panhellenic’ is everywhere.

Leotychidas’ response to the Samians invites comparison with earlier passages in the *Histories*. As Hegesistratus is speaking, the Spartan general asks him a question (9.91.1-2):

‘Samian stranger, what is your name?’ ‘Hegesistratus’, he replied. Then Leotychidas cut short his answer (ὁ δὲ ὑπαρπάσας τὸν ἐπίλοιπον λόγον), lest Hegesistratus be minded to say something more, and cried: ‘I accept the omen, Samian stranger...’

Herodotus is particularly attentive to naming and plays with names elsewhere.¹⁰¹

Leotychidas takes the Samian’s ‘speaking name’ as an omen and cuts him short before he

¹⁰¹ See e.g. Munson 2005, 45-51.

can say anything ill-omened.¹⁰² He accepts the omen, and the Samians become enrolled in the Hellenic League. As has been observed, the episode “ironically characterizes Spartan religiosity, their standoffishness with strangers, and their dislike for long speeches”.¹⁰³ The historian demonstrates epichoric difference in speech styles: the long-winded Ionian, the laconic Spartan. Leotychidas, indeed, ‘cuts off’ Hegesistratus, whom Herodotus had described as speaking ‘at great length’ (9.90.2); similarly, Cleomenes had ‘cut off’ Aristagoras, described with the same words (5.50.3).¹⁰⁴ This second connection between the two Spartan kings – the first being the similarity in the appeals of their petitioners, Aristagoras and Hegesistratus – emphasises Flower and Marincola’s point that, while one Spartan king (Cleomenes) had denied Aristagoras, another (Leotychidas) accepts Hegesistratus’ request;¹⁰⁵ finally, the Ionians and other Greeks are coming together in alliance.

The episode also illustrates cultural connections between the Ionians and other Greeks. The omen reflects their common religious practices.¹⁰⁶ It also picks up Hegesistratus’ invocation of their ‘common gods’ (9.90.2: θεοῦς...κοινοῦς), which presumably refer to the θεοὶ Ἑλλήνιοι (cf. Aristagoras’ appeal, 5.49.3).¹⁰⁷ Moreover, the meaning of Greek names is common to both parties: the ‘prophetic’ wordplay on the name Hegesistratus (‘leader of the army’) is dependent on their shared Greek tongue. This is not inhibited, moreover, by the fact of different regional variations, represented here by Leotychidas’ Spartan brevity.¹⁰⁸ In some ways, this omen is the reverse of one at the beginning of Book

¹⁰² Flower and Marincola 2002, 265. This is ‘kledonomanancy’, chance utterances treated as portents (see Roberts 1984, 14, 29; Hornblower 2000, 135).

¹⁰³ Munson 2005, 48.

¹⁰⁴ Leotychidas’ coming appeal to the Ionians (9.98) is also noticeably more brief than Themistocles’ ‘inscription-speech’ (8.22).

¹⁰⁵ Flower and Marincola 2002, 263 (see above).

¹⁰⁶ Mikalson emphasises the ‘accuracy’ of omens in Herodotus (2003, 140-141).

¹⁰⁷ Mikalson 2003, 106 n.365; 133 n.76.

¹⁰⁸ Herodotus elsewhere can extract ‘Greek’ meaning from barbarian names; see below on the Paeonians.

5, in which the barbarian Paeonians mistake the Greek Perinthians' *paian* for an omen (5.1). That is a similar process to Leotychidas' interpretation of Hegesistratus' name, except it is based on a mistake due to linguistic ignorance – the Paeonians do not know enough Greek to understand the *paian*. That tale highlights cultural and linguistic difference; by contrast, the omen of Hegesistratus highlights the cultural and linguistic similarity of the Ionians and other Greeks. This looks ahead to Leotychidas' orchestrated appeal to the Ionians, which exploits common language in a more explicit manner.

Leotychidas ordered Hegesistratus to sail with the Greeks because he considered his name an omen (9.92.2). Upon arrival at Mycale, Leotychidas sails close to the shore where the Persian ships are beached, and makes a proclamation to the Ionians through a herald (9.98.2: ὑπὸ κήρυκος προηγόρευε) who exclaimed thus (9.98.3):

‘ἄνδρες Ἴωνες, οἳ ὑμέων τυγχάνουσι ἐπακούοντες, μάθετε τὰ λέγω· πάντως γὰρ οὐδὲν συνήσουσι Πέρσαι τῶν ἐγὼ ὑμῖν ἐντέλλομαι. ἐπεὶ συμμίσγωμεν, μεμνήσθαι τινὰ χρὴ ἐλευθερίας μὲν πάντων πρῶτον, μετὰ δὲ τοῦ συνθήματος Ἥβης. καὶ τάδε ἴστω καὶ ὁ μὴ ἀκούσας ὑμέων πρὸς τοῦ ἀκούσαντος.’

‘Men of Ionia, those who happen to be within earshot, understand what I say, for by no means will the Persians understand anything of which I enjoin you. When we join battle, each man must remember his freedom first of all, and next the watchword ‘Hebe’; and let him who hears me tell him who has not heard it.’

After Leotychidas' message, the Ionians do finally betray the Persians, but only after the Samians and Milesians lead the way (9.103.2-104). In this, Hegesistratus was wrong (or, rather, exaggerating) to say that they would revolt the moment they saw the Greeks (9.90.2).¹⁰⁹ The Ionians are still presented as divided, “hesitant participators needing the help of the mainland Greeks”.¹¹⁰ Herodotus thus undermines the rhetorical ideals of alliance expressed by Hegesistratus and Leotychidas.

¹⁰⁹ See Flower and Marincola 2002, 263-264.

¹¹⁰ Flower and Marincola 2002, 264.

The message contains an explicit emphasis on the exclusivity of its medium – the common Greek tongue.¹¹¹ Leotychidas’ herald addresses ‘those who happen to be within earshot’,¹¹² and entreats them to ‘understand what I say’; by contrast, he notes, ‘by no means will the Persians understand anything of which I enjoin you’. The Spartan king here employs the verb συνίημι, often used (by Herodotus and others) with respect to mutual intelligibility of language.¹¹³ This expression places extra stress on the fact that his language is shared by the Ionians and Hellenes, but *not* the Persians.¹¹⁴ The Greek language is thus here ‘weaponised’; as Munson notes, this is the only time in the *Histories* when someone “strategically exploit[s] language difference against an enemy in war”.¹¹⁵ However, like Mardonius’ remark on the eve of the invasion and the Athenian ‘definition’ of Hellenicity, the projection of shared language here is tinged with a certain intratextual irony: although Leotychidas emphasises that the Persians will not understand his words, Herodotus’ readers have already seen a Persian who knows Greek (9.16) as well as the King using interpreters to communicate with Greeks.¹¹⁶ As ever, Herodotus offers a rhetorical ideal of Greek cultural/linguistic solidarity, and undercuts it.

The subsequent narrative, however, makes clear that the Persians do not ultimately hear the message: they only ‘see’ (εἶδον) the Greeks ‘exhorting’ (παραινέσαντας) the Ionians

¹¹¹ Diodorus (11.34.4-5) also has Leotychidas send a herald, but his message – surprisingly, perhaps, given Diodorus’ views on Greek (see Chapter 1.2.1) – does not refer to linguistic exclusivity (11.34.4).

¹¹² Shuckburgh’s recommended translation (1893, *ad loc*).

¹¹³ E.g. Hdt. 4.113.2: 114.2; see also on Thuc. 1.3 below.

¹¹⁴ Bowie 2007, 224.

¹¹⁵ Munson 2005, 71. As we shall see later in the chapter, such ‘strategic exploitation’ of language difference is more common in Thucydides.

¹¹⁶ Leotychidas’ emphasis is perhaps a reason for doubting the authenticity of 9.98.4 (deleted by Kruger; see Wilson 2015b, *ad loc*), which states that his purpose was the same as Themistocles at 8.22. In addition to ‘clumsy’ Greek (Macan, *ad loc*), the sentiment of 9.98.4 appears to run counter to Leotychidas’ emphasis on the Persians’ inability to understand his words which, I would argue, is contrasted with Themistocles’ ‘double intent’ (8.22). See further below: the Persians do not hear the message.

(9.99.1). All the same, they suspect treachery: they strip the Samians of their arms and assign the Milesians to guard the passes far from camp (9.99.3). The revolt occurs, which ultimately shows Leotychidas' appeal to have been successful.¹¹⁷ This achievement recalls somewhat Mardonius' suggestion that the Greeks should resolve disputes based on their *homoglossia*; even his suggestion of 'heralds and messengers' (7.9β.2) is perhaps reflected in Leotychidas' conveyance of this message 'through a herald' (9.98.2). Artabanus' statement, too, that the Ionians would eventually desert the Persians (7.51) comes to fruition at Mycale. Before Leotychidas' proclamation, the omen of Hegesistratus' name had also signalled the symbolic importance of common language; Leotychidas' message through a herald, however, highlights the primary value of shared language in war against a non-Greek enemy – its practical utility in coordinating between Greek peoples. The rhetorical 'ideal' of the Greeks' linguistic (and ethnic/cultural) unity constructed throughout the *Histories* is consistently undermined by their political disunity; rhetoric never matches reality.¹¹⁸ For a brief moment at Mycale, however, Herodotus presents the 'Greek tongue' as an effective, unifying weapon against the Persians.

Conclusion – Greek language

Throughout the *Histories*, Herodotus brings the common 'Greek tongue' to the fore in key passages, raising the notion of the symbolism and practical utility of Greek linguistic unity: the Pelasgian discussion, in which he argues that the Greeks' common language was inextricably linked to their *ethnos*; Mardonius' speech, in which this tongue is presented as a practical means of resolving intra-Greek disputes peacefully; Themistocles' appeal to the Ionians to join the other Greeks, weaponising their common tongue; the Athenian defence

¹¹⁷ *Contra* Munson 2005, 71: Leotychidas' appeal to the Ionians is "a maneuver that however remains without clear results".

¹¹⁸ Munson (2005, 16), with reference to Mardonius' comment: the Greeks' "political disunity devalues the ethnic and cultural homogeneity to which they lay claim"; see above on 8.144.2 for more references.

against medism, in which the Hellenic *ethnos* is presented as sharing a cultural and linguistic identity; and Leotychidas' appeal at Mycale, which emphasises the exclusivity of the language shared between Ionians and other Greeks. These passages all project a vision of the value of Greek cultural solidarity that includes *homoglossia*, in each case defined against the barbarian 'Other'. Every time, however, Herodotus undercuts these rhetorical constructions, showing how political realities prevent this common cultural identity ever becoming a source of full political alliance against the Persians. Only at Mycale is there success, and even then not without irony.

Greek Dialects

Having examined Herodotus' treatment of the 'Greek language', I will now explore Herodotus' explicit references to regional variation among Greek-speakers, or dialects. These include the reference to different names for the same alphabetic letter among the Dorians and Ionians (1.139); the infamous 'Ionian dialects' passage (1.142); and the Athenian mothers' teaching their half-Pelasgian children the 'Attic γλῶσσα' (6.138). What circumstances lead Herodotus to emphasise epichoric variation rather than common Greekness in these passages?

Dorian and Ionian difference

The first reference to Greek dialects occurs, perhaps unexpectedly, within the 'Persian ethnography' (1.139). This section of the work is generally considered to be a mixture of "the idealised, the fairly accurate, and the somewhat misunderstood", of "objective data, curiosities, and idealized information" about Persian society.¹¹⁹ In discussing its structure,

¹¹⁹ Flower 2006, 280 (former quote); Asheri et al. 2007, 165 (latter); see also Thomas 2011.

Immerwahr observes that “to an extent [it] follows a standard pattern: gods – sacrifices – meals – social intercourse – dress – sex and family – education – justice – morality”, but remarks that “the end of the *logos* is less traditional”, referring to this section and the next.¹²⁰ This chapter reflects Herodotus’ interest in language as he brings up a linguistic difference between the Dorians and Ionians in the course of describing Persian names (1.139):

There is another thing that always happens among them, and we have noted it although the Persians have not: their names, which are similar to their bodies and their magnificence, all end in the same letter – that which the Dorians call *san*, and the Ionians *sigma* (τελευτῶσι πάντα ἐς τὸ αὐτὸ γράμμα, τὸ Δωριέες μὲν σὰν καλέουσι, Ἴωνες δὲ σίγμα). You will find, if you search, that not some but all Persian names alike end in this letter.

As often noted, Herodotus’ observation on Persian names ending in the same letter holds only for Hellenised masculine Persian names. In terms of the actual letter, we might wonder why he did not simply refer to *sigma* alone; the context of this reference, however, is significant. The Persian ethnography is an idealised vision of a united culture, ruled by a rigid hierarchy.¹²¹ The Greeks, however, are characterised throughout the *Histories* by their cultural, political and military disunity; they are not a cohesive entity, but made up of different ethnic groups that share common cultural features, including language. In contrast to the rhetorical construction of common Greek language which we have seen so far in this chapter, however, Herodotus here chooses to emphasise a linguistic feature that is not shared among Greeks: different names for a particular letter of the alphabet. His reference to a universal feature of Persian language here is contrasted with internal linguistic divisions among the Greeks, represented by dialect differences; as a result, the Persians appear homogenous, the Greeks much less so.

¹²⁰ Immerwahr 1966, 185 n.107.

¹²¹ Immerwahr 1966, 185-188; Munson 2001, 149-156; Thomas 2011.

Ionian ‘dialects’

Reflecting disunity

We have recently seen how Herodotus presents the Ionians uniting in military alliance with the other Greeks, however briefly, to defeat the Persians at Mycale, the culmination of a motif in the *Histories* concerning the loyalty of the Ionians. While Herodotus presents this temporary union as formed in part through the common language they share with the mainland Greeks, this putative ‘shared’ language is worth further comment in light of a passage from the ‘Ionian ethnography’ (1.142-148) earlier in the *Histories*. In polemical mode Herodotus insists that the twelve Ionian cities do not speak the same language (1.142.3-4):

They do not all use the same γλῶσσα but four different variations (γλῶσσαν δὲ οὐ τὴν αὐτὴν οὗτοι νενομίκασι, ἀλλὰ τρόπους τέσσερας παραγωγέων)... [list of variations by region]... These are the four imprints of γλῶσσα (οὗτοι χαρακτηῖρες γλώσσης τέσσερες γίνονται).

The Ionians, then, speak not one, but four χαρακτηῖρες γλώσσης. This rare expression employs a metaphor from coinage, focusing on the indelibility and specific ethnic mark of each regional linguistic variation.¹²² Such a classification, on the whole, cannot be verified from the epigraphic evidence, which suggests a “more or less uniform written dialect”.¹²³ This is perhaps not surprising, since Herodotus’ vocabulary in this passage suggests emphasis on the spoken nature of these linguistic variations (διαλεγόμεναι; ὁμολογέουσι; ὁμοφωνέουσι; διαλέγονται); it may be asking too much to see them reflected in the official documentary record, which Horrocks labels “superordinate to the four different spoken

¹²² Milette 2008, 32-38; cf. Worman 2002, 32.

¹²³ Horrocks 2010, 60; Asheri et al. 2007, 173; see the conclusions of Stüber 1996, 141, who admits some local differences but argues that East Ionic had an overall unity. Herodotus himself elsewhere refers to ‘Ionic letters’ (5.59) as well as the ‘letter...that Dorians call *san*, and Ionians *sigma*’ (1.139); cf. 1.148.2, discussed below.

varieties” identified by Herodotus.¹²⁴ In reality such differences may reflect contact with languages such as Carian and Lydian.¹²⁵

Elsewhere in the *Histories*, Herodotus labels Ionian language ‘Greek’ (1.58; 2.154.2; 5.58.2), so why does he focus on regional variation in this passage? The answer seems related to its place within the ‘Ionian ethnography’, a portrait of relative disunity; an Ionian *ethnos* ethnically, linguistically, and politically heterogeneous.¹²⁶ Of the twelve cities of the ‘Panionion’, one has a separate alliance with the Persians (Miletus: 1.141.4; 143); they do not speak the same γλῶσσα, but four variations (1.142.3-4); the twelve cities might glory in the name ‘Ionian’, but the Athenians and others do not (1.143.3); the Twelve forbid other cities joining the (therefore ironically named) ‘Panionion’ (1.143.3; 145); they can hardly claim to be ‘purer’ Ionians, because the twelve correspond to the twelve divisions of the contemporary Achaeans, whence they came (1.145-146); moreover, they have many other *ethnea* mixed in (1.146.1); those who emigrated directly from the Athenian *prytaneion* are not as ‘pure’ as they believe, for they brought no women with them but married Carians (1.146.2-3); some Ionians had kings from Lycia and elsewhere (1.147.1). Herodotus then concedes that since the twelve cities cling to the name ‘Ionian’, let them be known as the ‘purebred’ ones (1.147.2: ἀλλὰ γὰρ περιέχονται τοῦ οὐνόματος μᾶλλον τι τῶν ἄλλων Ἰόνων, ἔστωσαν δὴ καὶ οἱ καθαρῶς γεγονότες Ἴωνες); he then corrects this view, by claiming that all who celebrate the Apatouria are Ionian – yet two of the twelve cities (Ephesus and Colophon) do not celebrate it! (1.147.2).¹²⁷ The overall impression Herodotus wants to convey is of disunity and heterogeneity and, since Plutarch, many have seen

¹²⁴ Horrocks 2010, 60; Abe emphasises the difference between “spoken/everyday and written/official forms” of language (2014, 149-150). Cf. also Davies 2002, 157.

¹²⁵ Asheri et al. 2007, 173; Abe 2014, 150.

¹²⁶ Immerwahr 1966, 230-231; McInerney 2001, 57-59; Munson 2005, 14; Asheri et al., 2007, 173.

¹²⁷ McInerney 2001, 58.

‘systematic bias’ in Herodotus’ treatment of the Ionians, here and throughout the work.¹²⁸

The disparate dialects of the Ionians are one part of this picture. As with the Dorian/Ionian *san/sigma* divide in the Persian ethnography, Herodotus uses a description of dialect difference to signify wider (relative) disunity.

A greater cultural unity?

At the end of this ‘ethnography of disunity’, however, Herodotus conversely offers what appears to be a note of cultural and linguistic unity. He describes the Panionion, at which the Ionians gather to celebrate the Panionia (1.148.1-2):

The Panionion is a sacred ground in Mykale, facing north; it was set apart for Heliconian Poseidon by the joint will of the Ionians (κοινῇ ἐξαραιρημένος ὑπὸ Ἴόνων). Mykale is a western promontory of the mainland opposite Samos; the Ionians used to assemble there from their cities and keep the festival to which they gave the name of Panionia (τῇ ἔθεντο οὖνομα Πανιώνια). [2] Not only the Ionian festivals, but all those of all the Greeks alike, end in the same letter, just as do the names of the Persians (πεπόνθασι δὲ οὔτι μόναι αἱ Ἰόνων ὀρταὶ τοῦτο, ἀλλὰ καὶ Ἑλλήνων πάντων ὁμοίως πᾶσαι ἐς τὸν αὐτὸ γράμμα τελευτῶσι, κατὰ περ τῶν Περσέων τὰ οὐνόματα).

The Ionians, in various aspects of this passage, are presented in a different, more ‘unified’ light than previous chapters. Herodotus had previously mentioned the Panionion as a place of exclusivity: the Milesians had been excluded from discussions because of their treaty (1.141.4); the Twelve excluded other Ionians from the sanctuary (143.3). But here at 1.148, there is no hint of exclusivity at all: the sanctuary is dedicated to Poseidon by the ‘joint will’ of the Ionians; ‘the Ionians’, he says, assembled there (no hint of excluding the Milesians, as several times before: 1.141.4; 143.3); and ‘they’ named the festival Panionia; a similar expression (τῷ οὖνομα ἔθεντο Πανιώνιον) at 1.143.3 had referred to the naming by the twelve cities. This is not to say, however, that Herodotus’ previous chapters were

¹²⁸ E.g. Alty 1982, 11; see Plut. *Mor.* 857ff.

misleading; there is simply an elision of these details here which leaves an impression of a more ‘united’ Ionia than elsewhere in the ethnography.

Continuing this trend, Herodotus ends the chapter by stating that all the festival names of the Ionians and, indeed, all Hellenes, end in the same letter (i.e. *alpha*) (1.148.2). Just as other aspects of 1.148 give the impression of a more politically ‘unified’ Ionia compared to the earlier sections of the ethnography, this comment strikes a note of linguistic unity in contrast to the previous impression of disunity represented by the four ‘imprints’ of Ionian language. Munson suggests that the festival names gloss “formulates an opposition, rather than an analogy, between a unified linguistic rule and the disunity of the society to which the rule belongs”, and represents “evidence of Herodotus’ unresolved reflection of the possible relationships between languages and cultures”.¹²⁹ Harrison mentions a comment by Anna Davies that “Herodotus might have been interested here in showing that the various forms of speech in Greece were not so remote from each other”.¹³⁰ Indeed, I tend to agree with Davies here: by connecting the Ionians to the other Greeks with respect to festival names, Herodotus allows a greater comparison to be made – between Greeks and non-Greeks, an antithesis so central to his work. For his comparison to the Persian names (cf. 1.139) drives that opposition home, whilst conversely connecting the two great cultures; both Greeks and Persians each have, in fact, a unified linguistic rule. The passage shows how Herodotus was thinking about the different forms of Greek and their relationships to each other; it is perhaps evidence of concrete thinking about the ‘abstract notion’ of Greek as a common tongue subsuming the dialects.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Munson 2005, 27. Cf. Immerwahr (1966, 231), who considers the festival detail evidence of disunity, since compared to the Persians the Ionians are “united only in name”.

¹³⁰ Harrison 1998, 18 n.83.

¹³¹ Davies 2002.

Pelasgian children taught ‘Attic tongue’

The final reference to a Greek dialect concerns an ancient dispute between the Pelasgians and Athenians on Lemnos, evidently after the Athenians had become Hellenes.¹³² In his account of how Miltiades had taken Lemnos, Herodotus includes a detailed backstory of the dispute between the Pelasgians and Athenians in which the Attic dialect is mentioned. The tale is anticipated on two earlier occasions in the *Histories*, which suggests its significance to Herodotus.¹³³ It is also the final *logos* before the narrative of Xerxes’ campaign begins in Book Seven.

In a clear reminiscence of the proem’s series of abductions, the Pelasgians kidnap Athenian women from a festival of Artemis on the Attic coast, taking them away to be their ‘concubines’ (6.138.1). Children are born from these unions (6.138.2):

These women bore more and more children, and they taught their sons the Attic tongue and Athenian ways (γλῶσσάν τε τὴν Ἀττικὴν καὶ τρόπους τοὺς Ἀθηναίων ἐδίδασκον τοὺς παῖδας). These boys would not mix with the sons of the Pelasgian women; if one was beaten by one of the others, they would all come to his aid and help him in vengeance (ἐτιμώρεον ἀλλήλοισι); these boys even considered it just to rule other boys, and prevailed by much.

Herodotus elects to describe the language taught to the boys as ‘Attic’ rather than ‘Greek’; we might contrast Scyles’ learning the ‘Greek tongue and letters’ (4.76.1: γλῶσσάν τε Ἑλλάδα καὶ γράμματα ἐδίδαξε). With Scyles, the contrast is between Greek and barbarian (i.e. Scythian); with the Pelasgian-Athenian boys, Herodotus wants to make a specific point about the Athenians. The behaviour of these boys has received much attention; as many have observed, they exhibit very ‘Athenian’ behaviour, acting in a manner befitting a military alliance like the Delian League, helping each other retaliate if harmed; they claim

¹³² See 6.137.3: ‘Athenians....nor any other Hellenes’; cf. 2.51; Sourvinou-Inwood 2003, 133.

¹³³ 4.145.2; 5.26-7. For other versions of the myth, see Sourvinou-Inwood 2004.

an imperialising right to rule others; and prevail over the other boys.¹³⁴ Scholars have highlighted the Athenian ‘propaganda’ elements of this episode. Munson believes the Lemnian tale “reproduces Athenian hegemonic propaganda about the Athenians’ superior Greekness”, and compares the ‘Pelasgian theory’ passage in Book 1 in which Herodotus “reshapes and corrects this sort of discourse”.¹³⁵ Dewald labels the story an Athenian “charter myth, designed to justify the Athenian control of Lemnos and, more generally, the superiority of Athenian blood or at least the upbringing given by an Athenian mother”.¹³⁶ Harrison suggests that “the Attic language and a characteristic Attic freedom of spirit go hand-in-hand here”, while he sees the Lemnian story as reflecting a view of “the ultimate impossibility... of cultural integration”.¹³⁷ It certainly seems clear that the boys’ education and behaviour is meant to mirror that of Athenian citizens and their empire. This is the only passage in the *Histories* in which the Attic dialect is mentioned explicitly and appears here as a key element of Herodotus’ conception of Athenian identity.¹³⁸

Rather than simply ‘reproducing’ Athenian propaganda, however, I would suggest that Herodotus’ account of the story carries an undercurrent of irony. Just as Greekness is acquired (at least in part) through learning Greek in the ‘Pelasgian theory’ passage, so too in this passage ‘Athenian-ness’ is learned, since the Athenian mothers teach their children dialect and customs. It is not clear, however, whether the ‘imperialising’ behaviour that follows in Herodotus’ description is part of the aforementioned learned *tropoi*, or whether it is somehow ‘innate’ in the children.¹³⁹ This may be deliberately ambiguous on

¹³⁴ As Strong (2010, 462) puts it: “By itself, this statement presents an intriguing reflection on what it means to behave like an Athenian for an Ionian historian living during the height of the Athenian empire”.

¹³⁵ Munson 2005, 9.

¹³⁶ Waterfield and Dewald 1998, 692.

¹³⁷ Harrison 1998, 6-7.

¹³⁸ Cf. Solon’s reference to the loss of ‘Attic γλῶσσα’ among refugees (fr. 36.11 West). Cf. also Thuc. 7.63.3, discussed below.

¹³⁹ Lape (2010, 157-158) speaks of Athenian identity being seen here in “developmental terms, as a product of education rather than as a manifestation of innate or inherited nature”.

Herodotus' part, raising the question of whether such behaviour is Athenian, 'barbarian', or both; for any conception of 'innate' behaviour here is problematised by the fact that the children are not 'pure' – they are half-Pelasgian, half-Athenian. Indeed, in the context of Pericles' citizenship law of 451/0, they would not even be considered legitimate Athenians.¹⁴⁰ In this regard, it is not irrelevant that Herodotus has recently recounted Pericles' own family history, noting that he too traced Athenian descent through his mother's side back to Alcmeon, while also being related to a non-Athenian tyrant, Cleisthenes of Sicyon, through the same side of the family (6.131). We might note that both the Pelasgians and the boys engage in 'vengeful' behaviour (6.138.1: τιμωρήσασθαι; 6.138.2: ἐτιμώρεον ἀλλήλοισι); the 'Athenian imperialising behaviour' itself then, on Herodotus' presentation, carries a note of the barbarian. This seems related to the blurring of notions of Greek and barbarian as Herodotus' work progresses and the narrative begins to look beyond the text at the Athenian empire succeeding the Persian. Attic identity, including dialect, is thus here presented as a cultural veneer over ambiguously barbarian behaviour.¹⁴¹

Conclusion – Greek dialects

Metalinguistic references to dialect in the *Histories* occur for various reasons, whenever Herodotus wishes to make a specific ethnic point. The Dorian/Ionian comment within his observation on Persian names invites a contrast between Greeks and Persians: the latter – a unified, rigid hierarchical society – have a unified linguistic rule; the Greeks, on the other

¹⁴⁰ Strong 2010 discusses 'mules' in Herodotus in the context of this law, on which see Ps-Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 26.3; Carawan 2008; Lape 2010. Schwartz 1969 and Evans 1991 (93-94) argue that Herodotus' Lycian passage (1.173.5, cited above) was directed at Pericles. Moreover, the Athenian women are not even legitimate wives but 'concubines' (παλλακὰς); only the Pelasgian wives of the Pelasgian men are legitimate (6.138.3: κουριδιέων γυναικῶν).

¹⁴¹ We might compare a speech by Thucydides' Nicias (Thuc. 7.63.3, discussed below), who praises his metic sailors for their knowledge of Attic dialect and 'imitation' of Athenian customs (τῶν τρόπων τῇ μιμήσει), for they are considered to be Athenian, whilst 'not being so' (μὴ ὄντες).

hand, have different words for the same letter, reflecting their broader cultural and political differences. Similarly, Herodotus highlights the multiple forms of Ionian language as part of a broader portrait of the Ionians' disunity on ethnic, linguistic, and political grounds – a characteristic that will recur throughout Herodotus' narrative of the Ionian Revolt and Persian Wars proper. The reference to Ionian/Greek festival names suggests Herodotus' reflecting upon the relationship between different forms of Greek, connecting the Ionians and other Greeks in implied contrast to the Persians. The Attic dialect learned by the half-Pelasgian boys is presented as a typically Athenian element of cultural identity, inextricably linked to their imperialising Athenian behaviour. Just as Herodotus shows that his rhetorical construction of the 'Greek language' as part of an ideal of Greek cultural solidarity in the face of barbarian invasion falters under Greek military and political disunity, his references to epichoric dialects likewise reflect his thinking about language and its wider connections to society.

2. Thucydides

Introduction

We shall now move on to discuss Thucydides' references to Greek and epichoric dialects, beginning with the possible creation of a common Greek tongue. I will then explore his presentation of Doric and its strategic use by Demosthenes; next, Nicias' reference to the Attic tongue; and finally, I will discuss the linguistic 'barbarianisation' of certain Greek peoples in the *History*.

Greek Language

The creation of the Greek tongue?

Early in the *Archaeology*, Thucydides appears to allude to the development of a shared Hellenic language. In discussing the lack of common action in Hellas before the Trojan War, he comments on the names ‘Hellas’ and ‘Hellenes’, which existed before the Trojan War; through the contact that Hellen and his sons had with others (ὁμιλία), the name spread, though it took a long time before it prevailed, i.e. much later than the Trojan War (1.3.1-2). Thucydides adduces Homer, who lived ‘long after’ the war he describes, and never uses the name to designate all Greeks; nor *barbaros*, which marks off the Greeks as separate (1.3.3). He concludes (1.3.4):

οἱ δ’ οὖν ὥς ἕκαστοι Ἑλλήνες κατὰ πόλεις τε ὅσοι ἀλλήλων ξυνίεσαν καὶ ζύμπαντες ὕστερον κληθέντες οὐδὲν πρὸ τῶν Τρωικῶν δι’ ἀσθένειαν καὶ ἀμειξίαν ἀλλήλων ἀθρόοι ἔπραξαν.

It appears therefore that the several Hellenic communities – comprising not only those who first acquired the name, city by city, as many as came to understand each other, but also those who assumed it afterwards as the name of the whole people – were before the Trojan War prevented by their weakness and the absence of mutual intercourse from displaying any collective action.

For Thucydides, the gradual adoption of the name ‘Hellenes’ began before the Trojan War, and only became a widespread designation for all Greeks centuries after the war. Moreover, as Gomme noted, “with the problem of the spread of the Hellenic name was involved a much more important one, the spread of a common Hellenic language”.¹⁴² Indeed, the phrase ‘as many as came to understand one another’ (ὅσοι ἀλλήλων ξυνίεσαν) could conceivably suggest the creation, or perhaps realisation, of a common language, as indeed

¹⁴² Gomme 1945, 95.

many have interpreted it (Gomme among them).¹⁴³ It is a rather vague formulation, particularly compared with Herodotus at 1.58, when he says the Hellenic *ethnos* had spoken the same language since its inception.¹⁴⁴ Elsewhere, moreover, Thucydides can be relatively articulate in matters of language, including distinguishing bilingual peoples (4.109), non-Greek speakers and languages (4.50.2; 8.85.2), the adoption of foreign tongues (1.138.1), and the transvaluation of words in *stasis* (3.82-83). It is also not clear whether ‘as many as came to understand each other’ implies that some Greeks did not understand each other.¹⁴⁵

However, Thucydides’ focus is on the spread of the name, Hellenes, and clarity about the Greek tongue may be expecting too much. Perhaps Malkin is right, at least for Thucydides, when he suggests that “the ancient historians...insisted on the distinction between being Greek (an earlier state, without a general appellation) and being *called*, comprehensively, ‘Greeks’ (Hellenes), a result of migration, diffusion, and acculturation”.¹⁴⁶ I would suggest that, in Thucydides’ conception, this state of ‘being Greek’ went along with ‘speaking Greek’; he is not describing the development of the Greek language so much as the realisation that Greeks had speech in common. Unlike Herodotus, neither here nor elsewhere does Thucydides employ the metalinguistic expression ‘the Greek tongue’; nevertheless, his phrasing here – paralleled elsewhere – assumes a commonality of language.¹⁴⁷ Thucydides’ presentation has the effect of highlighting by contrast the

¹⁴³ Gomme 1945, 95; Price 2001, 335; Jowett 1881 and Warner 1972 translate as ‘a common language’. Malkin (1998, 144) is on the fence: “Thucydides thought that the name (and language?) of the Hellenes had spread only after the Trojan War”; cf. also Marchant 1905, *ad loc.*

¹⁴⁴ Note Marchant’s comment that Thucydides “does not seem to have a clear view of the matter” (1905, *ad loc.*).

¹⁴⁵ Cf. the ‘unintelligible’ Eurytians (3.94.5); discussed below.

¹⁴⁶ Malkin 1998, 145 (italics original).

¹⁴⁷ E.g. Plat. *Theaet.* 196e, which uses the same expression as Thucydides in the sense of a shared understanding of vocabulary, that they both know what the words really mean; the expression thus assumes commonality of language. Additionally, the scholiast on Thuc. 1.3.2 links ὁμιλία to διάλεξις, on the basis of

significance which Herodotus places on the Greek language as an entity in and of itself. Herodotus, of course, also assumes that ‘being Greek’ went along with ‘speaking Greek’, for when the Athenians join the Hellenes, they change their language (1.57.2), and the Greek *ethnos* had the same language from its beginning (1.58), as we have seen. Neither historian, therefore, needs to describe the creation of the Greek language *per se*. Thucydides implies what Herodotus had made explicit – that the Greeks had always spoken Greek – whilst also hinting at a process of the Greeks’ realising their common speech.

Amphilochian Argives and Ambraciots (2.68.5)

Despite Thucydides’ lack of clarity about the spread of Greek in early times, the existence of ‘Greek’ in the wake of the Trojan War is assumed in his account of the Amphilochian Argives, who were ‘Hellenised’ in their tongue. When the Ambraciots march against Amphilochian Argos, Thucydides describes the origin of their conflict (2.68):

This Argos and the rest of Amphilochia were colonized by Amphilochus, son of Amphiaraus. Dissatisfied with the state of affairs at home on his return there after the Trojan War, he built this city in the Ambracian gulf, and named it Argos after his own country. [4] This was the largest town in Amphilochia, and its inhabitants the most powerful. [5] Under the pressure of misfortune many generations afterwards, they called in the Ambraciots, their neighbours on the Amphilochian border, to join their colony; and it was by this union with the Ambraciots that they first became Hellenised in the language which they now speak, but the rest of the Amphilochians are barbarians (καὶ ἡλληνίσθησαν τὴν νῦν γλῶσσαν τότε πρῶτον ἀπὸ τῶν Ἀμπρακιωτῶν ξυνοικησάντων· οἱ δὲ ἄλλοι Ἀμφιλόχοι βάρβαροί εἰσιν). [6] After a time the Ambraciots expelled the Argives and held the city themselves.

This linguistic process reminds us of Herodotus’ description of the Athenians who had ‘changed their language when they joined the Hellenes’ (Hdt. 1.57.3). In each case, language is presented as fundamental to ‘Hellenicity’, if presumably not the only factor involved: the addition of ‘with respect to their current language’ here appears to imply

the expression in 1.3.4 (ἀλλήλων ξυνίεσαν). Thucydides does talk about the ‘Hellenisation’ of a language, however; see below on the Amphilochian Argives.

other components necessary for full ‘Hellenisation’.¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, ἑλληνίζειν guarantees the Greekness of their tongue.

We learn later in the text that the Ambraciots spoke the Doric dialect (3.112.4). Why does Thucydides choose to emphasise the ‘Hellenic’ qualities of the Amphilochean Argives’ γλῶσσα, rather than the ‘Doric’? Part of the answer must lie in the status of the ‘other Amphilocheans’, whom Thucydides describes as *barbaroi* (2.68.5). It is probably a matter of relativity, employing the Greek/barbarian antithesis: if the other Amphilocheans are *barbaroi*, then the Amphilochean Argives are more ‘Greek’ in their γλῶσσα. The contrast with the barbarian Amphilocheans would not be as strong if the focus was on the Argives’ ‘Dorianisation’, rather than ‘Hellenisation’; indeed, reference to the Dorians tends to come with implied contrast to the Ionians, the Dorians’ ‘eternal enemies’.¹⁴⁹ Just as with Thucydides’ use of the Greek/barbarian antithesis in the *Archaeology* (1.3.3), the use of ἑλληνίζω in this passage offers a starker contrast to the *barbaroi* surrounding the Amphilochean Argives.¹⁵⁰

Greek Dialects

Doric dialect – Strategic benefit and confusion

We have seen how Thucydides can emphasise the ‘Hellenic’ in the Greeks’ modes of speech; we now turn to those instances when he explicitly refers to the epichoric dialects. Thucydides sometimes makes clear that enemies shared the same dialect; Doric,

¹⁴⁸ Thomas 2001, 224; cf. Hornblower 1991, 352.

¹⁴⁹ 1.124.1; 5.9.1; 6.80.3 (αἰεὶ πολέμιων, ‘eternal enemies’); 82.2; 7.5.4; 57.2; 4; 9; 8.25.5. Cf. Hdt. 8.73.3 for an example of ‘Dorianization’ (ἐκδωριεύομαι).

¹⁵⁰ See also below on the Ambraciots. Cf. Rood’s comments on “Ἑλλην-language” at Thuc. 1.89 and 109-110, “a Herodotean touch suitable to the narrative of conflict between Greece and Persia” (Rood 1998, 240 n.53).

particularly, is exploited to intentional strategic effect on several occasions in the *History* (exclusively by the Athenian general Demosthenes), and once even causes unintentional confusion. This is something that has been observed before in passing, but not explored in detail.¹⁵¹

Messenians and Ambraciots (3.112.4)

The first occasion concerns Demosthenes' campaign against the Ambraciots, whom we have just discussed regarding their 'Hellenisation' of the Amphilochian Argives (2.68.5). In Book 3, we have an account of how the Ambraciots' γλῶσσα (which we now learn is Doric) is 'weaponised' against them by the Athenian general to powerful effect. At Idomene, the Messenians in the Athenian army deceive the Ambraciots in the darkness through their shared tongue (3.112.3-4):

At dawn Demosthenes fell upon the Ambraciots while they were still in bed, ignorant of what had passed, and fully thinking that it was their own men (τοὺς ἑαυτῶν εἶναι). [4] For Demosthenes had purposely put the Messenians in front with orders to address them in the Doric tongue (προσαγορεύειν ἐκέλευε, Δωρίδα τε γλῶσσαν ἰέντας), and thus to inspire confidence in the guards, who would not be able to see them, as it was still night.

Presumably, it is meant that the Messenians were taken to be Spartans.¹⁵² This strategy was a success, and Demosthenes slew 'most of them where they were, the rest breaking way in flight over the hills' (3.112.5). The Ambraciots, however, not knowing the country, fell into ravines and ambushes (3.112.6). Thucydides then presents some Ambraciots as making a somewhat strange decision: they turned to the sea and swam towards the Athenian ships, 'thinking it better in their panic to perish, if perish they must, by the hands of the Athenians, than by those of the barbarous and detested Amphilochians' (3.112.7: ὑπὸ τῶν βαρβάρων καὶ ἐχθίστων Ἀμφιλόχων). It is worth recalling that the Ambraciots had long

¹⁵¹ E.g. Harrison 1998, 13; Petrocelli 2001, 85-94.

¹⁵² Luraghi 2008, 189 n.57.

ago once mixed with these ‘barbarous’ Amphilochians, resulting in the present Hellenised γλῶσσα of the Amphilochian Argives (2.68.5); now, however, after the defeat by Demosthenes, the Ambraciots consider the Amphilochians to be not only barbarian (as Thucydides had called them at 2.68.5), but also ‘hateful/detested’. The Ambraciots, despite being deceived by the Athenians and their Messenian allies, would rather be killed by Athenian hands than by those perceived as *barbaroi*. Thus in their last moments the Ambraciots define themselves as more Hellenic than the Amphilochians. Thucydides underscores this in his coda to the episode when he declares the Ambraciot massacre to be the ‘greatest disaster that befell any one Hellenic city within so few days during this war’ (3.113.6).

This is surely bitterly ironic from Thucydides: the Ambraciots’ own Doric dialect has been used against them, yet they still cling to a common ‘Greek’ identity. Herodotus, as we have seen, depicts the ‘weaponisation’ of language in a similar way, when Themistocles and Leotychidas employ the common Greek language to turn the Ionians to their cause; however, that was in the cause of Greek collaboration against a barbarian enemy. For the Ambraciots to cling to their Hellenicity in the wake of this episode, I would suggest, is part of Thucydides’ portrait of a Greek world unhinged from traditional bonds.

Messenians and Spartans (4.3.3; 4.41.2)

The Messenians also shared the Doric dialect with the Spartans, according to Thucydides.¹⁵³ Demosthenes puts it to strategic use once more in the following summer’s campaign in Pylos. After a storm drives the Athenian fleet into Pylos, Demosthenes urges

¹⁵³ The epigraphic divergences between Messenian and Laconian, which seemingly contradict Thucydides’ view (4.3.3) that Messenians and Laconians are ὁμόφωνοι, have also been explained as a result of self-differentiation in the early fourth century when the Messenian helots fought for independence (Katičić 1959, 135–6).

his men to fortify the location, arguing that this spot was distinguished by having a harbour close by, ‘while the Messenians, being former natives of the country (οἰκείους ὄντας αὐτῷ τὸ ἀρχαῖον) and ὁμόφωνοι with the Lacedaemonians, could do them the greatest damage by their incursions from it (πλεῖστ’ ἂν βλάπτειν ἐξ αὐτοῦ ὁρμωμένους), and would at the same time be a trusty garrison’ (4.3.3).¹⁵⁴ Indeed, that is what happens; Thucydides returns to this point at the conclusion of the Pylos campaign, even echoing the vocabulary: ‘Meanwhile the defence of Pylos was not forgotten; the Messenians from Naupactus sent to their *patris*, to which Pylos formerly belonged, some of their most suitable men, and began raiding Laconia, which their being ὁμόφωνοι rendered most destructive’ (4.41.2: πλεῖστα ἔβλαπτον ὁμόφωνοι ὄντες).¹⁵⁵ This particular detail with all its ethnic and strategic significance was evidently compelling to Thucydides. In this war, shared dialects do not necessarily unify; they can also cause devastation.

The use of the term ὁμόφωνος in the Pylos episode highlights the factor of shared language in a more marked way than with the Ambraciots (3.112.4). The word ‘Doric’ is not even mentioned; it is simply that the Messenians and Spartans share the same dialect that matters.¹⁵⁶ This detail is even foreshadowed, perhaps, by Thucydides’ passing reference to the Spartan name for Pylos at the start of this episode: ‘For Pylos lies about four hundred stades from Sparta, in the territory that, belonging once to the Messenians, the Spartans call Koryphasion’ (4.3.2: καλοῦσι δὲ αὐτὴν οἱ Λακεδαιμόνιοι Κορυφάσιον). Thucydides rarely notes alternative place-names; by contrast, he does mention former place-names (e.g.

¹⁵⁴ Luraghi (2008, 189 n.58) suggests that the notion that these Messenians would be familiar with the area is rather ‘strained’, but cf. 4.36.1.

¹⁵⁵ Rood (1998, 38) notes the echo. Cf. similar kinds of deception without the dialect mentioned (e.g. 7.73.3-74.1).

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Chapter 1.2.1 on Diodorus’ similar use of terminology.

4.76.3; 102.3; 6.2.2).¹⁵⁷ This rarity strengthens the suggestion of foreshadowing, since it calls attention to Spartan linguistic difference from the Athenians, the very thing that will hurt them through the Messenians.¹⁵⁸ In his use of the term ὁμόφωνος Thucydides emphasises the abuse and ‘weaponisation’ of a shared dialect in this destructive war.¹⁵⁹

Doric paean (7.44.6)

Both Herodotus and Thucydides describe incidents of confusion regarding the singing of a *paean*. In Herodotus’ Book 5, as we have seen, the Paionians interpret the Perinthians’ *paean* as fulfilling an oracle that they should attack if the Perinthians call them by name (5.1-3); the confusion caused by the oracular wordplay between Παίονες and παίωνίζω is typically Herodotean and emphasises the confusion between two languages. Thucydides’ account of *paean*-based confusion is equally characteristic, for it concerns the motif of Demosthenes and Doric speech. In contrast to Herodotus, however, Thucydides’ *paean* story highlights the confusion between two groups speaking the same tongue.

In Book 7, Thucydides describes the unsuccessful night attack on Epipolae and the confused panic caused by limited visibility (7.44.1-5): a bright moon did not aid in distinguishing friend and foe; the general noise (βοή) made things worse; and while the victorious Syracusan side was shouting, the Athenians were attempting to discern friends

¹⁵⁷ Hornblower 1996, 154. Hornblower also notes the presence of ‘Koryphasion’ in the truce document of 4.118.4 and in the Peace of Nicias (5.18.7) and suggests that “the present passage may well therefore have been written with those passages already in mind”.

¹⁵⁸ Sears argues that even Thucydides’ topographical details are affected by his literary need to characterise Athenian and Spartan difference (Sears 2011).

¹⁵⁹ The history of the Spartans and Messenians, of course, was charged and complex, and it has been suggested that the Messenians of Naupactus developed a ‘rebel identity’ given their hatred of the Spartans (cf. e.g. Thuc. 1.103.3; Luraghi 2008, 172-208, esp 189; Thein 2014). One reading of the Pylos episode is that the Messenians’ weaponization of their φωνή, a key aspect of identity shared with their erstwhile enslavers, may form part of this identity formation.

by asking for the watchword, which allowed the enemy to learn it to their benefit. The greatest damage was done by the *paean*, however (7.44.6):

μέγιστον δὲ καὶ οὐχ ἥκιστα ἔβλαψε καὶ ὁ παιανισμός· ἀπὸ γὰρ ἀμφοτέρων παραπλήσιος ὦν ἀπορίαν παρείχεν. οἳ τε γὰρ Ἀργεῖοι καὶ οἱ Κερκυραῖοι καὶ ὅσον Δωρικὸν μετ' Ἀθηναίων ἦν, ὁπότε παιανίσσειαν, φόβον παρείχε τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις, οἳ τε πολέμιοι ὁμοίως.

But what hurt them the most, or indeed more than anything else, was the singing of the *paean*; for it caused perplexity by being nearly the same on either side; for the Argives and Corcyraeans, and any other Dorian peoples with the Athenian army, struck terror into the Athenians whenever they raised their *paean*, no less than did the enemy.

Earlier in the chapter, Thucydides says that this was the only night battle that took place between ‘great armies’ during the war (7.44.1). This comment nevertheless calls to mind Demosthenes’ earlier night attack in 426/5 (3.112), when the Athenian general had employed the Messenians’ Doric γλῶσσα to deceive the Ambraciots – not ‘great armies’ perhaps, but certainly an instance when Dorian allies in the Athenian army had been put to positive strategic use, as we have seen. Thucydides’ analeptic allusion invites comparison: in the earlier instance, the Athenians had successfully exploited the language shared by their Doric enemies and allies; at Epipolae, however, this shared language backfires on the Athenians.

Circumstances are much different at this point, however. This is no longer the Archidamian War; the Athenians are in Sicily, and the optimism strategically built up in the narrative of Book 6 with various Athenian successes has turned.¹⁶⁰ The Athenians are struggling, having just lost a battle (7.41). The night battle comes after Nicias’ letter to the Athenian Assembly and forms the first stage of Demosthenes’ attempt to bring about a decisive resolution to the Sicilian campaign (7.42.5). Connor argues that the presentation of this night attack works as part of a narrative strategy that shows Demosthenes’ formerly

¹⁶⁰ Summarised well by Connor 1984, 185-187.

successful techniques failing in the Epipolae attack (although he does not take into account the linguistic component).¹⁶¹ Once again, indeed, Demosthenes is in charge – but this time, the common tongue shared by the Athenians’ Dorian allies and their Dorian enemies backfires on the Athenians, and now causes them damage. Thucydides goes on to describe the accidental slaughter in strong, emotive language (7.44.7): ‘Thus, after being once thrown into disorder, they ended by coming into collision with each other in many parts of the field, friends with friends, and citizens with citizens’ (φίλοι τε φίλοις καὶ πολῖται πολίταις). After several episodes when shared Doric language had been put to successful strategic use by Demosthenes, in this Sicilian battle (also led by Demosthenes), Thucydides narrates the tragic irony that language shared between one’s enemies and allies can also work against one in the wrong circumstances.¹⁶²

Attic dialect – What is ‘Athenian-ness’?

We have seen several instances of the Doric γλῶσσα successfully exploited in military operations, followed by a case of its causing unintentional confusion. Thucydides demonstrates a weakness in the concept of a shared dialect: its strategic use within the context of the *kinesis*, when alliances are not necessarily formed along clear-cut ethnic lines, something he points out in the catalogue of forces at Syracuse (7.57.1). Now, we shall discuss a key reference to the Attic tongue.

¹⁶¹ Connor 1984, 191-193.

¹⁶² The other reference to Doric in the *History* – which cannot be discussed for space – comes in the *Sikelika*, when describing the mixed dialect of Himera: ‘The tongue was a mixture of Chalcidian and Doric, but the institutions which prevailed were the Chalcidian’ (6.5.1: καὶ φωνὴ μὲν μεταξὺ τῆς τε Χαλκιδέων καὶ Δωρίδος ἐκράθη, νόμιμα δὲ τὰ Χαλκιδικὰ ἐκράτησεν). Cf. also 5.77; 79 (written in Doric).

Nicias' speech to the sailors (7.63)

In Nicias' speech to the Athenians and their allies before the battle in the Syracusan harbour, the idea of shared language crops up again (7.63.3):

“The sailors I advise, and at the same time implore, not to be too much daunted by their misfortunes, now that we have our decks better armed and a greater number of vessels. Bear in mind how well worth preserving is the pleasure felt by those of you who through your knowledge of our φωνή and imitation of our τρόποι have hitherto been considered Athenians, even though not so in reality, and as such were honoured throughout Hellas (ἐκείνην τε τὴν ἡδονὴν ἐνθυμεῖσθαι ὥς ἀξία ἐστὶ διασώσασθαι, οἱ τέως Ἀθηναῖοι νομιζόμενοι καὶ μὴ ὄντες ἡμῶν τῆς τε φωνῆς τῇ ἐπιστήμῃ καὶ τῶν τρόπων τῇ μιμήσει ἐθαυμάζεσθε κατὰ τὴν Ἑλλάδα), and had your full share of the advantages of our *arkhe*, and more than your share in the respect of our subjects and in protection from ill treatment.¹⁶³

This comment perhaps harks back to the catalogue's reference to the φωνή and *nomima* of the Athenian allies (7.57). The parallel catalogue of Syracusan allies in 7.58 does not mention language; likewise, Gylippus' speech to the Syracusans/allies (the counterpart to Nicias' speech here) makes no reference to language either (7.66-68). Evidently, then, Thucydides' focus regarding language in this battle is the Athenians and their allies.

Nicias treats the sailors, as Dover argues, “without restriction or qualification, as non-Athenians, culturally and linguistically Atticized”.¹⁶⁴ Leaving aside for now the question of their actual status, it is important to emphasise Nicias' stress on the learned nature of the sailors' ‘Athenian-ness’: they have ‘knowledge’ of Attic dialect and ‘imitate’ Athenian customs. The vocabulary is peculiar, since elsewhere in Thucydides people typically ‘use’ (χράομαι) customs.¹⁶⁵ Indeed, the sailors are only ‘considered to be Athenians’ (Ἀθηναῖοι

¹⁶³ For the textual difficulties, see Hornblower 2008, *ad loc.*

¹⁶⁴ Dover 1965, 54. While Thucydides has Nicias treat them all as non-Athenians, it was unlikely historically that they were (Hornblower 2008, *ad loc.*). See also Maurer 2002.

¹⁶⁵ E.g. τρόποι: 1.6.4; 132.5; 5.7.3; *nomoi*: 2.34.1; 34.7; 37.1; 52.4; 3.37.3; 70.5; 4.118.3 (x2); 5.105.2; 6.54.6; 7.57.2 (*nomima*). For μίμησις, cf. 1.95.3.

νομιζόμενοι), since ‘they are not’ (καὶ μὴ ὄντες ἡμῶν).¹⁶⁶ The strangeness of this comment has rarely been noted.¹⁶⁷ In attempting a stirring, unifying speech (cf. 7.60.5), Nicias selects attributes that instead undermine solidarity in his forces. Such a choice perhaps reflects the desperation of the Athenians’ position.¹⁶⁸ It may also reflect a view of cultural identity as insufficient to be truly considered ‘Athenian’; a mere cultural façade on an unchanged non-Athenian core. As such, we might compare our earlier discussion of the Lemnian-Pelasgian passage in Herodotus: the Athenian women teach Attic dialect and customs to their children, but they are presented as a cultural veneer over ambiguously barbarian behaviour. Within Thucydides’ text, some generations after the Trojan War the Amphilochian Argives could become ‘Hellenised’ linguistically by the Ambraciots; within the Hellenic *kinesis* of the Peloponnesian War, however, these metic sailors, despite their adoption of Attic dialect and Athenian customs, can only be ‘considered’ Athenians, whilst remaining ‘not’. However unintentionally on Nicias’ part, the Attic dialect (along with customs) appears here as exclusive and unable to unify, even in a pre-battle appeal intended to inspire cohesion against the enemy.

‘Barbarian’ Greeks

Eurytians (3.94.5)

Our final passage for discussion is an intriguing case of ‘othering’ a Greek people and their language. Thucydides recounts how the Messenians from Naupactus persuaded Demosthenes, in the wake of the destruction of Leucas and the swelling of Athenian ranks

¹⁶⁶ Dover speculates that they were probably “metics and foreigners from states not included in the empire” (1965, 54); Hornblower argues for metics (2008, 677; 1987, 98).

¹⁶⁷ As Maurer (2002) observes.

¹⁶⁸ Rood (1998, 191-192) stresses that the ‘weakness’ of Nicias’ arguments reflects on the Athenians’ “desperate position, not on his own intellect”.

which it entailed (3.94.1), to take on the Aetolians. The historian then offers a “rare piece of ethnographic writing” (3.94.4-5).¹⁶⁹

The Aetolian *ethnos*, although numerous and warlike, dwells in unwallled villages scattered far apart, and had nothing but light armour, and might, according to the Messenians, be subdued without much difficulty before help could arrive. [5] The plan which they recommended was to attack first the Apodotians, next the Ophionians, and after these the Eurytians, who are the largest group among the Aetolians, but are most unintelligible in their language and eat their meat raw, as it is said (Εὐρυτᾶσιν, ὅπερ μέγιστον μέρος ἐστὶ τῶν Αἰτωλῶν, ἀγνωστότατοι δὲ γλῶσσαν καὶ ὠμοφάγοι εἰσὶν, ὡς λέγονται). These once subdued, the rest would easily come over.

The Eurytians, an Aetolian *ethnos* – that is, a Greek *ethnos*, albeit on the fringes of the Hellenic world – are presented as speaking unintelligibly and practicing a very un-Greek dietary *nomos*.¹⁷⁰ Here, just as on several other occasions in Thucydides, language is coupled with *nomoi*; the report of their tongue’s incomprehensibility, itself a somewhat subjective assessment, is given more weight by the objectively and culturally non-Greek – even more than that, a ‘superlatively savage’ – *nomos* of eating raw flesh.¹⁷¹

These comments come in the midst of a report in *oratio obliqua* focalised through the Messenians (evident from the verbs ἀπέφαινον and ἐκέλευον: 3.94.4-5), who are attempting to convince Demosthenes to attack the Aetolians. Although the comments on the Eurytians’ language and diet – in addition to the other ‘barbarian’ elements of the Aetolians more generally (3.94.4) – appear to come from the Thucydidean narrator (‘as it is said’),¹⁷² this kind of ‘barbarianisation’ of the Eurytians may well have formed part of the Messenians’ persuasive strategy. We might compare Aristagoras’ presentation of the Persians as weak when trying to convince the Spartans to join the Ionian Revolt in

¹⁶⁹ Hornblower 1991, 510.

¹⁷⁰ Not an uncommon depiction of the Aetolians: see Antonetti 1990; Rzepka 2013.

¹⁷¹ To paraphrase Gray 2011, 83.

¹⁷² Westlake 1977a, 350; Gray 2011, 83. Rood (2006, 244) notes Thucydides “often reports only what is ‘said’ or ‘thought’ about peoples on the fringes of the Greek world”, citing this passage and 2.81.8.

Herodotus; there are even some parallels, including references to light armour (Hdt. 5.49.3; Thuc. 3.94.4), and ease of victory (Hdt. 5.49.4; Thuc. 3.94.4; 97.1). In any case, the attempt to convince Demosthenes works; he agrees to the plan, with disastrous results. The Aetolians prove more difficult to overcome – and their light armour and mode of fighting more successful – than the Messenians suggested would be the case (3.97-8). The ‘barbarised’ portrait of the Aetolians evident in this passage works to heighten the magnitude of the Athenians’ eventual defeat for Thucydides’ audience, for the Athenians lose to a ‘barbarian’ Greek *ethnos*.

It is important to remember, however, that the Eurytians were Greek and their language was still Greek. Why present them as essentially ‘barbarians’? Thucydides, it seems, can play up or play down the Greekness of a people to suit his purposes.¹⁷³ His presentation of the Eurytians has much in common with other Greek (often Athenian) representations of *ethne* from the margins of Hellas. We might compare the comment in Plato’s *Protagoras* about Pittacus’ Lesbian dialect, which Prodicus sarcastically labels *barbaros* (341C):

ἀλλὰ τί οἶει, ἔφη, λέγειν, ὃ Σώκρατες, Σιμωνίδην ἄλλο ἢ τοῦτο, καὶ ὀνειδίζειν τῷ Πιττακῷ ὅτι τὰ ὀνόματα οὐκ ἠπίστατο ὀρθῶς διακεῖν ἅτε Λέσβιος ὢν καὶ ἐν φωνῇ βαρβάρῳ τεθραμμένος;

“Well, Socrates, he said, what else do you think Simonides meant? Was he not reproaching Pittacus for not knowing how to distinguish words correctly, Lesbian as he was, and nurtured in a *barbaros* tongue?”

In E. Hall’s words, Prodicus “was not implying that the Lesbians did not speak Greek, but that it was difficult to understand them”.¹⁷⁴ Thucydides, however, uses all the tools he can

¹⁷³ Rzepka 2013 argues that the Aetolians embraced such prejudices (at least in fourth century) and played up ‘uncivilized’ aspects as strengths as part of ‘a politics of ethnography’.

¹⁷⁴ E. Hall 1989, 179. Similarly, she suggests (179 n.63) that Gorgias’ Sicilian dialect was a factor in Aristophanes’ implication that he was *barbaros* (Ar. Av. 1700-1701). The humour of these passages should not be ignored, however.

to imply that the Eurytians are *barbaroi* without directly calling them such.¹⁷⁵ This includes the hearsay (ὡς λέγονται) which he inserts about their unintelligible language and eating of raw flesh. Within the *oikoumene* of Hellas, they are on the barbarian end of the spectrum: not called *barbaroi* as the Amphilochians are, but certainly ‘barbarian-ish’. To say their language was ‘most incomprehensible’ was akin to the kinds of expressions we see in tragedy: we might compare Sophocles’ Heracles’ – albeit somewhat stronger – expression for non-Greeks, ἄγλωσσος (Soph. *Trach.* 1060-1). The Eurytians’ particular γλῶσσα is here labelled incomprehensible and culturally foreign in order to make the opposite point to the Amphilochian Argives: while the latter were βάρβαροι who learned Greek and were later attacked by the Ambraciots, the Eurytians are Greeks essentially ‘barbarian’ in language and diet, who are attacked by the Athenians. In the Hellenic realm of the Peloponnesian War, Greeks fight Greeks of varying ‘Greekness’.

Thucydides first introduces the reader to the strangeness or ‘barbarian’ qualities of the Aetolians in the *Archaeology*. At 1.5.3, he mentions them in the context of Greek peoples who still follow the ‘ancient custom’ (τῷ παλαιῷ τρόπῳ) of piracy (1.5.3). Although “arguably unfair” from a historical point of view as Hornblower notes, Thucydides nevertheless chooses to represent the Aetolians in this way.¹⁷⁶ Having associated the Aetolians with an ancient mode of life, he makes further points before concluding that ‘one could point to many other similar habits between the ancient Hellenic world and the barbarians’ lifestyle today’ (1.6.6).¹⁷⁷ This comparison serves to essentially ‘barbarise’ the

¹⁷⁵ Baron 2014, 5 n. 9: “Even when a group of people within these regions could easily be called barbarian – for example, the raw-meat-eating Eurytanes of Aetolia... Thucydides makes no such move”. (Although note the Amphilochian *barbaroi*, 2.68). Cf. Eur. *Phoen.* 138, where an Aetolian is described as foreign-looking in armour, and labelled ‘half-barbarian’ (μειζοβάρβαρος); Hall (1989, 178) argues that this contrasts with the hoplite armour of Euripides’ own Athenians.

¹⁷⁶ Hornblower 1991, 24.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. similar sentiment at Plat. *Crat.* 397c-d: “I think the earliest men in Greece believed only in those gods in whom many barbarians believe today: sun, moon, earth, stars, and sky”.

Aetolians by association with ancient Greek customs. Already, early in Book 1, the Aetolians are implicitly presented as being, to a degree, non-Greek in their way of life. This may, however, associate them with a pre-Hellenic stage of development. As we noted earlier, it is not clear whether Thucydides' comment in the *Archaeology* ('as many as came to understand each other') implies that some Greeks did not come to understand each other; perhaps Thucydides here presents the Eurytanians' 'unintelligible' dialect as a remnant of this early stage.

Conclusion

Thucydides' explicit references to Greek language in the *History* operate in a variety of ways. In the *Archaeology*, his argument for the spread of the names 'Hellas' and 'Hellene' – those terms that separate the Greek from the barbarian – includes a passing reference to what seems to be the realisation among Greeks that they had language in common.¹⁷⁸ Speaking Greek went along with being Greek, and Thucydides is less concerned than Herodotus to assert that Greeks had always spoken Greek as long as the *ethnos* had existed. In depicting Demosthenes' strategic exploitation of the Doric dialect shared by the Messenians and their enemies, Thucydides crafts a narrative of success and reversal: initially effective against the Ambraciots and the Spartans, shared Doric speech ultimately backfires in Sicily, reflecting greater Athenian misfortunes. Similarly, in the Syracusan harbour Nicias' claim that sailors who 'know' Attic and 'imitate' Athenian customs have been 'considered' Athenian whilst 'not being so' is clearly intended as a unifying message before battle, but may ironically suggest a more exclusive view: that one cannot become 'Athenian' through the adoption of dialect and customs.

¹⁷⁸ Price (2001, 333-344, at 333) argues more broadly for "the idea of Hellas as a unified entity", including common language.

The Greek/barbarian polarity evident in the *Archaeology* is also responsible, I have argued, for certain emphases elsewhere: the Amphilochian Argives' language is 'Hellenised' rather than 'Dorianised' so as to heighten the contrast with the *barbaroi* around them; the Eurytians' incomprehensible dialect (along with other 'barbarian' customs) allows Thucydides to present them as essentially 'barbarian', although Greek; and the Ambraciots choose to die by the more 'Hellenic' Athenians than the 'barbarian' Amphilochians – despite having been deceived by the Messenians' use of Doric. The old Greek/barbarian antithesis is still present in Thucydides' Greek war, even when it is Greeks fighting Greeks.

3. Xenophon's *Anabasis*

Introduction

Compared with Herodotus and Thucydides, Xenophon is generally less concerned with representing languages and their use throughout his corpus. The *Anabasis* is the exception, offering several fascinating references to linguistic interaction in a barbarian sphere. A diverse group of Greek mercenaries first fights alongside Cyrus and his Persian troops, before battling its way back to the Greek settlements of the Black Sea, encountering many Persians and other non-Greek peoples along the way. In recent years, scholars have begun to ask more questions about such cultural representations.¹⁷⁹ One has even claimed that the relationship between Greeks and *barbaroi* “organizes the entire work”.¹⁸⁰ In line with the ‘literary turn’ in the study of classical historiography, Xenophon's narrative art has also started to come under scrutiny.¹⁸¹ In this section, I seek to unite these scholarly strands in

¹⁷⁹ Dillery 1995; Briant (ed) 1995; Laforse 1998; Lane Fox (ed.) 2004; Lee 2007; Harman 2013.

¹⁸⁰ Laforse 1998, 56. He does not elaborate, however.

¹⁸¹ Dillery 1995; Gray 2003; Lane Fox (ed.) 2004; Tsagalis 2009; Bradley 2010; Flower 2012; Grethlein 2012; Harman 2013; Pelling 2013.

analysing the representation of Greek language in the *Anabasis*. In contrast to Herodotus and Thucydides, Xenophon displays little interest in language *per se*, though he does include more interpreters (ἐρμηνεῖς) than either (see Ch. 2.1.3). This relative reticence concerning languages, however, arguably makes it more significant when he does mention such details. I will discuss several episodes in which cultural and linguistic issues are at play and demonstrate how these operate in the narrative.

Little work has been done on the role of languages and communication in the *Anabasis*. Although we lack a detailed study, scholars have long used this text for various observations about the representation of Greek dialects or the use of interpreters. An article from 1909 on the mutual intelligibility of Greek dialects cites the Ten Thousand as evidence “that a miscellaneous body of soldiers of fortune, recruited from every part of Greece, did succeed in communicating freely and easily with each other”.¹⁸² Gehman’s study from 1914 speaks of Xenophon’s ‘frequent’ references to interpreters, and attempts to extrapolate the actual linguistic knowledge of individuals like Cyrus and Tissaphernes on the basis of their varying use of interpreters.¹⁸³ Various scholars have argued that Xenophon’s many references to language issues in the *Anabasis* are due to his personal experience with such practical difficulties on the expedition.¹⁸⁴ This must be true in part, but holders of this view rarely seek to explain the varying treatment of linguistic issues across the text (nor indeed do they attempt to tally the ‘personal experience’ view with Xenophon’s third-person narratorial stance and probable pseudonymous publication).¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² Bonner 1909, 356.

¹⁸³ Gehman 1914a.

¹⁸⁴ Harrison 1998, 13; Colvin 1999, 68; Gera 1999; Stoneman 2015. Lane Fox (2004, 205 n.79) compares Caesar’s (much fewer) references to *interpretes* (*BG* 1.19.3; 1.47.4).

¹⁸⁵ On these issues, see *Hell.* 3.1.2; *Plut. Mor.* 345F; MacLaren 1934; Marincola 1997, 186; Gray 2003; Pelling 2013.

In a general discussion of the literary treatment of language difference in Greek authors, Harrison argues that “it is only perhaps with Xenophon’s *Anabasis*, that we see a more realistic appreciation of language difference”.¹⁸⁶ He claims that the scenes depicting barbarians speaking no Greek “reflect the real attempt of Xenophon to ‘get by’ in foreign lands. The convention that barbarians speak Greek has collapsed under the weight of his experience”.¹⁸⁷ Harrison has just surveyed the representation of foreign speech chiefly in Herodotus, Thucydides, and Old Comedy, arguing that in general these authors follow the “convention that barbarians speak Greek”, which started with Homer. To argue that such a ‘convention’ has ‘collapsed’ from real world experience of non-Greek speakers does a disservice to the lives and works of figures like Hecataeus, Herodotus, Ctesias, and Thucydides, all of whom travelled in or had connections with ‘barbarian’ lands, not to mention the foreign tongues audible every day even on the streets of cities like Athens. Such a view also ignores any literary purposes in representing certain figures as using interpreters or being endowed with particular linguistic skills, and dismisses the narratorial choices that Xenophon made in including such details – he did not have to, as ‘convention’ would have it. Certainly, he is a more artful narrator than many would allow.¹⁸⁸

In a similar discussion of foreign languages in Greek literature, Colvin writes that Xenophon’s references to language in the *Anabasis* are due to “realism for the sake of historical accuracy”.¹⁸⁹ In this respect, he adduces the contrasting evidence of the far fewer references in the *Hellenica*, “very little of which is reported as eye-witness account”.¹⁹⁰ Colvin notes the sole mention of a Greek dialect at 3.1.26 – Apollonides, who spoke ‘in

¹⁸⁶ Harrison 1998, 13.

¹⁸⁷ Harrison 1998, 13.

¹⁸⁸ See references above, n. 181.

¹⁸⁹ Colvin 1999, 67.

¹⁹⁰ Colvin 1999, 68.

the Boeotian dialect’, only to be accused of being non-Greek for his ears pierced ‘like a Lydian’s’ (discussed below) – and comments that “usually [Xenophon] leaves it to his readers to assume that a Spartan will speak in the Laconian dialect, a Boeotian in Boeotian, etc”; surely, however, if Xenophon were concerned with “realism for the sake of historical accuracy”, we might expect more references to Greek dialects? Colvin himself admits that there is “plenty of scope for interaction in non-Attic dialect”.¹⁹¹ In this instance, he does acknowledge that there are specific narrative reasons which require Apollonides’ appearance to contain a reference to dialect, which we will discuss later.¹⁹² If the inclusion of a reference to dialect serves a literary function here, then it must also be a narrative choice to omit such references elsewhere.

Greek Language

There are only three metalinguistic references to ‘Greek’ in the *Anabasis*. None employ the same terminology of Herodotus’ ‘Greek tongue’ (Ἑλλάς γλῶσσα; Ἑλληνική γλῶσσα); Xenophon prefers other formulations (1.8.1: ἐβόα...ἑλληνικῶς; 7.3.25: ἑλληνίζειν... ἡπίστατο; 7.6.9: ἑλληνιστὶ). Each reference, as we shall see, is to a non-Greek who either speaks or understands Greek. (With respect to the sole reference to an epichoric dialect, discussed below, the speaker’s ethnicity is unclear.)

Pategyas’ shouting

One of the first references to languages in the *Anabasis* – and the first concerning the Greek tongue – occurs when the King’s army appears at Cunaxa. The moment is a dramatic one,

¹⁹¹ Colvin 1999, 70.

¹⁹² Colvin 1999, 68.

signalling the impending engagement with the Persian King after so much build-up. The Persian Pategyas comes galloping into sight and makes an announcement to all (1.8.1):

It was now about full-market time and the stopping-place where Cyrus was intending to halt had been almost reached, when Pategyas, a trusty Persian in Cyrus' service, came into sight, riding at full speed, with his horse in a sweat, and at once shouted out to everyone he met, in barbarian and in Greek (εὐθὺς πᾶσιν οἷς ἐνετύγγανεν ἐβόα καὶ βαρβαρικῶς καὶ ἑλληνικῶς), that the King was approaching with a large army, all ready for battle.

Xenophon mentions that Pategyas conveyed the message in both 'Greek and barbarian'.¹⁹³

One might wonder whether the adverbs refer not to language but rather the manner of the shouting;¹⁹⁴ it is unclear, however, what *shouting* 'in barbarian and Greek fashion' could mean other than a difference in tongue.¹⁹⁵

Xenophon does not name the language(s) employed in shouting to the non-Greeks; Pategyas simply yells βαρβαρικῶς. He also shouts in 'Greek' (ἑλληνικῶς); no Greek dialects are singled out. Elsewhere, Xenophon can be more specific as to the languages spoken on the campaign: he speaks of the Greeks' interpreter speaking 'Persian', and a Greek captain speaking in the 'Boeotian φωνή'; he can even specify the extent of an individual's linguistic knowledge.¹⁹⁶ On display here, however, is the simple, ancient contrast between 'Greek' and 'barbarian', as we have seen in Herodotus and Thucydides. Incorporated under these umbrella terms are several non-Greek tongues, and many regional variations of Greek; as Lee rightly points out, "Xenophon often ascribes a uniform Greekness to the mercenaries in order to contrast them with the Persians and other

¹⁹³ Colvin, briefly, finds it "interesting" that "when a Persian actually speaks in Greek Xenophon sees fit to mention this" (1999, 69). Lendle has nothing to say (1995, *ad loc.*).

¹⁹⁴ Cf. ἑλληνικῶς referring to 'in Greek fashion' at Eur. *IT* 660; Hdt. 4.108.2; Arr. *Anab.* 4.11.8; for βαρβαρικῶς 'in barbarian fashion', cf. e.g. Diod. 20.33.2; Plut. *Cam.* 40.3; Arr. *Anab.* 4.11.8.

¹⁹⁵ This is the first literary attestation of βαρβαρικῶς; it is used to refer to language at Diod. 2.23.3; cf. Arr. *Anab.* 4.4.2; 6.3.5.

¹⁹⁶ Persian: 4.5.10; 4.5.34; Boeotian: 3.1.26 (see below on Apollonides); cf. also 4.8.4 (Macronian). Extent of knowledge: 7.6.8-9 (Seuthes' knowledge of Greek); cf. Lane Fox 2004, 206.

‘barbarians’ they encountered during their march”, despite his own narrative demonstrating the multi-ethnic nature of the army.¹⁹⁷ Indeed, Xenophon’s interest here is not one of linguistic specificity: with this comment, the historian calls attention to the oddity of these two opposing ‘cultures’ fighting on the same side against a Persian King.¹⁹⁸

The Greek/barbarian mixture of the forces under Cyrus is a motif which Xenophon introduces early. He includes many references to the army’s containing ‘Greeks and *barbaroi*’ (1.2.1; 1.2.14; 1.2.16; 1.2.18; 1.3.5; 1.5.16; 1.7.1; 1.7.3; 1.7.10; 1.7.14; 1.8.5; 1.8.19), and continues after Cyrus’ death (1.10.11; 2.1.3; 2.2.8-9).¹⁹⁹ Even in Cyrus’ eulogy, Xenophon twice refers to him as a good ruler to ‘Greek and *barbaros*’ (1.9.13; 1.9.28). After Cyrus’ death, we can observe a slow disintegration of the cooperation between the Greeks and *barbaroi* who had been under his command. The *barbaroi* take extra oaths not to behave treacherously to the Greeks (2.2.8); Tissaphernes, entreating the Greeks through an interpreter, stresses he is a neighbour to Greeks in his homeland, and that alongside the King he had pursued ‘those *barbaroi* with Cyrus’ army’ (2.3.19), i.e. not the Greeks; soon Tissaphernes is leading Cyrus’ army, with Ariaeus leading ‘Cyrus’ barbarian army’ (τὸ Κύρου βαρβαρικὸν στράτευμα), and the Greeks proceeding by themselves, wary of the others (2.4.9-10; they split up later at 2.4.14). Suspicions arise between Greeks and barbarians (2.4.22). This culminates in Tissaphernes’ treacherous slaughter of the Greek generals (2.5.31-32), after which ‘barbarian horsemen’ killed every ‘Greek’ they met (2.5.32). Greeks and barbarians had worked together under Cyrus, as reflected in Pategyas’ ‘bilingual’ announcement; later, however, they are rent asunder.

¹⁹⁷ Lee 2007, 60. See also Lane Fox 2004, 204.

¹⁹⁸ It may also reflect Xenophon’s ignorance of what non-Greek languages were uttered.

¹⁹⁹ Compare when the King’s army is labelled *barbarikos* in contrast (1.8.14). The Greeks are treated separately in the course of the battle of Cunaxa; see Chapter 2.1.

The contrasts between the two ‘cultures’, however, are already evident under Cyrus; Xenophon depicts Cyrus himself as playing heavily on the differences, such as in the parade scene at 1.2, which makes much of the contrasts between Greeks and barbarians (see Chapter 2.1.3 below on how Cyrus’ use of bilingual intermediaries emphasises these contrasts). Similarly, in Cyrus’ exhortatory speech to the Greek generals and captains he claims that the Greeks are ‘braver and stronger than many barbarians’ (1.7.3: ἀμείνωνας καὶ κρείττους πολλῶν βαρβάρων). The ‘Greek tongue’ in the Pategyas episode is used to mark off the Greeks from the *barbaroi* in Cyrus’ forces, just as much as it shows the two essences of Greek and barbarian working together under the same leader.

Greek in the Thracian *logos*

The other two references to ‘Greek’ will be explored in more depth in Chapter 3.1.3 with respect to the characterisation of the bilingual Thracian dynast, Seuthes. As I argue there, those references are part of a narrative presentation that reflects Seuthes’ changing loyalties to the Greeks. We will briefly discuss them here in terms of the Greek-barbarian antithesis already touched on in our discussion of Pategyas.

The first reference to Greek in the Thracian *logos* occurs during a banquet of the Greeks and Thracians. A Greek makes a joke, and Seuthes has the cupbearer translate for him because the cupbearer ‘understood Greek’ (7.3.25: ἐλληνίζειν γὰρ ἠπίστατο). The reference perhaps implies the exclusivity of the language: barbarians cannot typically understand Greek.²⁰⁰ This is what Herodotus’ Leotychidas had explicitly acknowledged about his appeal to the Ionians in Greek, that the Persians would not be able to ‘understand’ anything (Hdt. 9.98.3). More pertinently, however, it is evident that ‘Greek’ is used here rather than

²⁰⁰ On the particular circumstances of the joke, see Chapter 3.1.3.

a particular dialect because of the Greek-barbarian contrast, so apparent in this banquet scene.

A later passage in the *Anabasis*, however, reveals that Seuthes could indeed understand ‘most’ Greek. The political situation had changed, and relations between Xenophon and Seuthes had soured over the army’s pay. Some of the Greeks became angry at Xenophon, and during one of their speeches, we are told that Seuthes himself was present with an interpreter, ‘although he could really understand for himself most of what was said in Greek’ (7.6.8-9: ξυνίει δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς Ἑλληνιστὶ τὰ πλεῖστα). At the earlier banquet, Seuthes had required his cupbearer to interpret a comment in Greek; now the Thracian is revealed to be able to understand most Greek.²⁰¹ In light of such a presentation, the earlier banquet scene and the cupbearer’s interpreting role is brought into question: if Seuthes had known Greek all along, then he had not really needed an interpreter at the banquet nor at Xenophon’s speech. That is, the incident with the cupbearer at the banquet, right at the outset of the working relationship between Seuthes and Xenophon, is revealed in hindsight to be another example of Seuthes’ deceptive ways. Another barbarian betrays the Greeks, and Seuthes’ knowledge of ‘Greek’ contrasts with his non-Greek identity.

Greek Dialects

We now move on to the depiction of epichoric dialects. As noted earlier, Xenophon is more willing than Herodotus and Thucydides to imitate certain dialect phrases in his reporting of events, such as his splashes of Laconian colour in the phrase ‘by the twin gods’

²⁰¹ Nankov’s conclusion that Seuthes II “did not know Greek” (citing the banquet scene, 7.3.25) is invalidated by this passage, which he fails to cite (Nankov 2012, 121 n.65). Historically, it is entirely plausible that Seuthes II knew Greek to some degree: for the use of Greek in Classical and Hellenistic Thrace, see Dana 2015, 245-253.

(ναὶ τὸ σιῶ).²⁰² There is only one occasion, however, when Xenophon explicitly states the dialect of a speaker in his historical works – the Boeotian dialect of Apollonides in the *Anabasis*. That there is only one such reference is quite remarkable, given the scope for interaction between dialects provided by the *Hellenica* and *Anabasis*, and the rarity of this phenomenon suggests its significance in the Apollonides episode.

Apollonides the Boeotian/Lydian

As we have seen with respect to Greeks and barbarians, right from the start of the *Anabasis* Xenophon is sensitive to the ethnic makeup of Cyrus’ army. Indeed, in the first chapter of the *Anabasis*, when Cyrus is assembling his Greek mercenary forces, Clearchus the Spartan, Aristippus the Thessalian, Proxenos the Boeotian, Sophaenetus the Stymphalian, and Socrates the Achaean are all introduced with their ethnic affiliations, as they collect forces from all over the Greek world (1.1.9-11).²⁰³ The only reference to an epichoric dialect, however, comes in a moment of crisis for the Greeks.

At the Greater Zapatas and the beginning of a new chapter in the fortunes of the Ten Thousand, the Greeks have lost their leadership to Persian treachery and are deciding what to do next. The Greek army is in a great state of *aporia* (3.1.2; 3.1.11), so Xenophon, responding to a dream, calls together the captains (*lochagoi*) of Proxenos, his recently murdered Boeotian friend (3.1.11-25). He advocates reorganising and resisting, rather than surrendering. In response, the Greek *lochagoi* agree, except one Apollonides (3.1.26-32):

²⁰² Xen. *Anab.* 6.6.34; 7.6.39; *Hell.* 4.4.10; *Ages.* 5.5; cf. other dialect expressions at *Hell.* 1.1.23; 3.3.2; on all these passages, see Colvin 1999, 70-73; Huitink-Rood, forthcoming. See my Ch. 3.1.3 on Xenophon’s Seuthes and mimicking such linguistic expressions.

²⁰³ Rood also notes that “more distinguished characters such as generals have a definite article before their ethnic identification”, citing Proxenos, Sophaenetus and Socrates at 1.1.11 (Rood 2018, 174); cf. also Aristippus (1.1.10).

Such were Xenophon's words; and upon hearing what he said the officers bade him take the lead, all of them except a certain Apollonides, who spoke in the Boeotian dialect (πλὴν Ἀπολλωνίδης τις ἦν βοιωτιάζων τῇ φωνῇ). This man maintained that anyone who said he could gain safety in any other way than by winning the King's consent through persuasion, if possible, was talking nonsense; and at the same time he began to recite the difficulties of their situation. Xenophon, however, interrupted him in the midst of his talk, and said: [27] ‘You amazing fellow, you have eyes but still do not perceive, and you have ears but still do not remember... [30] In my opinion, gentlemen, we should not simply refuse to admit this fellow to companionship with us, but should deprive him of his captaincy, lay packs on his back, and treat him as that sort of a creature. For this man disgraces both his *patris* and the whole of Hellas, since, being a Greek, he is still a man of this kind’ (οὗτος γὰρ καὶ τὴν πατρίδα καταισχύνει καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν Ἑλλάδα, ὅτι Ἕλληνα ὦν τοιοῦτός ἐστιν). [31] Then Agasias, a Stymphalian, broke in and said: ‘For that matter, he does not belong in Boeotia or any part of Greece at all, for I have noticed that he has both his ears pierced, like a Lydian’s’ (ἀλλὰ τούτῳ γε οὔτε τῆς Βοιωτίας προσήκει οὐδὲν οὔτε τῆς Ἑλλάδος παντάπασιν, ἐπεὶ ἐγὼ αὐτὸν εἶδον ὥσπερ Λυδὸν ἀμφοτέρω τὰ ὄτα τετυπημένον). [32] In fact, it was so (καὶ εἶχεν οὕτως). They, therefore, drove him away, but the others proceeded to visit the various divisions of the army...

Scholars have seen Apollonides as many things: ritual ‘scapegoat’;²⁰⁴ a Thersites figure;²⁰⁵ “victim of a lynch-mob”;²⁰⁶ an ‘ex-slave’.²⁰⁷ For our purposes, this passage is chiefly significant as the only explicit reference to an epichoric dialect among the Greeks in the *Anabasis*. As I will argue, the reference serves a literary function here, which means that it must also be a narrative choice to omit such references elsewhere.

First, let us consider how Apollonides is introduced in the text. Xenophon describes him as ‘speaking in the Boeotian φωνή’ rather than as ‘the Boeotian’ (as Boeotians are elsewhere).²⁰⁸ As Tsagalis notes, “the way this Apollonides is introduced markedly diverges from Xenophontean name-typology in the *Anabasis*”;²⁰⁹ we will explore the reasons for this below. For now, the contrast between Apollonides’ narrative introduction

²⁰⁴ Lee 2007, 74; cf. Bremmer 1983; Tuplin 2008, 693.

²⁰⁵ Rinner 1978, 146-147; Dalby 1992, 21.

²⁰⁶ Tuplin 2008, 693.

²⁰⁷ Roy 1967, 300; Hunt 1998, 108-109.

²⁰⁸ Proxenos: 1.1.11; 2.5.31; 2.6.16; cf. 2.1.10, ‘the Theban’. Thorax: 5.6.19, 21, 25.

²⁰⁹ Tsagalis 2009, 457.

and that of Proxenos (up to this point the only other Boeotian in the *Anabasis*) reminds us that these assembled men are the *lochagoi* of Proxenos himself. Xenophon spends most of the beginning of 3.1 describing his relationship with Proxenos (3.1.4-10), who had encouraged him to join the expedition of Cyrus. Perhaps we are meant to understand Apollonides as a sort of antithesis to Proxenos, the noble – if not the most inspiring – Boeotian *strategos*; a kind of ‘anti-Proxenos’, if you will.²¹⁰ When Xenophon labels Apollonides a ‘disgrace to his *patris*’, we may be expected to recall Xenophon’s Boeotian friend, so recently killed. One Boeotian had got him involved with the expedition; another (fake?) Boeotian signals a new phase as Xenophon rises to a position of leadership.

Many have argued that Apollonides’ introduction foreshadows his eventual ‘unmasking’ as ‘Lydian’ (on the basis of his ears, pierced ‘like a Lydian’s’). The implication, it is suggested, is that he is imitating a Boeotian accent. Yet it is curious that if Apollonides had been a Lydian posing as a Greek *lochagos*, how had he gotten away with it for so long?²¹¹ Agasias explicitly refers to Boeotia and Hellas when criticising Apollonides for not belonging in either (ἀλλὰ τούτῳ γε οὔτε τῆς Βοιωτίας προσήκει οὐδὲν οὔτε τῆς Ἑλλάδος παντάπασιν). Xenophon does not clarify his identity: his ‘confirmation’ that Apollonides’ ears were indeed pierced (καὶ εἶχεν οὕτως) does not necessarily mean the man was non-Greek.²¹² It certainly seems correct, however, that the insertion of the reference to Apollonides’ dialect prepares the way for the ‘unmasking’ scene, regardless of its legitimacy.

²¹⁰ Xenophon’s ‘eulogy’ of Proxenos mentions his failure to inspire his men (2.6.19-20).

²¹¹ Lee 2007, 73-74; Tuplin 2008, 694; Vlassopoulos 2013a, 52.

²¹² Cf. Tuplin 2008, 694; Rood 2018, 175. Lane Fox suggests he was an Aeolic-speaker from Lesbos or the Troad (2004, 204); cf. Ma 2004, 336-337.

In addition to the immediate narrative function of preparing for Agasias' comments, citing Apollonides' Boeotian dialect perhaps also allowed Xenophon to play with certain Boeotian stereotypes, the kind he would be less likely to apply to Proxenos. This includes the Boeotians as 'haters of *logos*' (*misologoî*). Indeed, *misologia* was something of a "stock Athenian charge" against Boeotians.²¹³ In Plato's *Symposium*, Boeotians are called μὴ σοφοὶ λέγειν (182b); Plutarch refers to 'the ancient reproach against Boeotians of *misologia*' (*Mor.* 575E: τὸ κατὰ Βοιωτῶν ἀρχαῖον εἰς μισολογίαν ὄνειδος); Thucydides plays on it in his presentation of Theban speeches.²¹⁴ In one of Babrius' Aesopic fables, a Boeotian man loses an argument to an Athenian due to his rhetorical inferiority: 'His opponent was only a Boeotian, after all, and could not hope to compete with the Athenian in *logoi*...' (ὁ δ' ἄλλος ὥς βοιωτὸς οὐκ ἔχων ἴσην λόγοις ἄμιλλαν); this is underscored when the Boeotian is described as speaking 'with rustic inspiration' (εἶπεν ἀγρίῃ μούσῃ).²¹⁵ Xenophon, of course, made the editorial decision to deny Apollonides direct speech, whilst giving himself an eloquent oration, so we cannot judge Apollonides' rhetorical style; perhaps, however, this narrative difference itself suggests the contrast between Athenian and Boeotian speech-making. By calling attention to the specific Boeotian φωνή of Apollonides, Xenophon may have evoked for a fourth century reader an image of rhetorical ineloquence and thus served to characterise Apollonides negatively.

Another 'stereotype' was that of Theban medism; Thebes had famously turned to the Persian side during the Persian Wars. I suspect it is no coincidence that Apollonides is said to speak in Boeotian dialect before proceeding to argue – in contrast to Xenophon the Athenian – for obtaining the favour of the Persian King. This may be a narrative strategy

²¹³ Demand 1982, 72.

²¹⁴ E.g. Thuc. 3.61-67; see Debnar 1996. See also. Plat. *Phaed.* 89D; Plut. *Mor.* 864D. Plato's *Laches* perhaps implies a certain non-Hellenic character to *misologia* (188C-E).

²¹⁵ Babrius 15 = Perry 278.

to raise hackles at the thought of medizing Greeks, before Xenophon himself chastises him as ‘a disgrace to all Greece’. This meeting, of course, had been called in response to the betrayal of the Greek mercenaries by the Persian Tissaphernes, and Xenophon has just argued that the Greeks should reorganise and resist the King (3.1.15-25). His argument is a strong stance against the specific betrayal, *hybris*, and impiety of the King and ‘those around him’; the Persians are called ‘enemies’ (3.1.16). In response to Apollonides’ suggestion, Xenophon continues to speak of the terrible act inflicted upon them by the Persians (3.1.27-29). After Agasias questions Apollonides’ Greekness²¹⁶ and he is driven away, Xenophon gives a speech that brings in the Greek/barbarian polarity: he argues that, because of Tissaphernes’ treachery and the King’s conniving, ‘we’ (i.e. the Greeks) should do all possible to avoid falling into the power of ‘the *barbaroi*’; rather, we should have power over them (3.1.35). The Greek/barbarian polarity and ‘Panhellenic’ rhetoric is again strongly evident; it has come up in several points in the *Anabasis* so far, as we have noted, but this is the first instance when the Greeks are fully autonomous.²¹⁷ Any thought of seeking the King’s favour is banished along with Apollonides.

Conclusion

The Greek/barbarian polarity evident early in the *Anabasis* shapes the references to language throughout. Pategyas’ use of both ‘Greek and barbarian’ language marks off the Greeks from the *barbaroi*, whilst simultaneously highlighting the presence of these ‘two cultures’ in fighting together on Cyrus’ side. In the Thracian *logos*, Xenophon’s references

²¹⁶ Xenophon initially uses dehumanising language to compare him to a ‘pack animal’ (3.1.30); Rood 2018, 175. Cf. *Cyr.* 8.5.4 for the terminology.

²¹⁷ See above on the Pategyas episode. For other examples, cf. Clearchus’ ‘cunning’ speech to the Greek soldiers, saying that he will not betray the Greeks by choosing *philia* with barbarians over Greeks (1.3.5); the Greeks’ conversation with Phalinus (2.1.7-23); Xenophon’s speech to the *lochagoi* to which Apollonides responds (e.g. 3.1.23).

to the Greek linguistic knowledge of Seuthes' cupbearer and Seuthes himself reflects the intensity of cultural contrasts while the Greeks are in barbarian Thrace. Various literary techniques allow Xenophon to cast Apollonides the ambiguous Boeotian as the anti-Proxenos, perhaps also evoking stereotypes of 'logos-hating', medising Boeotians. The primary narrative function of the Boeotian dialect reference, however, is to prepare for the Greeks' 'unmasking' of Apollonides as 'non-Greek'.

Overall conclusion – Chapter 1.1

What, then, dictates whether a classical historian chooses to emphasise the 'Hellenicity' or 'epichoricity' of references to the Greek language? Chiefly, and perhaps unsurprisingly, metalinguistic expressions of 'Greek' tend to occur in contexts that contrast with the barbarian, just as epichoric dialects crop up mainly in intra-Greek contexts. Thus, it seems there is an inherently 'oppositional' identity element to these explicit references to language.

Herodotus' rhetorical construction of 'Greek' throughout the *Histories* as practically and symbolically unifying exists in opposition to the Persians; the language's potential value lies in its power against the barbarian. Similarly, Herodotus' references to dialects can also play on this antithesis, such as when they symbolise intra-Greek cultural division in contrast to Persian unity (Dorian/Ionian *san/sigma*; Ionian dialects) or imply 'barbarian' elements of an epichoric identity (Attic-Pelasgian children). The festival names gloss, too, connects epichoric Greek linguistic divisions (Ionian festival names ending in *alpha*) to what is shared between Greeks (all Greek festival names ending in *alpha*), reflecting 'concrete' thinking about the 'abstract notion' of Greek as common language – aided by comparison to Persian names all ending in the same letter. Herodotus' metalinguistic

references suggest his interest in the relationship between language and broader political and cultural aspects of society.

Thucydides likewise is affected by the Greek/barbarian polarity in his metalinguistic intrusions. His reference in the *Archaeology* to Greeks coming to ‘understand’ each other occurs in the context of the spread of the exclusive, binary term ‘Hellenes’; the Amphilochean Argives’ language is ‘Hellenised’ rather than ‘Dorianised’ to contrast with the barbarian; the Eurytians’ unintelligible dialect and customs place them on the ‘barbarian’ end of Thucydides’ spectrum of Greek identity; and the Ambraciots prefer to die at Greek rather than barbarian hands, despite being deceived by shared dialect. Thucydides’ references to epichoric dialect, moreover, emphasise the intra-Greek divisions of the war, particularly the Ionian/Dorian which can act like the Greek/barbarian antithesis. His references perhaps also problematise connections between dialect and *ethnos*: thus, Demosthenes’ opponents confuse Doric-speakers, and Nicias implies that one cannot become ‘Athenian’ through the adoption of dialect and customs.

Finally, the metalinguistic details in Xenophon’s *Anabasis* are also shaped by the Greek/barbarian polarity, from Pategyas’ shouting to Thracian knowledge of Greek. Apollonides’ Boeotian dialect crops up in an intra-Greek context, as the Greeks decide how to proceed after the slaughter of their generals at Persian hands. Once he evinces ‘medising’ tendencies in his pierced ears and willingness to go to the King, however, he becomes a traitor on a Greek vs. barbarian scale.

We have seen that the classical historians have their own unique concerns and approaches to language. At the same time, it is evident that the overriding influence on their

presentation of metalinguistic references to the Greek language is the Greek/barbarian antithesis, carved indelibly into the Greek consciousness in the wake of the Persian Wars.

Chapter 1.2: The Greek Language

Extant Alexander Tradition

Introduction

We have seen how the Greek language is treated in Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon's *Anabasis*; we now move to the Roman period, and the extant accounts of Alexander's campaigns. These four historians all wrote under the ruling power of Rome, between the late Republic (Diodorus) and the high Empire (Arrian). A recent commentator has labelled Rome the greatest 'blindspot' in modern Alexander studies: "Roman writers... more or less invented the 'Alexander' that we now know... they are bound to have seen this story [of Alexander] through a Roman filter, to have interpreted and adjusted what they read in the light of the versions of conquest and imperial expansion that were characteristic of their own political age".²¹⁸ While arguably undervaluing previous work on placing the extant sources in their contemporary Roman context, such a comment does highlight the relative novelty of this trend.²¹⁹ Much of traditional Alexander scholarship has been tied up with *Quellenforschung*; while this approach has certainly produced valuable results, too often practitioners are guilty of treating the extant texts as mere repositories of lost, 'superior' primary sources. Much is lost by taking the authors – who shaped these accounts – out of the equation. Throughout this thesis, therefore, I endeavour to consider these writers as unavoidably products of their own time. This does not mean, however, losing sight of the historiographical traditions in which these writers composed their works: the influences of tradition and contemporary society are not mutually exclusive.

²¹⁸ Beard 2011; this comment essentially echoes Spencer 2002, xiv: "The early story of Alexander as we receive it today is essentially a Roman story".

²¹⁹ A sample of works that elucidate the Roman context: Stadter 1980; Bosworth 1988b; Sacks 1990; Yardley and Heckel 1997; Baynham 1998; Spencer 2002; Asirvatham 2005; Green 2006; Leon 2012.

The late Republic and early Empire was a period marked with heated linguistic debates, as Rome reacted to an influx of foreigners and *novi homines*.²²⁰ Greeks adapted to the new superpower by linking Latin to Greek (‘Aeolism’), for example, or striving for an artificial ‘Atticism’ to rival the golden age of Greek power in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE.²²¹ This would come to be a key component of what is often called the ‘Second Sophistic’ movement, an influential context for Plutarch and Arrian. Any examination of these historians’ representation of languages must proceed against this background of language as an ideological battleground.

1. Diodorus: Greek Language Supremacist²²²

Introduction

Scholars have traditionally denigrated Diodorus’ abilities as a historian: although a historiographical hero in the Renaissance, the nineteenth-century rise of *Quellenforschung* quickly branded Diodorus a ‘slavish compiler’ of earlier accounts; consequently, the *Bibliothèque* “lost its integrity as a unified work and its place within the history of ideas.”²²³ Indeed, Diodorus himself warns readers against excerpting his work and ignoring its structural integrity (1.5.2; cf. 40.8). For him, “the reader should regard the *Library* as a history with a structural integrity that requires acknowledgement of a beginning, middle, and end... and, accordingly, as a text that is to be read from beginning to end”.²²⁴ Unfortunately, the ravages of time have made this an impossible task for the modern reader, and indeed the very fragmentary nature of the extant text has contributed to modern

²²⁰ Adams 2003a, 1; Wallace-Hadrill 2008.

²²¹ On Aeolism, see Stevens 2006. For a survey of Atticism, see Kim 2010.

²²² This section has been published in slightly different form as James 2018.

²²³ Sacks 1990, 4; see Sulimani 2011, 3-6; Green (2006, 1-47) for a thorough tracing of “this sad historiographical trail”.

²²⁴ Too 2010, 151.

condemnation. In more recent years, however, scholars have begun to demonstrate that Diodorus exercised some influence over the structure, organisation, vocabulary and intellectual themes of his work, while nevertheless working closely with his sources.²²⁵ This aligns with a burgeoning appreciation for the works of Greek writers in the first century BCE as cultural monuments, expressions not only of the past but also of contemporary Greek identity under Rome.²²⁶ In an increasingly Latinate world, the Greek language remained – perhaps more than ever – a key component of identity.

This chapter examines Diodorus’ explicit references to the Greek language in Book 17 on Alexander’s campaigns. The Macedonian king was an important figure to Diodorus: not only does Alexander receive an entire book (an honour granted to no other) but he also may have served as a model for Diodorus’ presentation of the travels and conduct of certain mythical figures in the *Bibliothēke*.²²⁷ Furthermore, Book 17 is one of the few for which we have an abundance of comparable material to act as a control on Diodorus, most significantly the often parallel account in Curtius, probably based on a common source.²²⁸ Through the lens of Book 17, I shall examine the internal consistency of Diodorus’ presentation of languages within the *Bibliothēke*. With respect to certain *topoi* concerned with the nature of fortune, Hau has shown recently that Diodorus “took over moralising passages from his sources where he found them, and did not compose any where he did

²²⁵ For this ‘rehabilitation’, however partial, see Palm 1955; Rubincam 1987; 1989; 1998a; 1998b; Sacks 1990; Green 2006; Anson 2004, 18; Sulimani 2011. An interesting older example is Farrington, who thought that Diodorus’ ‘incapacity’ for history-writing meant that he better mirrors aspects of his own time (1937, 8).

²²⁶ Schmitz and Wiater 2011; Wiater 2011; Liddel and Fear 2010; De Jonge 2008; Yarrow 2006; Clarke 1999.

²²⁷ Sulimani 2005 and 2011, 9, 44, 169; cf. Burton 1972, 87. For a survey of the literary evidence for foreign languages on Alexander’s expedition, see Rochette 1997.

²²⁸ Generally agreed to be Cleitarchus; for a useful review, see Bosworth 1997; the classic study is Hamilton 1977. Some argue for two or more sources for Book 17 (e.g. Prandi 1996; Hammond 1983). Other sections of Diodorus’ work where some comparison can be conducted include parts of Books 3 and 28-32 (see Anson 2004, 16-17). Note Sulimani’s caveat that, “since no complete section of text of any length from any of the presumed sources has come down to us, it is impossible to make a comparison between the text of the *Bibliothēke* and that of the source, which may enable us to assess the respective contributions of Diodorus and the source” (2011, 4 n. 13).

not”; she also finds that Diodorus’ treatment of fortune is inconsistent, owing to diverse treatment from different sources.²²⁹ If it can be demonstrated, however, that Diodorus is consistent in his representation of languages throughout the *Bibliothēke* – even where it is known that he used different sources – then we can posit some ‘ideological bias’ in Diodorus’ presentation of material to reflect these themes in a particular manner.²³⁰ This chapter argues that his selection creates a greater emphasis on the Greek language as cultural force and signifier of shared Hellenic community. Moreover, I shall suggest that contemporary debates about language and identity among both Greeks and Romans are reflected in Diodorus’ ‘promotion’ of his own tongue.

Greek Language

Thebes

The first reference to language in Book 17 occurs in the midst of Alexander's destruction of Thebes. The particular *pathos* of Diodorus’ account has long been recognised.²³¹ Neighbouring cities hostile to the Thebans (Thespians, Plataeans, Orchomenians and ‘some others’) joined the Macedonians in the attack: Diodorus labels these cities “Ἕλληνες (17.13.5). The historian sums up the slaughter with this statement (17.13.6):

Διὸ καὶ πάθη πολλὰ καὶ δεινὰ κατὰ τὴν πόλιν ὄραν ἦν γινόμενα· Ἕλληνες γὰρ ὑφ’ Ἑλλήνων ἀνηλεῶς ἀνηροῦντο καὶ συγγενεῖς ὑπὸ τῶν κατὰ γένος προσηκόντων ἐφονεύοντο, μηδεμίαν ἐντροπὴν τῆς ὁμοφώνου διαλέκτου παρεχομένης.

²²⁹ Hau 2009 (at 192).

²³⁰ On such ‘ideological bias’, see Schmitz 2011, 235: “Even where his *Library* is based on a single source, as is the case for a number of books, Diodorus had to select and compress the material he found, and this very act of choosing what to include and what to omit was controlled by the author’s ideological bias. Of course, Diodorus most likely was not conscious of this bias, which was in turn controlled by the cultural outlook of his own time and surroundings”.

²³¹ Baynham 1998, 39 n. 75; Stadter 1980, 92; Hau 2016, 113-114.

Wherefore people witnessed the many and terrible calamities that occurred throughout the city. Greeks were mercilessly slain by Greeks, relatives were butchered by their own relatives, and even a common tongue induced no pity.²³²

The ‘Greeks slaying Greeks’ here are Boeotians, not Macedonians: Diodorus calls the Boeotian states Ἑλλήνες, while Macedonians are distinguished earlier (17.13.1-2). In this context, then, the phrase ὁμόφωνος διάλεκτος could perhaps be interpreted two ways: as a reference to the Boeotian dialect, or to the Greek language.²³³ While we cannot compare Curtius’ (lost) parallel account, it is unlikely that Diodorus is distinguishing between Greek dialects: for his purposes, it was sufficient that the Boeotians simply spoke the same tongue. Diodorus, moreover, never mentions the existence of different Greek dialects.²³⁴ Throughout the extant text of the *Bibliothēke*, he employs the term διάλεκτος for all spoken tongues, and not once refers to Greek dialects.²³⁵ (Other terms for ‘language’ are avoided by Diodorus: γλῶττα is used exclusively of physical tongues, while φωνή appears only with the meaning ‘voice’ or ‘sound’.)²³⁶ This is atypical among Greek historians: for Herodotos, Thucydides, and Xenophon the ‘abstract notion’ of a single Greek language

²³² Cf. Curt. 7.5.33, where *commercium linguae* cannot save the Brankhidai; see also D. H. *Ant. Rom.* 1.29.3, where ‘kinship is the reason for having the same language’ (τὸ συγγενὲς τῆς ὁμοφωνίας αἴτιον).

²³³ Translators have taken it both ways, e.g. ‘common dialect’ (Welles 1963, *ad loc.*; my translation above is that of Welles, save for this word); ‘la communauté de langue’ (Goukowsky 1976, *ad loc.*).

²³⁴ In the case of non-Greek tongues, however, he does suggest some regional distinctions (1.88.5; 3.31.1; 3.63.5; 4.48.1; 4.52.3; 16.15.2; 17.76.7).

²³⁵ One possible exception is 26.18.1, where Archimedes speaks in Doric (Δωριστὶ φωνῇ Συρακουσίᾳ); however, this would be the only instance of φωνή for human speech in the *Bibliothēke* (see below, n. 19), and adverbs relating to speech ending in –ιστί are generally not found in Diodorus (cf. the sole exception at 1.19.4, Ἑλληνιστί). Moreover, the fragment is from a section of Tzetzes’ *Chiliades* in which he uses both Diodorus and Dio, so it is not even certain this passage can be attributed to Diodorus (see Africa 1975, 306; cf. Yarrow 2018). Certainly, it is unreliable as evidence for Diodorus’ original wording; cf. Palm 1955 on his independence of vocabulary and style. There is possibly an allusion to Gorgias’ Sicilian dialect at 12.53.3, highlighting the novelty of his speech (τῷ ξενίζοντι τῆς λέξεως) to Athenian ears, but this is not certain.

²³⁶ Cf. γλῶττα: 1.35.3; 1.78.3; 2.56.5; 3.36.6; 4.66.6; 10.18.1, 2; γλῶσσα: 9.20.3. Although 25.19.1 refers to the Greek language, the Tzetian origin of the fragment means it is not necessarily Diodorus’ own vocabulary (see above n. 18). Φωνή occurs sixty-three times; ἀσύνετος φωνή at 13.58.2 must mean ‘unintelligible’ on grounds of foreignness (the context is Sicilian women’s alarm at being transported to Libya), so is in effect a way of talking about linguistic difference. Diodorus’ use of φωνή here emphasises voice rather than language *per se* and may be influenced by the ‘bestiality’ of the Carthaginians in this passage (θηριώδη... τρόπον): he regularly uses φωνή for animal voices.

coexisted with the reality of regional linguistic variation.²³⁷ We do not have Diodorus' full text, of course, though we might note that Polybius does not mention dialects either (only 'Greek language': Plb. 39.1.3-4).²³⁸ In any case, within the text of the *Bibliothēke*, it seems, there is only a single Greek language. Regarding the Theban passage, then, we can safely conclude that Diodorus was referring to the Greek tongue and not the Boeotian dialect.

This episode, then, is revealing of Diodorus' attitude to his own language. He gives the Theban incident the most space of all the extant sources, so it clearly held great significance for him.²³⁹ The transgression of traditional Greek ethnic ties, particularly kinship and language, is emphasised, certainly more than in Arrian's account.²⁴⁰ He also makes much of the Panhellenic justification for Alexander's campaign (17.9.1-5).²⁴¹ In this context, then, the mention of a common language is particularly significant. Moreover, Diodorus' reference here to 'Greeks killing Greeks' and 'relatives killing relatives' may even suggest a subtext relating to the recent Roman civil wars: certainly many contemporary sources mention the tragedy of Romans killing Romans.²⁴² For an audience at this time, Greek or Roman, such an emotive statement must have resonated strongly.²⁴³

Diodorus employs the same vocabulary in Book 11 when describing the Spartan embassy to Athens after Salamis. The envoys, he says, begged the Athenians not to submit to the

²³⁷ See Chapter 1.1. Note also that Strabo – writing in a similar genre, dialect, and era to Diodorus – does mention dialects (e.g. 7.7.8; 8.1.2; 14.1.3; 14.5.26) and 'Greek language' (e.g. 13.1.52; 14.2.28); cf. James 2018, 433. On the 'abstract notion' of a common Greek language, see Davies 2002.

²³⁸ For Polybian influence on Diodorus, see Green 2006, 10; Sulimani 2011, 46-9. More tentatively, we might speculate whether Diodorus (and Polybius?) was influenced by the *Iliad*'s presentation of linguistic diversity among Trojan allies but not the Greeks (on which, see Chapter 1.1.1).

²³⁹ Diodorus was certainly aware of the value of due proportion in his own writing: see comments at 1.8.10; 1.9.4; 1.29.6; 1.41.10; 4.5.4; 4.68.6; 6.1.3.

²⁴⁰ Cf. Arr. *Anab.* 1.7.1, 11; 1.8. 8; 1.9. 9-10; Roisman 1984, 375; Bosworth 1980a, 73-74.

²⁴¹ See Flower 2000. Cf. Schmitz 2011, 246-247.

²⁴² E.g. Verg. *Georg.* 2.505-512; *B.Hisp.* 27; Luc. *BC* 7.545-596; App. *BC* 4.137.

²⁴³ See Hau (2016, 113-114) on Diodorus' "moralising through pathos".

Persians but to maintain their loyalty to ‘the Greeks (Ἕλληνες), who are men of the same blood (συγγενεῖς) and language (ὁμόφωνοι)’ (11.28.1). This appeal to common ethnicity is found in Herodotus’ account of the episode too, as we have seen; there, however, it comes from the mouths of the Athenians (Hdt. 8.144.2). Diodorus’ account omits the other aspects of common Greek culture articulated by Herodotus’ Athenians (religion, way of life) and focuses on kinship and language. The inclusion of these details in the *Bibliothēke*’s abbreviated narrative suggests the same interest in the importance of a common language to Greek ethnicity which we have seen in the account of the destruction of Thebes. The *pathos* of ‘Greeks fighting Greeks’ in that episode is heightened by Diodorus’ reference to their shared language.

Dioxippus and Koragos: A Difference of Tongue

The next relevant passage is Diodorus’ account of the duel between the Greek Dioxippus and the Macedonian Koragos (17.100.1-101.6). His narrative emphasises the episode’s importance: it is highlighted as ‘something unique’ (ἰδιόν τι) and ‘worthy of record’ (μνήμης ἄξιον) (17.100.2), and this significance is further suggested by his decision to include the Dioxippus affair in such detail.²⁴⁴ The different treatments of the episode by Diodorus and Curtius reveal much about each author’s narrative concerns.²⁴⁵ Diodorus introduces a linguistic element not found in Curtius’ narrative (Curt. 9.7.16-26).

When Dioxippus emerges victorious, Diodorus says that he was applauded by his Greek supporters, explicitly called ‘men of the same language’ (17.101.2: ὁμόφωνοι).²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ Borza 1996, 128; Baynham 2007, 428.

²⁴⁵ Cf. also Ael. *VH* 10.22.

²⁴⁶ I agree with Goukowsky (1976, *ad loc.*) and Bosworth (2006, 420) that the correct reading is ὁμοφώνων rather than ὁμοφύλων.

Bosworth suggests that the linguistic issue was divisive: “The Greeks in Alexander’s army are defined by their language, which Diodorus (and probably Diodorus’ source) saw as a hallmark of ethnicity.”²⁴⁷ Across the Alexander sources, there is certainly often found a tension between Greeks and Macedonians, and we can also see differences of treatment between Diodorus and Curtius in this regard elsewhere.²⁴⁸ Moreover, language is one part of other cultural distinctions between the fighters. Diodorus draws an explicit ethnic contrast between the two individuals in their attire, with the Greek heroically nude: ‘The Macedonian clad in expensive armour (πολυτελέσιν ὅπλοις κεκοσμημένος), but the Athenian naked, his body oiled’ (17.100.4).²⁴⁹ Dioxiippus also carries a ‘well-balanced club’ (ρόπαλον σύμμετρον), which Curtius makes ‘stout and knotty’ (*alidum nodosumque stipitem*).²⁵⁰ Heraclean imagery, indeed, but only Diodorus, for whom Heracles was a ‘culture-hero’, makes this explicit (17.100.5: ιδιότητα τὴν πρόσωπιν Ἡρακλεωτικὴν εἶχεν).²⁵¹ A comparison to the demigod here, then, suggests Diodorus’ sympathy for the Greek fighter.

As we have seen, Diodorus omits virtually all traces of Greek dialects from his work. The closest he comes is perhaps here: by calling Dioxiippus’ supporters ὁμόφωνοι, he calls attention to a linguistic division between Greeks and Macedonians, which assumes a Macedonian tongue. Although many Macedonians may have also known Greek (see on Curtius below), nevertheless Diodorus’ reference to the Greeks as ὁμόφωνοι highlights their language as a marker of their own ethnicity. He further differs from Curtius by

²⁴⁷ Bosworth 2006, 420.

²⁴⁸ Cf. Borza 1996, 131-132; Anson 2004, 233-258. Compare the different treatments by Diodorus and Curtius of a Greek revolt against Macedonians (Diod. 17.99.5-6; Curt. 9.7.1-11).

²⁴⁹ Cf. Koragos’ ‘regular weapons’ in Curtius (9.7.19: *iusta arma*); on *iusta arma*, cf. Liv. XXXVIII 22.5. See below, Chapter 1.2.2, on Curtius’ general sympathy with Macedonians.

²⁵⁰ See Baynham 2007, 432.

²⁵¹ On Heracles in Diodorus, see Sulimani 2011, esp. 22-23. Diodorus also compares his own historical labour to that of Heracles (1.2.4-3.1; see Ring 2010), who was also an important figure for Diodorus’ hometown of Agyrion (4.24.1-6).

providing a more ‘black-and-white’ depiction of the supporters: the Macedonians support Koragos and the Greeks Dioxippus (17.100.4). Curtius, on the other hand, describes simply a large crowd who supported Dioxippus, ‘Greeks among them’ (9.7.19: *inter quos erant Graeci*). Diodorus presents this event as one of broader ethnic significance, a face-off between Macedonians and Greeks: he alone claims that the victory brought a ‘common honour (κοινήν...εὐδοξίαν) to all the Greeks’ (17.101.2). Diodorus’ account, with its applause from fellow Greek-speakers, celebrates Dioxippus’ victory in relation to common Greek identity, of which language is a key part.

Greek education

Certain episodes suggest the importance of the Greek tongue in relation to education, a ‘core topic’ among Greek writers of the first century BCE.²⁵² Diodorus alone mentions that Alexander provided the Persian royal women with instructors in Greek (17.67.1: παρακατέστησε τοὺς διδάζοντας τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν διάλεκτον).²⁵³ Arrian mentions the παιδευσίς of Darius’ children (*Anab.* 3.22.6), which may derive from the same source as Diodorus’ detail.²⁵⁴ If so, that only Diodorus is explicit about the teaching of Greek language may reflect greater appreciation for Alexander’s linguistically ‘Hellenising’ attitude.

Later, Diodorus refers to Alexander’s arrangements for the sons of Macedonians by Persian women to be educated in a manner befitting free children (17.110.3: τροφὴν ἐλευθέρῳ).²⁵⁵

The reference to *paideia* suggests that Diodorus was thinking of specifically Greek

²⁵² See Schmitz and Wiater 2011, at 42.

²⁵³ Cf. Curt. 5.2.17-22.

²⁵⁴ Bosworth 1980a, 348.

²⁵⁵ Cf. Diodorus’ praise of foreign kings who accept Greek learning elsewhere in his work (e.g. 34/35.35; 31.19.8; see Yarrow 2006, 9).

education.²⁵⁶ No other source refers to this kind of education for these children.²⁵⁷ Arrian, by contrast, mentions Alexander's promise to have the boys brought up in the Macedonian fashion (*Anab.* 7.12.2: Μακεδονικῶς); this is an important distinction.²⁵⁸ Both Diodorus and Arrian are careful throughout their works to distinguish between the Greeks and the Macedonians;²⁵⁹ thus, Diodorus' emphasis on Greek language and education in these two examples appears to be his own.²⁶⁰

Boeotians in Asia

Diodorus also records the tale of a Boeotian *genos* in Asia which preserves some Greek language (17.110.4-5):

ἐν ᾧ μέχρι νῦν διαμένει γένος Βοιωτίον, κατὰ μὲν τὴν Ξέρξου στρατείαν ἀνάστατον γεγονός, μεμνημένον δ' ἔτι τῶν πατρίων νόμων· ὄντες γὰρ οὗτοι δίφωνοι τῇ μὲν ἑτέρᾳ διαλέκτῳ ἐξωμοιώθησαν τοῖς ἐγχωρίοις, τῇ δ' ἑτέρᾳ πλείστας τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν λέξεων διετήρουν καὶ τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων ἕνια διεφύλαττον.

There dwells here down to our time a Boeotian *genos* who were moved in the time of Xerxes' campaign, but still remember their ancestral *nomoi*; for they are bilingual and speak like the natives in the one language, while in the other they preserve most of the Greek vocabulary, and they maintain some Greek practices.

This tale is found only here. Diodorus' treatment is sympathetic; compare Curtius on the Branchidae, for example, who had migrated from Miletus on the orders of Xerxes (Curt. 7.5.29): 'Their ancestral customs had not yet faded, but they were now bilingual, having degenerated gradually from their original language by means of a foreign tongue' (*mores*

²⁵⁶ *Paideia* came to be a key aspect of Greek identity in the imperial period (Swain 1996); for Diodorus' 'unpolished' anticipation of such classicism, see Schmitz 2011. Cf. Diodorus' reference to the settled Greeks who longed to go back to a 'Greek upbringing and way of life' (18.7.1: τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν ἀγωγὴν καὶ δίαίταν).

²⁵⁷ Cf. Plut. *Alex.* 71.9; Just. 12.4.2-12 (who confuses them with the 30,000 *Epigonoι*; Yardley and Heckel 1997, 208).

²⁵⁸ Cf. Arrian's similar description of the 30,000 *Epigonoι* (*Anab.* 7.6.1).

²⁵⁹ Borza 1996.

²⁶⁰ Diodorus does not mention the Greek instruction of the 30,000 *Epigonoι*, as found in Plutarch (*Alex.* 47.6; cf. Diod. 17.108.1-3); however, that detail may derive from Plutarch's own 'creative elaboration' (on which see below, Chapter 1.2.3). Diodorus' methods, unlike Plutarch's, do not seem to have extended to such embellishment (see e.g. Hau 2009).

patrii nondum exoleverant; sed iam bilingues erant paulatim a domestico externo sermone degeneres).²⁶¹ Curtius' vocabulary is damning: *degener* suggests rejection of ancestry.²⁶² Diodorus, on the other hand, uses δίφωνοι rather than δίγλωττοι (as elsewhere: 11.60.4; 12.68.5), perhaps to avoid the latter's negative connotations of being 'double-tongued'.²⁶³ Moreover, he emphasises the Boeotians' preservation (διετήρουν) of language, rather than what has been lost (as Curtius does).

Diodorus was perhaps influenced by Herodotus on the Eretrians, whom Darius uprooted to Asia: they 'dwelt in that place until my time, guarding their ancient language' (Hdt. 6.119.4: οἱ καὶ μέχρι ἐμέο εἶχον τὴν χώραν ταύτην, φυλάσσοντες τὴν ἀρχαίην γλῶσσαν). Herodotus considered it significant that they had managed to protect the 'purity' of their Greek tongue, presumably because he knew of others who had not done so, like the Gelonoi (Hdt. 4.108.2). Diodorus' depiction of the Boeotians here may also recall the woeful tale of the Thebans earlier in Book 17: while they could not be saved by their common Greek tongue, Diodorus can focus on the endurance of these other Boeotians' Greek language and culture in the face of the threat of bilingual linguistic 'corruption'.²⁶⁴ This is something evident also in his accounts of Greek colonisation on Sicily and Crete, as I have shown elsewhere; Diodorus emphasises the eventual victory of Greek language and culture, whether the colonists are Greek or non-Greek.²⁶⁵

²⁶¹ Diodorus' account of the Branchidae is lost; he refers to it in the contents for book XVII.

²⁶² *Bilinguis* also perhaps reflects impurity; see Poccetti 1986 and cf. introduction to Chapter 2.1.

²⁶³ Dubuisson 1983; Rochette 2001; for Diodorus' independence of vocabulary, see Palm 1955. Cf. introduction to Chapter 2.1.

²⁶⁴ Cf. Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.89.4 on Greeks losing all 'Greekness' (incl. language and customs) in barbarian environments, citing the Achaeans on the Euxine.

²⁶⁵ James 2018, 438-441.

Conclusion

Greek intellectuals of the first century BCE had different responses to their political and cultural circumstances under Rome: Dionysius of Halicarnassus, for example, argued that those in power, the Romans, were in origin Greeks; consequently, Latin, he claimed, was related to Greek. Moreover, he advocated ‘Atticism’, anticipating the stylistic movement of the ‘Second Sophistic’.²⁶⁶ While Diodorus was no Atticising stylist, he was certainly interested in issues of language. Through his careful selection of material Diodorus emerges as something of an advocate for his own Greek tongue: he mentions it on many occasions when parallel sources do not; he never includes examples of communication problems involving Greek; and he never mentions the Greek dialects, giving the effect of a monolithic Greek language. As we saw earlier regarding the *Anabasis*, Xenophon seeks to reduce linguistic division among the Greeks by mentioning a dialect once in order to dismiss it (i.e. Apollonides), eliding differences between Greeks to give the impression of linguistic homogeneity in a quasi-Iliadic fashion. Diodorus, writing a universal history, had even more scope than Xenophon to mention Greek dialects if he had wished. Instead, he often mentions ‘Greek’, and Diodorus appears almost ‘proto-Second Sophistic’ in his apparent promotion of the superiority of Greek.

2. Curtius Rufus: Greek, Macedonian, Latin

Introduction

Writing in Latin from Greek sources, Curtius will have been ever conscious of linguistic issues and the politics of language. Certainly, he evinces the most interest in such matters

²⁶⁶ For ‘Aeolism’ (Latin as Greek dialect) see De Jonge 2008, 60-5; Stevens 2006. For language and identity in Dionysius, see Wiater 2011.

of our extant sources. An easy comparison: Arrian mentions interpreters twice in the *Anabasis*, while Curtius mentions them some ten times (see further Chapter 2.2.2). More generally, he reveals a clear interest in writing, words, and language in general.²⁶⁷ This interest has been occasionally remarked upon in passing but never explored in depth.²⁶⁸ In this section, I shall explore a single extended example from the trial of Philotas, in which the politics of Greek (and Macedonian) language use are prominent.

Philotas' Trial: Greek Language vs Macedonian Dialect²⁶⁹

Curtius' is by far the longest and most detailed account of Philotas' trial that we have.²⁷⁰ The other sources barely refer to a trial, let alone any description of its proceedings.²⁷¹ Curtius is the only source to report Philotas' speech in his own defence, and it is a rhetorical showpiece in which language and identity play a unique role. It appears, then, that there was certainly a tradition in which Philotas defended himself in a trial setting, and Curtius was evidently the most interested in this episode of the extant sources.

²⁶⁷ Various examples occur *passim*: the Persian words for the king's tiara (*cidaris*: 3.3.19), money (*gaza*: 3.13.5), burden-carriers (*gangabae*: 3.13.7), and arrow (*tigris*: 4.9.16; cf. *Metz Epitome* 67); the Sogdian word for pits (*siri*: 7.4.24); reference to the Indians' use of a different word for rhinoceros (9.1.5); references to "customs and language" (4.13.4; 5.5.19; 6.3.8); the etymology of the names of certain places and peoples: Euergetae (7.3.1), Red Sea (8.9.14; 10.1.13), and Mt Meros (8.10.12); the Macedonian words for swords (*copidae*: 8.14.29) and the famous long spear (*sarisa*: 9.7.19); and references to Greek poetry (3.1.2-4), Greek proverbs (7.8.23), the Phoenician alphabet (4.4.19), and Indian tree bark which could be written on (8.9.15). Atkinson notes that Curtius "had the curiosity to enquire about points of Persian and Indian lexicography" (1997, 3469); cf. Rolfe II, 603.

²⁶⁸ Heckel notes Curtius' occasional "concern for the 'language-barrier'" (1994, 77 n.15); Leiwo observes Curtius' interest in "linguistic communication" (Leiwo 1996, 131 n. 38); Borza: "Curtius is interested in matters of language" (1996, 132); see also Rolfe's index entry under "language" (1946, II.603). Harrison, however, as we have seen, claims that "the accounts of the campaigns of Alexander show little of the practical awareness concerning language of Xenophon, very probably due to the distance in time from the events" (Harrison 1998, 14). No one to date has systematically examined this interest of Curtius'.

²⁶⁹ Throughout this chapter I shall conventionally refer to Macedonian as a 'dialect' for convenience; for recent scholarship on the position of the tongue, see Panayotou 2007.

²⁷⁰ Atkinson 1994, 212; Kapetanopoulos gives a detailed breakdown of the relative size of the surviving accounts (Kapetanopoulos 1999, 117-8).

²⁷¹ Cf. Diod. 17.80.1; Plut. *Alex.* 49.6; Arr. *Anab.* 3.26.2; Just. *Epit.* 12.5.3.

The trial scene is perhaps the most discussed in Curtian scholarship.²⁷² While scholars are divided on the historical question of whether the execution of Philotas was justified, there is general consensus as to the difficulty of determining the historicity of Curtius' account.²⁷³ It is certain, however, that his narrative is coloured by Roman imagery and values.²⁷⁴ Curtius may have been influenced by *maiestas* trials in the Senate, which might explain the disproportionate space given to this and other trials on Alexander's campaigns.²⁷⁵ As was standard in ancient historiography, he felt free at certain points to go beyond his sources, particularly in his presentation of "speeches, feelings, and motives", and the trial is a good example of this.²⁷⁶ It occurs in Book 6 within the context of Curtius' depiction of 'growing distance' between the king and the Macedonians, and this will have consequences for his representation of language and identity, which will be my focus here.²⁷⁷

Alexander accuses Philotas

Alexander begins proceedings by calling the army to an assembly and accuses Philotas of betraying him. When Philotas himself enters in chains, Alexander accuses him in such a way that implies that Philotas is a cultural traitor too (6.9.34-36):

And now the king, looking intently at him, said: "The Macedonians are about to pass judgement upon you; I wish to know whether you will use their ancestral tongue (*patrio sermone*) in addressing them." Thereupon Philotas replied: "Besides the Macedonians there are many present who, I think, will more easily understand what I shall say if I use the same language (*eadem lingua*) which you have employed, for no other reason, I suppose, than so that your speech might be understood by the greater number." Then said the king: "Do you not see how Philotas loathes even the ancestral tongue (*sermonis patrii*)? For he alone disdains to learn it (*solus quippe fastidit eum discere*). But let him by all means speak in whatever way he desires, provided that you remember that he

²⁷² Gissel provides a brief literature review (1995, 216-8).

²⁷³ Atkinson 1994, 215.

²⁷⁴ Hammond 1981, 181, esp. n. 72; Rutz 1986, 2354-5. Cf. Baynham (1998, 49) on the scene with the mutilated Greek prisoners.

²⁷⁵ Atkinson 1994, 213.

²⁷⁶ Gissel 1995; Baynham 1998, 48; Atkinson 2009, 14. On *inventio*, see Marincola 1997, 158-174; Barnes 2005, 13-19.

²⁷⁷ Gissel 1995, 222; cf. also Anson 2004.

holds our customs in as much abhorrence as our language (*a nostro more quam sermone abhorrere*)". And with these words he left the assembly.

The strangeness and unconventionality of this exchange has been often noted, since Alexander appears a hypocrite for chastising Philotas for choosing to speak in the same tongue as he (i.e. *koiné* Greek); Lane Fox calls it "a detail...too unusual perhaps to be only a history's fiction".²⁷⁸ The passage is certainly remarkable for it implies that Macedonian was difficult for Greeks to understand, and is in fact the only ancient testimony for such a language barrier in Alexander's age.²⁷⁹

Within Curtius' narrative, however, the king's comment is probably a performance for the benefit of the Macedonian soldiers, and may have been Alexander's way of responding to criticism of his recent adoption of Persian practices.²⁸⁰ Indeed, only a few chapters earlier Curtius himself had provided an assessment of Alexander's moral decay in this respect and claims the king himself was moving away from 'ancestral customs' (*patrii mores*): he states that Alexander considered them, along with the *disciplina* of Macedonian kings, to be beneath him (6.6.1-2). Alexander, he says (6.6.4-10), became 'corrupted by luxury and foreign customs' (*luxu et peregrinis infecta moribus*), and the Macedonians felt that more had been lost than gained by victory if they had surrendered themselves to 'alien and foreign customs' (*alienis moribus et externis*). This focus on Alexander's embracing of Persian customs provides the important narrative background to the trial of Philotas and informs Curtius' use of *patrius sermo* and *patrii mores*.²⁸¹

²⁷⁸ Lane Fox 1973, 288; cf. Rutz 1986, 2349; Devine 1979, 154; Gissel 1995, 234; Baynham 1998, 177; Anson 2004, 206-208.

²⁷⁹ Cf. Plut. *Alex.* 51.6: an order 'in Macedonian' is the sign of a μέγας θόρυβος, implying that normally commands were given in Greek (see Chapter 1.2.3 on Plutarch). Cf. also Plut. *Eum.* 14.11, where Eumenes is hailed 'in the Macedonian tongue' (Μακεδονιστὶ τῇ φωνῇ); Hammond 1994 marshals the literary evidence.

²⁸⁰ Gissel 1995, 230; Baynham 1998, 177. Cf. Kalléris 1976, 477.

²⁸¹ Similar terminology will recur in Book 8 in Hermolaus' criticisms of Alexander as eschewing *patrii mores* (8.7.12; cf. 8.8.3). On *patrii mores*, see Short 2007, 117, 127-132: "Just as the definition of *mos maiorum*

Corruption of language

The focus on loss of ancestral language and customs taps into a common *topos* in imperial Greek and Roman literature of the corruption of language by barbarian elements. It perhaps is best known from the ‘Second Sophistic’ Greeks and their concern for pure Greek and ‘Atticism’. Linguistic and cultural corruption is also a particular concern of Curtius’.

We can see this clearly in another passage, discussed earlier with regard to Diodorus. This is the massacre of the Branchidae, a Greek people moved from Miletus into Sogdiana by Xerxes (7.5.28-29):

Their ancestral customs had not yet passed out of use, but they were already bilingual, having gradually degenerated from their original language through the influence of a foreign tongue (*mores patrii nondum exoleverant, sed iam bilingues erant, paulatim a domestico externo sermone degeneres*).... [33] [After Alexander ordered their slaughter] the unarmed wretches were butchered everywhere, and the cruelty could not be checked either by fellowship of language (*commercio linguae*) or by the draped olive branches and prayers of the suppliants.

The historicity of the massacre of the Branchidae has long been a problem for modern critics. Curtius gives the fullest account that we have (7.5.28-35).²⁸² Neither Justin nor Arrian mention the incident, while Diodorus’ account is lost in a *lacuna*.²⁸³ The detail concerning the language of the Branchidae does not occur in our other sources. A concern for linguistic corruption by foreign influence is evident: the Branchidae are *degeneres*, literally ‘that which has fallen away from one’s origin or *genus*’. *Bilinguis* is also not a neutral term, for it often carried the negative connotations of a language that was impure

could accommodate varying ideological purposes, so too the (vaguely-defined) *patrii mores* could be invoked in similar contexts in opposition to ‘modern’ behaviours” (127). See below on *patrius sermo*.

²⁸² For the view that it never occurred, see Tarn 1922. For the opposing view, see Parke 1985.

²⁸³ He refers to it in the contents for Book 17.

and corrupted.²⁸⁴ This contrasts with the relative preservation of their ‘ancestral *mores*’; here, again, ‘language and customs’ are connected yet distinguished.²⁸⁵

Philotas’ response and the rise of *koine*

Back to the trial scene and Philotas’ response to his choice of language. Alexander leaves the assembly, and Philotas answers the charge (6.10.23-24):

Mihi quidem obicitur quod societatem patrii sermonis asperner, quod Macedonum mores fastidiam. Sic ego imperio quod dedignor, immineo! Iam pridem nativus ille sermo commercio aliarum gentium exolevit; tam victoribus, quam victis peregrina lingua discenda est.

“It is even charged against me that I scorn association with my native language, that I disdain the customs of the Macedonians. So then I aspire to the rule of something which I hold in contempt! That native tongue has long passed out of use through intercourse with other peoples; a foreign language must be learned by both victors and vanquished.”

Philotas does not deny ignorance of Macedonian, but argues that it is no longer relevant. It has ‘passed out of use’ (*exolevit*).²⁸⁶ This could simply mean, however, that Macedonian’s importance had faded and it was no longer the primary speech. Curtius elsewhere uses the word *exolesco* in describing cultures where elements of original customs still linger, including the Branchidae passage just discussed.²⁸⁷ This would not, then, preclude the use of Macedonian among the Macedonian soldiery, where it seems to have been the tongue of special command: as we shall see in the next section, Plutarch has Alexander shouting to his bodyguard in Macedonian during the Cleitus episode, the only instance in our sources where Macedonian is depicted actually in use (Plut. *Alex.* 51.6; it is explicitly noted as being exceptional). It would not be the only time in history when different languages were

²⁸⁴ E.g. Hor. *Sat.* 1.10.30; Verg. *Aen.* 1.661; see Poccetti 1986; Rochette 2010, 288.

²⁸⁵ Cf. Curtius’ treatment of the Gortuae, a Euboean people in Darius’ army in 331 who had ‘formerly followed the Medes; they were now degenerate and ignorant of their native customs’ (4.12.11: *Medos quondam secuti, sed iam degeneres et patrii moris ignari*). In this instance, there is no explicit mention of language, only native customs; the vocabulary, however, is similar to the description of the Branchidae (*degener, patrii mores*).

²⁸⁶ See Atkinson 1994, 236.

²⁸⁷ 7.5.29; 9.4.3. Cf. 3.13.17; 7.6.27.

in common use among elite and non-elite communities.²⁸⁸ Indeed, Philotas' words perhaps imply that Macedonian became less important because of increasing contacts with the Greek states.²⁸⁹ Curtius has demonstrated the widespread use of *koine* among the army through Alexander's use of the tongue in accusing Philotas: Alexander had used Greek to address the assembly, Philotas says, because 'besides the Macedonians...most of those present' (*praeter Macedonas...plerique adsunt*) more easily understood Greek. Moreover, Alexander asked Philotas specifically whether he would use the Macedonian tongue to address the Macedonians, which suggests that Philotas had a choice of language.²⁹⁰ Curtius is employing the trial to explore the politics of language choice and tensions between Greeks and Macedonians which he found in his sources.

Curtius also has Philotas provide the rhetorical *sententia* that 'a foreign language must be learned by both victors and vanquished' (*tam victoribus quam victis peregrina lingua discenda est*).²⁹¹ Although Greek is evidently the *peregrina lingua* in this context,²⁹² the sententious nature of the expression seems to speak more broadly to Curtius' audience. He may have had in mind the necessity for elite Romans to learn Greek; perhaps there is an echo of the Roman sentiment, expressed most famously by Horace, that 'captive Greece has captured her savage conqueror' (*Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit*).²⁹³ Curtius, of course, knew Greek well, since his sources were Greek; nevertheless, he occasionally

²⁸⁸ Cf. also Plut. *Ant.* 27.5, where Cleopatra's multilingual talents are contrasted with earlier Ptolemies, many of whom gave up the Macedonian tongue (τὸ μακεδονίζειν).

²⁸⁹ See Engels 2010.

²⁹⁰ That Macedonian was no longer the primary speech (of the army at least) is supported by the other sources: Alexander has the Persian women (Diod. 17.67.1) and the 30,000 Persian *Epigono*i (Plut. *Alex.* 47.6) learn Greek, not Macedonian.

²⁹¹ This seems to be a popular rhetorical antithesis with Curtius, most likely related to his interest in *fortuna*: 3.11.23; 4.1.14; 4.5.7; 5.2.10; 6.2.18; 6.6.4; 6.6.10; 6.10.23; 8.4.25; 8.5.19-20; 10.3.12; 10.5.9; cf. 7.1.12. Compare similar sentiments at Plut. *Alex.* 20.12; Just. *Epit.* 12.12.2; cf. Plut. *Aem.* 28.4.

²⁹² Borza 1994, 19; Kapetanopoulos is less sure (1999, 119 n.8). Cf. also Leiwo 1996, 133.

²⁹³ Hor. *Ep.* 2.1.156. For possible Horatian influence on Curtius, see Alessandri 1969; Baynham 1998, 118 n. 63.

expresses his disdain for the Greeks and their culture.²⁹⁴ Philotas' comment may be both somewhat sarcastic on Curtius' part, yet also entirely appropriate for Philotas' defence: the Macedonians, having conquered the Greek mainland, needed to know Greek to communicate with the conquered states as well as those in their army.

Bolon and learning Macedonian

Curtius continues to drive home the significance of the Macedonian tongue to the Macedonians. Alexander had accused Philotas of disdaining to learn (*discere*) his native tongue (6.9.36), and soon after Philotas' defence, an old soldier named Bolon builds on this by accusing Philotas of requiring an interpreter when listening to Macedonian (6.11.4):

ludibrio ei fuisse rusticos homines, Phrygasque et Paphlagonas appellatos, qui non erubesceret, Macedo natus, homines linguae suae per interpretem audire.

[Bolon reminded the soldiers] that the rustic men had always been objects of [Philotas'] mockery, and were called Phrygians and Paphlagonians by one who, though born a Macedonian, was unashamed that he listens to men speaking his own native language through an interpreter.²⁹⁵

Bolon here continues Alexander's line of attack, depicting Philotas as disdainful of his native people through a focus on their language. He succeeds in inflaming the assembly (6.11.8: *tum vero universa contio accensa est*). As we have noted, as an educated Macedonian Philotas may never have needed to learn a tongue that appears to have been mainly spoken among the rank and file. The use of interpreters had symbolic power in the Roman world, however, and are often used in historiography to express cultural remoteness

²⁹⁴ See 3.1.2, 4.5.11-12, 8.5.7-8; Atkinson 1980, 80-81; Atkinson 2009, 9, 26. Cf. also 5.8.3 (Greeks with 'ancient loyalty' to Darius III); for more on the Greek mercenaries, see Chapter 3.2.2.

²⁹⁵ The phrasing of the last statement is grammatically ambiguous: it could be translated either "he is not ashamed that, though Macedonian born, men of his own language listen to him through an interpreter", or "he is not ashamed that, though Macedonian born, he listens to men of his own language through an interpreter." Indeed, it has been translated both ways (Rolfe for the former translation, Yardley for the latter); but in context it seems the latter makes more sense (Leiwo 1996, 132 n. 41, who also notes that the latter translation has been accepted in Bardon's 1947 French translation and Schoenfeld's 1954 German translation).

(see Chapter 2); by accusing Philotas of such linguistic distance from his own people, Curtius could evoke his own cultural context for emotional effect, much as Bolon does.

Macedonian as *patrius sermo*

Let us consider Curtius' Roman context a little more. By his time, the Macedonian speech was long extinct. Indeed, on Curtius' presentation it was already dying out in Alexander's day to be replaced by the *koine*.²⁹⁶ Curtius himself cannot have known of its nature or intelligibility; he just saw it in his sources. In this respect, it is worth remarking on the terminology that Curtius employs to describe the tongue here: *patrius sermo*, that is, 'ancestral language', or literally 'language of the father'. As Short put it, "this term, unlike *lingua Latina*, which refers to Latin as a collection of grammatical data – morphology, syntax and lexicon –, connotes Latin in its social and cultural, rather than merely linguistic dimension".²⁹⁷ Farrell calls it the "linguistic *mos maiorum*".²⁹⁸ While Roman writers could also use the term to describe the 'national language' of other peoples, it was nevertheless – for Roman readers – a term evocative of paternity and ancestral ties.²⁹⁹ Curtius has Alexander depict the use of Macedonian by the Macedonians, therefore, as broadly comparable to the use of Latin by Romans: it was central to ethnic identity.

This is significant; elsewhere in the *Historiae*, Curtius shows himself to be disdainful of both Greeks and barbarians, while tending to depict the Macedonian soldiers in sympathetic

²⁹⁶ Anson notes that Greek was the spoken language of Macedonia by the early Roman Empire (Anson 2004, 203). Strabo (7.7.1) regards Macedonians as Greek, speaking of their affinity of language (*dialektos*); cf. 7.7.8. Cf. also, however, Cleopatra's alleged retention of Macedonian speech (Plut. *Ant.* 27.5), surely a rarity if true.

²⁹⁷ Short 2007, i. For a brief analysis of Curtius' use of *sermo* and *lingua*, see Anson 2004, 207. Rarer is the term *patria lingua*, only found in Aulus Gellius (Aul. Gell. 19.9.8); Ovid (*Tr.* 4.4.1); Propertius (*Eleg.* 4.2); Silius Italicus (*Pun.* 3.344ff).

²⁹⁸ Farrell 2001, 65.

²⁹⁹ See Short (2007, ii), who cites Tac. *Ann.* 2.60.2 (Egyptian); 4.45.1 (Termestine); Sil. Ital. *Pun.* 2.437-440 (an African language); Sen. *Cons. Helv.* 7.9 (Corsican tongue). Leiwo comments that "[to Curtius] the choice of language is a question of patriotism" (Leiwo 1996, 132).

contrast to their (sometimes despotic) leader, Alexander.³⁰⁰ By way of example, we might compare Diodorus' account of the burning of Persepolis, where the Macedonians are depicted as pillaging Persepolis (17.70.4), while Curtius' account implies that they were swept along by their king's actions (5.7.3-10); or Curt. 6.6.1-12, where Alexander's moral decay appears to be judged by the Macedonians, and indeed Curtius, according to Roman *mores*. He even once compares the *mores* of Macedonians and Greeks, labelling the former loyal to *patrii mores*, and the Greeks susceptible to *mali mores* (8.5.7). Throughout, he seems to equate traditional Macedonian values with conservative Roman *mores*, and he is not alone amongst Latin authors in implying similarities between Romans and Macedonians.³⁰¹ As Asirvatham puts it: "For Roman Greeks, the Macedonians are always 'other' – except at times on the battlefield; for Romans, the Macedonians are 'us'".³⁰²

Bloomer highlights how debates over linguistic purity or supremacy were part of the polemics of social practice in Latin literary society: language criticism is an "instrument of power".³⁰³ By having Alexander participate in such a 'debate' (or, rather, aggressive assertion) within the narrative, Curtius perhaps shows him to be asserting linguistic dominance over Philotas.³⁰⁴ Labelling Macedonian as *patrius sermo* was thus a powerful means of evoking an emotive response. It is undercut, of course, by the revelation that the king himself had used Greek, not Macedonian; such an unreasonable demand from Alexander, however, fits with Curtius' depiction of the 'growing distance' between the

³⁰⁰ For Greek disdain, see Atkinson 2009, 9; I would also add 7.4.13 to his list relating to barbarians. For Roman sympathy with Macedonians, see Asirvatham 2010, 115-116, 123. On the derogatory connotations of 'Macedonian' in Rome, however, see Spencer 2002, ch.1.

³⁰¹ Asirvatham 2010, 115-116, 123. Borza observes a predilection in Curtius, in contrast with the other extant sources, "of referring to the whole of Alexander's army as 'Macedonian'" (1996, 130). Since the Macedonians often appear analogous to the Romans in Curtius, one suspects this predilection is related to his own Roman bias.

³⁰² Asirvatham 2010, 116.

³⁰³ Bloomer 1997, 5.

³⁰⁴ On Roman 'linguistic assertion', see Adams 2003b.

king and his Macedonians which we can discern at this point in the *Historiae*.³⁰⁵ Alexander is desperate to prove his Macedonian *bona fides*. Curtius' sympathy is with the Macedonians rather than Alexander here.

In addition to the cultural significance of *patrius sermo*, this exchange between Alexander and Philotas is reminiscent of certain contemporary Roman events. Scholars have noted the similarities to stories like Tiberius' demand that a centurion reply in Latin instead of Greek, when Tiberius himself often carried out trials in Greek.³⁰⁶ Claudius, too, apparently appreciated 'both our languages', but is also recorded as demanding that certain Roman citizens must know Latin.³⁰⁷ Such hypocrisy may have influenced Curtius in his presentation of Alexander at Philotas' trial, though we ought to be wary of assigning a simplistic allegory to such a scene – Curtius' is a study of the nature of *regnum* itself, so it is possible to see echoes of not only one but many *principes* throughout the work, and indeed the concept of the principate itself.³⁰⁸

Conclusion

Curtius' presentation of the politics of language, both Macedonian and Greek, in the trial of Philotas seems to be more than mere interesting detail: it forms a key part of his characterisation of Alexander's turn away from Macedonian *mores* and descent into 'barbarity', as well as linking with Curtius' general concerns about linguistic and cultural corruption. This scene seems to be significantly influenced by Curtius' contemporary Roman linguistic context, evident in the terminology of *patrius sermo* and the significance

³⁰⁵ Gissel 1995, 222.

³⁰⁶ Suet. *Tib.* 71; Cass. Dio 57.15.2-4; Devine 1979, 154-5; Hammond 1981, 181 n. 72. For Tiberius' Latin 'purism', see Dubuisson 1986.

³⁰⁷ Suet. *Claud.* 42; cf. Cass Dio 60.17.4; Suet. *Claud* 16.1. See Kaimio 1979, 133-136.

³⁰⁸ Baynham 1998, 52, 216.

of interpreters. Like other Romans, he appears to sympathise with the Macedonians and equate their cultural identity (including language) to his own. In this respect, Curtius seems a linguistic conservative and proud Latinist, perhaps akin to a Cato or a Marius. Curtius did choose to write his history in Latin, of course; he could have chosen Greek.

3. Plutarch: Greek in the Second Sophistic

Introduction

Plutarch is the only biographer studied in this thesis. He was generally associated with the ‘Second Sophistic’, and Alexander was an important figure for him as for other writers of this period.³⁰⁹ He held an interest in the Macedonian king throughout his life: early in his career, Plutarch composed the paired orations *De Alexandri Magni fortuna aut virtute*,³¹⁰ in which Alexander is portrayed as the ultimate philosopher, superior even to Socrates and Plato.³¹¹ Later, he wrote the *Life of Alexander*, which was paired with that of Julius Caesar and would have been widely read.³¹² The portrait of Alexander in the *Life* is more complex than that of the philosopher-king from the *Fortune*: on the one hand, he is the "epitome of all things Hellenic" (in Duff's words), a champion of Greek culture in a foreign world; on the other, there is a discernible tension in Alexander's identity, caught between playing the Hellenised Macedonian king and the Great King.³¹³ In this way, the *Alexander* resembles the *Antony*, in which the protagonist moves between the Roman, Greek, and Egyptian cultures; it is evident that “cultural relations and contrasts” are often at the centre of

³⁰⁹ On Alexander in the Second Sophistic, see G. Anderson 1989, 145; Spencer 2002, 37-38; Asirvatham (2010, 112) emphasises Alexander's particular significance in the first and second centuries CE as ‘Greek culture hero’.

³¹⁰ Henceforth referred to as the *Fortune*.

³¹¹ On Plutarch's Platonism, see Swain 1997.

³¹² On the lack of a *synkrisis* for the *Alexander-Caesar*, see Pelling 2011, 32-33; 2002, 377-382.

³¹³ Duff 1999, 65; Whitmarsh 2002, 186-92.

Plutarch's works.³¹⁴ This is certainly the case regarding multilingualism in the *Lives* – Plutarch often employs these details as key elements of characterisation.³¹⁵

Most of the linguistic details found in the *Alexander* do not occur in any of our other sources; this can possibly be explained by Plutarch's interest in character, which led him to include details not found in historical monographs and universal histories. He famously claims in the preface to be writing 'not histories but lives', focusing primarily, but not exclusively, on *ethos*.³¹⁶ This statement, however, was also a means of distinguishing Plutarch's *Alexander* from the crowd of Alexander historiography that preceded him.³¹⁷ Such a concern would have contributed to Plutarch's inclusion of details not found elsewhere.³¹⁸ There was also the necessity to create parallelism with the paired *Caesar*, which can produce certain peculiarities.³¹⁹ Plutarch's own finely tuned sensitivity to language, however, should not be underestimated in its effect on the narrative: throughout his corpus, there are countless etymologies of Greek and foreign terms, and a fondness for neologism and wordplay. Plutarch was part of a culture steeped in *paideia* and linguistic debate, and so it is possible that many linguistic details of minor historical consequence but important for characterisation were elaborated by Plutarch himself, as plausible elements of character.³²⁰

³¹⁴ See Swain 1990a.

³¹⁵ See, perhaps most famously, the case of Cleopatra and her linguistic knowledge (including, of course, the Macedonian tongue: Plut. *Ant.* 27; see further below and Chapter 3.2.3).

³¹⁶ Duff 1999, 13-51; Pelling 2011, 15-25.

³¹⁷ Duff 1999, 21; cf. Arr. *Anab. praef.* 3; Moles 1985; Marincola 1989; Gray 1990; more generally, see Marincola 1997.

³¹⁸ Cf. *Nic.* 1.5; Anderson 1993, 69-85.

³¹⁹ As Bosworth has shown regarding *Eumenes-Sertorius* (Bosworth 1992); on the effect of parallelism in the *Lives* more generally, see Duff 1999; Pelling 1988, 19-23; Humble (ed) 2010. Whilst we do not have the space to appreciate fully this parallelism in our examination of languages in the *Alexander*, at certain points attention will be paid to that parallel life.

³²⁰ On such 'imaginative elaboration' in Plutarch, see Pelling 2011, 57; cf. Pelling 2002, 143-170. For the culture of linguistic debate, see Bowie 1970; 1989; Anderson 1989; Kim 2010; cf. Zadorojnyi 2005 on Plutarch's 'scriptuality'.

Greek Language

Priest of Ammon

Plutarch's account of Alexander's consultation at Siwah includes a linguistic detail not found elsewhere, reflecting several of his interests throughout this work. The expedition to Siwah has been the subject of much debate concerning the nature of the Macedonian king's 'divinity'.³²¹ Plutarch's text reveals evidence of this debate in antiquity by reporting the divergent accounts of the oracle's response. He first records what most writers (οἱ πλεῖστοι γράφουσιν) claim: in response to Alexander's question about whether his father's killers had been avenged, the priest said his father was not mortal. Alexander then reframed the question specifically mentioning Philip, and asked whether he himself was destined to rule all mankind – the prophet answered both in the affirmative (27.5-8). This report is found in all sources.³²² Plutarch then adds two anecdotes not found elsewhere. He cites Alexander's letter to his mother concerning secret responses that he received from the oracle, which he would tell her alone upon his return (27.8).

Finally, Plutarch refers to the claims of 'some' that the tale of such a divine proclamation came about because of a slip in Greek pronunciation on the part of the foreign priest. The oracle wished to greet Alexander in a friendly manner (μετά τινος φιλοφροσύνης), by addressing him in Greek (Ἑλληνιστὶ) as 'my son' (ὦ παιδίον). His 'barbarian' pronunciation (τῶν φθόγγων ὑπὸ βαρβαρισμοῦ), however, led him to end the word with a *sigma* instead of a *nu*, resulting in ὦ παῖ Διός. Alexander was pleased by this slip of the tongue (σφάλμα τῆς φωνῆς) and the tale was told that he had been greeted by the god as

³²¹ The literature is vast; see most recently, with further references there, Bloedow 2004; Anson 2003.

³²² Curtius refers to the priest calling Alexander 'son' (Curt. 4.7.25: *filium appellat*); cf. Just. 11.11.7 (*filium salutant*); Diodorus has the priest address him as son, and tell him that it came from the god (17.51.1: ὦ παῖ· καὶ ταύτην παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ἔχε τὴν πρόσησιν); cf. Arr. *Anab.* 3.4.5.

‘son of Zeus’ (27.9: παῖδα Διὸς αὐτὸν τοῦ θεοῦ προσειπόντος). Although other sources refer to Alexander's being addressed ‘son’, as we have seen, only Plutarch explains this result as arising from mispronunciation.³²³ It seems related to his view that Alexander's divine pretensions were solely for propagandistic purposes (cf. *Alex.* 28).³²⁴

Plutarch's evident interest in wordplay and etymology, however, is likely a factor in his inclusion of this anecdote, as well as his concern for oracles (wordplay being an important part of oracular riddles).³²⁵ In his work *De Pythiae oraculis*, he laments that oracular responses are in his time more mundane than in the classical period, and less cryptic.³²⁶ Indeed, Plutarch seems fond of the ambiguous nature of oracles, in a quasi-Herodotean fashion. In his account of Alexander's earlier visit to Delphi, for example, the king draws greater meaning from the words of the priestess than originally intended: Alexander had arrived on a day where oracles could not be proclaimed, but nevertheless dragged the Pythia to the temple, whereby she, as if overcome by his zeal (ὥσπερ ἐξηττημένη τῆς σπουδῆς), uttered the comment ‘you are invincible, my son’ (ἀνίκητος εἶ ὃ παῖ); Alexander took this as sufficient prophecy, for he now had the oracle he desired (14.6-7).³²⁷ It is evident that the priestess' words were only intended as a comment on the present situation; Alexander, however, chose to interpret them as being of greater significance since they came from an oracular priestess and thus carried great authority. The same is true of the priest of

³²³ The source of this divergence may be Callisthenes (Brunt 1976, 468-9; Hamilton 1969, liv, 70). Anson (2003, 117 n.2, 128; cf. Hamilton 1969, 73) considers it "nonsense" that such a priest would not know Greek, but this seems to demand a fluency not often expected of second-language speakers. Plutarch himself refers to his own experience in speaking another tongue, i.e. Latin in Rome, where he had insufficient time to practise (*Dem.* 2.2).

³²⁴ “It is clear that Alexander himself was not foolishly affected or puffed up by the belief in his divinity, but used it for the subjugation of others” (Pelling 2011, 30-31); cf. Brenk 1977, 199 n. 11.

³²⁵ Dougherty 1992; Maurizio 1997. Brenk suggests that oracular dreams in Plutarch speak more in riddles even than the oracles themselves (Brenk 1977, 230).

³²⁶ See Olster 2004.

³²⁷ Cf. Diod. 17.93.4. It is tempting to see significance in the Pythia's addressing Alexander as ‘son’, perhaps foreshadowing the priest of Ammon's comment; Plutarch, however, often has his characters address younger people, not always relatives, in the same way (e.g. *Alc.* 16.9; *Cat. Min.* 3.6).

Ammon's 'barbarian' mispronunciation, where Plutarch exploits oracular ambiguity to illustrate Alexander's promotion of his own divinity.³²⁸

The priest's status as a foreign Greek-speaker carries more significance: throughout his corpus, Plutarch appears particularly concerned about the influence of foreign cults upon traditional Greek religion, and this often includes comments on language.³²⁹ Plutarch's treatise on the cult of Isis and Osiris (*De Iside et Osiride*) tends to stress its Greek aspects which suggests that Plutarch saw the cult's popularity as a threat to traditional Greek religion: Richter sees the work as "an appropriative text that has as one of its central aims the demonstration of the priority of Greek philosophy over Egyptian cult".³³⁰ In the *De Superstitione*, Plutarch quotes Euripides' *Trojan Women* on 'Greeks discovering evil ways from barbarians' (*Mor.* 166A; cf. *Eur. Tro.* 764). He also links Greek language and religion when he expresses disapproval of befouling one's tongue with 'strange names and barbarous phrases' (ἀτόποις ὀνόμασι καὶ ῥήμασι βαρβαρικοῖς), complaining that one who does so 'disgraces and transgresses the divine and ancestral dignity of our religion' (*Mor.* 166B: κατασχύνειν καὶ παρανομεῖν τὸ θεῖον καὶ πάτριον ἀξίωμα τῆς εὐσεβείας). He also claims that the name of Isis – the 'most important Egyptian goddess' – is in fact Greek (*De Iside* 351F).³³¹ He is elsewhere eager to distinguish between Greek and Latin and deny Greek origins to Latin words, and thus, was not one of those who subscribed to

³²⁸ Cf. another instance of βαρβαρισμός when Hannibal's pronunciation of the Latin placename Casinum results in his guides leading him instead to Casilinum; once Hannibal realises, he has the guides crucified (*Fab.* 6.1; cf. *Liv.* 22.13).

³²⁹ See Olster 2004, esp. 60-63; cf. also Richter 2001, 212, who notes "a tendency [throughout Plutarch's corpus] to denigrate non-Greek forms of cult".

³³⁰ Richter 2001, 194.

³³¹ See Richter 2001, from whom the quoted statement comes (213).

‘Aeolism’.³³² The mixing of language, for Plutarch, was associated with barbarians.³³³ This probably reflects Plutarch’s ‘Second Sophistic’ concerns about Greek linguistic purity, and a similar attitude prevails in the tale of the priest of Ammon: the foreign priest is forced to speak ‘in Greek’ (Ἑλληνιστὶ) in an attempt to please Alexander, the Hellenising king.³³⁴

The *Epigonoι*

Plutarch is the only source for the education of Alexander’s 30,000 Persian ‘Successors’ (*Epigonoι*), an episode which shows Alexander as ‘Hellenising’ figure.³³⁵ The context of the passage is significant: after doubts about the willingness of his Macedonians to continue campaigning following the death of Darius, Alexander is portrayed as wishing to bring Persian and Macedonian customs (ἔθη) closer together (47.3). Plutarch then discusses Alexander’s marriage to Roxane, the subsequent tensions between Craterus and Hephaestion, and the conspiracy of Philotas; but first, he relates how Persian boys were said to have been ordered by Alexander to ‘learn Greek letters and be trained to use Macedonian weapons’ (47.6: ἐκέλευσε γράμματά τε μανθάνειν Ἑλληνικὰ καὶ Μακεδονικοῖς ὅπλοις ἐντρέφεσθαι).³³⁶ Although other accounts also refer to military training, only Plutarch mentions linguistic education.³³⁷ The detail is intrinsically plausible,

³³² E.g. *Marc.* 22.7; *Num.* 13.9-10; cf. *Caes.* 46.2; 50.4; 66.8; *Pomp.* 78-79; Swain 1996, 140; see Strobach’s list of Latin etymologies (1997, 194-201). On Aeolism in general, see Stevens 2006. Plutarch is, however, happy to record instances of Roman homage to Greek (e.g. *Num.* 8; *Aem.* 25).

³³³ Cf. the ‘mixed sound’ coming from the Persian army before Gaugamela (*Alex.* 31.10: τις φωνὴ συμμεμιγμένη καὶ θόρυβος; cf. 9.1: συμμείκτους). The image of a confused babble was a standard depiction of barbarian armies, however, going back to Homer (*Il.* 4.433-438).

³³⁴ Plutarch employs the term Ἑλληνιστὶ more than any other author from antiquity (nineteen times). Significantly, of the thirteen uses in the *Lives*, all occur in Roman *Lives*, except this reference to the priest of Ammon. This highlights the importance of Greek to the Romans in Plutarch’s eyes, as well as pointing to Alexander’s ‘Hellenising’. The term βαρβαρισμός, too, occurs in Plutarch more than any author before the grammarian Herodian’s work on βαρβαρισμός and σολοικισμός (*Alex.* 27.9; *Fab.* 6.2; *Mor.* 731E; cf. *Arist. Poet.* 1458a; *Arr. Anab.* 7.6.3; *Luc. DMort.* 20.10).

³³⁵ For the name *Epigonoι*, see *Arr. Anab.* 7.6.1.

³³⁶ Briant believes these young recruits were an imitation of an established Persian practice, that of the *kardakes* (Briant 1999, 120-4; cf. Lane Fox 2007, 283).

³³⁷ *Diod.* 17.108.1-3; *Curt.* 8.5.1; *Arr. Anab.* 7.6.1; *Just.* 12.4.5-12 (with Yardley and Heckel 1997, 208).

given the need to communicate within the ranks, so we cannot dismiss the possibility that it was found in his sources.³³⁸

It is this very plausibility, however, that allows for some creative elaboration on Plutarch's part, so it is possible that he inserted this aspect as part of his broader interest in *paideia*.³³⁹ As we have seen, Plutarch is at pains throughout the *Alexander* to depict the king as a figure of Hellenism. Only Plutarch, for example, mentions Barsine's *paideia*, which he lists as the first reason for Alexander's marriage to her (21.9).³⁴⁰ Thus, an order to educate 30,000 Persian boys in the Greek tongue is entirely apt. Plutarch may have taken the detail, however, from the same source that mentioned the Greek education of Darius' children (Diod. 17.67.1; Arr. *Anab.* 3.22.6; see Chapter 1.2.1). It is possible that confusion led him to apply the instruction to the *Epigonoι* rather than Darius' family; more likely, however, Plutarch simply altered the context of this education, broadening its target from a small group of children to 30,000 Persian boys. In this way, perhaps Plutarch saw the spread of Greek as part of Alexander's 'Hellenising' agenda.

It should be noted that here Plutarch writes not of learning φωνή or *glossa* (speech), but of γράμματα (literacy). This is a term he uses elsewhere to refer to education in Greek literature;³⁴¹ it cannot mean spoken language alone but must have included that for practical

³³⁸ Perhaps in another context; cf. Justin's similar contrast between Greek *litterae* and Macedonian *instituta* in regard to Alexander's own upbringing (Just. 11.11.12; cf. Borza 1996, 131: "a rhetorical contrast echoing Plutarch").

³³⁹ For *paideia* in the *Lives*, see Pelling 1989, 199–232; Swain 1990b, 126–45; 1996, 135–86, esp. 137–45; Duff 2008; Buszard 2008. Significantly, perhaps, Plutarch omits explicit reference to the boys' new linguistic ability upon their return, focusing instead on their physical training (71.1). Moreover, if Diodorus can be seen as a similar advocate for the spread of Greek (see Chapter 1.2.1), then he too would have mentioned this instruction of the *Epigonoι* if it had been in his source (cf. 17.108.1–3).

³⁴⁰ Buszard observes that Barsine is the only other character in the *Life* besides Alexander whose *paideia* receives comment (2008, 190 n.16). Diodorus also refers to Barsine's family's time at the court of Philip (Diod. 16.52.3–4).

³⁴¹ *Crass.* 33.2; *Mar.* 2.2; cf. *Cat. Mai.* 23.2; *Pyrrh.* 1.4; Hammond 1990, 278; Bosworth 1996a 4 n.11; Strobach 1997, 178 thinks that "griechische Wissenschaften" more generally are meant here.

considerations. The choice of γράμματα is significant, since it is more suggestive of *paideia* than φωνή or *glossa*, perhaps reflecting this Plutarchan interest. We might compare Plutarch's treatment of a similar incident elsewhere: in the *Sertorius*, the Roman general orders the instruction of Hispanian children in 'Greek and Roman learning' (*Sert.* 14.3: διδασκάλους ἐπιστήσας Ἑλληνικῶν τε καὶ Ῥωμαϊκῶν μαθημάτων). Plutarch comments that 'while ostensibly he was educating them, in reality Sertorius made hostages of them' (ἔργῳ μὲν ἐξωμηρεύσατο, λόγῳ δ' ἐπαίδευεν).³⁴² Alexander's order, on the other hand, elicits no such negative comment from Plutarch, only noting that it was related to Alexander's 'settling affairs while he was far away' through 'a mixture and community which produced good will, rather than by force' (47.5: ἀνακράσει καὶ κοινωνία μᾶλλον δι' εὐνοίας καταστήσεσθαι τὰ πράγματα νομίζων ἢ βία, μακρὰν ἀπαίροντος αὐτοῦ).³⁴³ This difference in treatment accords with a noted double standard in the *Lives*, whereby the relationship between character and *paideia* in Plutarch's Roman heroes is scrutinised more intensely than the Greeks.³⁴⁴ It seems Plutarch includes the detail of linguistic training as part of his depiction of Alexander as a Hellenising figure.

The reference to the boys' education in Greek letters may also reflect an engagement with Plutarch's youthful work, *Fortune*. In these orations, Alexander appears as a philosopher who 'civilizes' barbarians. Plutarch compares the educational systems instituted by Alexander to those of earlier philosophers: Plato and Socrates 'taught talented students who spoke the same language, so that if nothing else they understood the Greek tongue' (*Mor.* 328B-C: εὐφυεῖς οὗτοι καὶ ὁμογλώσσους ἐπαίδευον, εἰ μὴδὲν ἄλλο, φωνῆς Ἑλληνίδος

³⁴² Cf. *Curt.* 8.5.1: *legi iussit et ad se armata perducī, obsides simul habiturus et militē* (referring to the 30,000 *Epigonoī*); cf. *Tac. Ag.* 21.2: *idque apud imperitos humanitas vocabatur, cum pars servitutis esset.*

³⁴³ Formerly considered evidence for Alexander's policy of 'fusion'; see Bosworth 1980b, esp. 4.

³⁴⁴ Pelling 1989, 199–232; Swain 1990b, 126–45; 1992; 1996, 135–86, esp. 137–45; Duff 2008. An illuminating example is the differing treatment of Alexander and Caesar (see Buszard 2008).

συνιέντας). Alexander, however, taught various barbarian peoples to adopt Greek ways: Homer was read widely, while Persian, Susianian and Gedrosian children sang the works of Sophocles and Euripides (*Mor.* 328C-D). Indeed, this passage and that from the *Life* have been used to demonstrate a system of state-education in which Alexander is the ‘outstanding figure’ in ancient education.³⁴⁵ However, such an interpretation derives solely from a single philosopher’s perspective on *paideia*: it is more likely that Plutarch has taken Onesicritus’ depiction of Alexander as ‘philosopher-in-arms’ (μόνον γὰρ ἴδοι αὐτὸν ἐν ὅπλοις φιλοσοφοῦντα), and developed this particular portrait in the *Fortune*.³⁴⁶ The only reference in the *Life* to instruction ordered by Alexander is the teaching of Greek language and Macedonian fighting to the *Epigonoι*. Plutarch cannot have written this detail without thinking of his earlier idealised discussion, and it is possible that this reference is included as a nod to the earlier work.³⁴⁷ The extent of Plutarch’s knowledge of a particular figure increased when he delved into research for a dedicated *Life*.³⁴⁸ It is possible, then, that Plutarch’s reference in the *Fortune* – to extensive education in Greek – was rhetorical fantasy derived from the common contemporary perception of Alexander as a lover of Greek literature. Then, when researching the *Life*, Plutarch realised that there was too little evidence for such an educational system, but nevertheless was unwilling to discard completely this ‘Hellenising’ image of Alexander.³⁴⁹ The reference to the education of the *Epigonoι* in Greek, in any case, is at least a plausible insertion based on Plutarch’s profound interest in the Greek tongue and *paideia*.

³⁴⁵ Hammond 1990, 287.

³⁴⁶ *FGrH* 134 F 14a = Strab. 15.1.64; Bosworth 1996a, 2.

³⁴⁷ Asirvatham sees the transferral of *paideia* from Alexander in the *Life* to his subject peoples in the *Fortune* as part of his representation in the *Fortune* as “more as a philhellene than a Hellene”, in contrast to the emphasis on his Hellenism in the *Life* (Asirvatham 2005, 118).

³⁴⁸ Hillard 1987; cf. Pelling 1979, 75; Plut. *Tim.* 1. See also Pelling 2011, 36–42.

³⁴⁹ Asirvatham 2005 stresses the Roman thinking behind many of the ideas in the *Fortune*.

Inscribing Greek

My next example is in a similar vein. Towards the end of the *Life*, Plutarch depicts Alexander's encounter with the tomb of Cyrus after it had been plundered. The chapter begins with a series of actions showing Alexander in the mode of 'Persian king': he distributes money amongst the women of Persis, as was the custom of the Persian kings (69.1: ὥσπερ εἰώθεισαν οἱ βασιλεῖς). As Plutarch explicitly notes, however, this practice had been avoided by recent monarchs (69.1-4); the suggestion is that Alexander is attempting to claim legitimacy as successor to the Achaemenid throne.³⁵⁰ Alexander then executes the man who robbed the tomb of Cyrus, despite (καίτοι) his being a prominent Macedonian native of Pella. Again, Plutarch's description of this action suggests Alexander is respecting his Achaemenid 'predecessors' even above his own people.³⁵¹ Alexander then reads (ἀναγνούς) the existing inscription on the tomb, before ordering another to be inscribed underneath in Greek (69.4: τὴν δ' ἐπιγραφὴν ἀναγνούς, ἐκέλευσεν Ἑλληνικοῖς ὑποχαράξαι γράμμασιν). The story of Alexander's encounter with the tomb is told in various extant accounts: Curtius refers to the robbery, but not the inscription on the tomb; Arrian and Strabo have more detail and discuss the inscription in depth.³⁵² The reports vary with regard to the language of the original inscription: Arrian claims that it was in Persian, while the versions in Strabo mention two inscriptions, one in Greek and one in Persian.³⁵³ Plutarch is unique in omitting the original language of the inscription and focusing on Alexander's creation of one in Greek.

³⁵⁰ Hutzel 1974, 130.

³⁵¹ At least at this point: see below on the earlier burning of Persepolis. For a recent discussion of Alexander as "last of the Achaemenids", see Lane Fox 2007.

³⁵² Curt. 10.1.30-35; Strab. 15.3.7-8; Arr. *Anab.* 6.29.8-9; cf. Pseudo-Call. 2.18.1. On the various accounts, see Heinrichs 1987; Seibert 2004.

³⁵³ Discussed below.

Plutarch's is the only extant account to explicitly mention both Alexander's reading of the inscription and the order for the second in Greek. Other reports simply describe the epitaph and do not refer to Alexander's actions, while varying on details of the inscriptions themselves. Aristobulus, as recorded by Arrian, mentions only a Persian inscription (ἐπεγέγραπτο δὲ ὁ τάφος Περσικοῖς γράμμασι· καὶ ἐδήλου Περσιστὶ τάδε).³⁵⁴ Onesicritus mentioned two inscriptions, according to Strabo, one oddly 'Greek in Persian letters' and another with the same sentiment in Persian (ἐπίγραμμα δ' εἶναι Ἑλληνικόν, Περσικοῖς κεχαραγμένον γράμμασιν ἐνθάδ' ἐγὼ κεῖμαι Κῦρος βασιλεὺς βασιλῆων. καὶ ἄλλο περσίζον πρὸς τὸν αὐτὸν νοῦν).³⁵⁵ Strabo claims that Aristos of Salamis, a later writer, also referred to two inscriptions, one Greek and another Persian (ἐπίγραμμα δὲ τὸ λεχθὲν Ἑλληνικὸν καὶ ἄλλο Περσικὸν πρὸς τὸν αὐτὸν νοῦν).³⁵⁶ Schmitt suggests that this account has its origin in Onesicritus, given the similarity regarding the inscriptional language.³⁵⁷ It is possible, however, that Aristos attempted to synthesise the earlier accounts of Onesicritus and Aristobulus: one Greek inscription, one Persian. It has been suggested that Aristos, directly or via Strabo, was the immediate inspiration for Plutarch's passage;³⁵⁸ Plutarch never cites Aristos, however, while he refers to both Onesicritus and Aristobulus several times in the *Alexander*.³⁵⁹ Perhaps it was rather Plutarch who attempted to reconcile the accounts of those two authors; he may have drawn on his knowledge of these earlier accounts to add

³⁵⁴ *FGrH* 139 F 51a = Arr. *Anab.* 6.29.8; cf. Strab. 15.3.7, citing Aristobulus, which does not include the language of the inscription. The term 'Persian letters' tends to refer to cuneiform in general, rather than the Old Persian script in particular (Schmitt 1988, 21).

³⁵⁵ *FGrH* 134 F 34 = Strab. 15.3.7. His account "does not inspire much confidence" (Hamilton 1969, 192); Hammond (1993, 129) rightly labels this report of the inscription as "absurd".

³⁵⁶ *FGrH* 143 F 1 = Strab. 15.3.8. On Aristos, see *FGrH* 143 T 2.

³⁵⁷ Schmitt 1988, 19-20; cf. also Sisti and Zambrini 2004, 574. The similarity of wording in the accounts of Onesicritus and Aristos, however, is likely due rather to Strabo's own style (in whom they are both preserved), rather than that of the earlier authors.

³⁵⁸ Hammond 1993, 130. Cf. Heinrichs 1987, 493-4 and Schmitt 1988, 19 who claim Aristobulus is the source of Plutarch's account, "obgleich im einzelnen verändert" (Schmitt 1988, 19). On Plutarch's use of Strabo elsewhere, see Helmbold and O'Neil 1959, 68.

³⁵⁹ Onesicritus in the *Alexander*: 8.2; 15.1; 46.1; 60.4; 61; 65.1-2. Aristobulus: 15.1; 16.7; 18.2; 21.4; 46.1; 75.4.

the plausible suggestion that Alexander created the Greek inscription found in these reports. This would certainly fit with Plutarch's presentation of a 'Hellenising' Alexander: a Greek inscription on a Persian monument is a supreme display of power and domination. Plutarch, as Liddel puts it, was "uninterested in quoting or discussing inscriptions for their own sake"; in his *Nicias*, he claims that documentary evidence can provide overlooked insight into the 'character and nature' (ἦθος καὶ τρόπος) of his subject (*Nic.* 1.5).³⁶⁰ Alexander's inscription adds to his characterisation in representing an indelible physical manifestation of enduring Greek influence, and even superiority, in the face of a (formerly) powerful empire.

Furthermore, within Plutarch's narrative, the command for a Greek inscription to be placed on a Persian monument may be symbolic of Alexander's conflicted identity, caught between playing the Hellenised Macedonian king and the 'King of Kings'.³⁶¹ The phrase Ἑλληνικὰ γράμματά, for instance, recalls Plutarch's earlier reference to Alexander's education of the *Epigonoι*.³⁶² It would seem in keeping with Plutarch's presentation of Alexander throughout the *Life*, therefore, to synthesise these earlier accounts by having Alexander order the Greek inscription.³⁶³ Moreover, that this reference comes near the end of the *Life* may be significant: Plutarch illustrates Caesar's ultimate 'failure' of *paideia* through his crying out in Latin (Πρωμαῖστί) as he is stabbed; Alexander, after a moment of

³⁶⁰ Liddel 2008, 126; Higbie 1999, 43. An inscription ordered by Alexander earlier in this *Life* is labelled φιλοτιμότητα, 'most loving of honour' (16.18; see below); we are perhaps to read this second inscription as also representative of Alexander's φιλοτιμία. For this value in the *Lives*, see Frazier 1988, 109-27. For a historical *comparandum*, compare Gallus inscribing his achievements on the pyramids (Cass. Dio 53.23.5-7; see Gibson 1997, 312-4).

³⁶¹ Whitmarsh 2002, 186-92.

³⁶² 47.6; cf. Diod. 17.108.1-3; Arr. *Anab.* 7.6.1; Just. 12.11.4.

³⁶³ No writing remains on the surviving tomb, however, and this has led to much doubt concerning the historicity of the recorded inscriptions: Dandamaev (1976, 29) denies that there was ever any writing on the tomb; Schmitt (1988 21, 25) agrees. Indeed, Stronach's (1978, 26) suggestion that the Greeks were "inspired" to create these more honourable inscriptions by those they found on nearby buildings may be correct; as he notes, "it was certainly never a standard practice to place Achaemenian inscriptions on tombs". Bosworth (1988b, 50 n. 37) thinks it more likely that the epitaph has been destroyed.

barbarian weakness during the Cleitus affair in which he employed Macedonian, ends his *Life* as a symbol of Hellenism by inscribing Greek on the tomb of Cyrus.³⁶⁴

Greek Dialects

Alexander's Use of Macedonian

Plutarch's *Alexander* contains the only reference to Macedonian speech – which we conventionally and conveniently label here, as elsewhere, a ‘dialect’ – being used during the king's lifetime.³⁶⁵ In the height of his altercation with the older Macedonian, Cleitus, Alexander shouts for the *hypaspists* in Macedonian speech, behaviour which Plutarch labels a symptom of Alexander's great personal agitation (*Alex.* 51.3-4):

οὐκέτι φέρων τὴν ὀργὴν Ἀλέξανδρος μῆλων παρακειμένων ἐνὶ βαλὼν ἔπαισεν αὐτὸν καὶ τὸ ἐγχειρίδιον ἐζήτει. [4] τῶν δὲ σωματοφυλάκων ἐνὸς Ἀριστοφάνους φθάσαντος ὑφελέσθαι, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων περιεχόντων καὶ δεομένων, ἀναπηδήσας ἀνεβόα Μακεδονιστὶ³⁶⁶ καλῶν τοὺς ὑπασπιστάς (τοῦτο δὲ ἦν σύμβολον θορύβου μεγάλου), καὶ τὸν σαλπικτὴν ἐκέλευσε σημαίνειν, καὶ πύξ ἔπαισεν ὥς διατρίβοντα καὶ μὴ βουλόμενον.

Then Alexander, no longer able to restrain his anger, threw one of the apples that lay on the table at Cleitus and hit him, and began looking about for his sword. [4] But one of his body-guards, Aristophanes, conveyed it away before he could lay hands on it, and the rest surrounded him and begged him to desist, whereupon he sprang to his feet and called out in Macedonian a summons to his *hypaspists* (and this was a sign of great disturbance), and ordered the trumpeter to sound, and struck him with his fist because he hesitated and was unwilling to do so.

³⁶⁴ *Caes.* 66.8; cf. also the similarity of Calanus' parting words (that he should soon see Alexander in Babylon: 69.6) and those of Caesar's ghost (that he should see Brutus at Philippi: *Caes.* 69.11); Pelling 2002, 379. On Alexander's ultimate Hellenism, compare the return of the newly-educated 30,000, soon after the Cyrus inscription (*Alex.* 71.1).

³⁶⁵ On the position of the Macedonian tongue, see Panayotou 2007. Alexander's accusation of Philotas in Curtius (6.9.34–35; 6.10.23–4), that he spurned Macedonian, results in Philotas speaking in the same *koine* as Alexander had done (see Chapter 1.2.2).

³⁶⁶ While μακεδονίζω is found as early as Polybius (20.5.6, 13), μακεδονιστί is not recorded before Plutarch (cf. *Plut. Eum.* 14.11). This item seems to have been missed by Borza in his discussion of μακεδονιστί (1994, 19).

This passage has been variously interpreted. It has been claimed that the use of Macedonian was a prearranged signal (σύμβολον) to the hypaspists about a general uproar (θορόβου).³⁶⁷ Another view has the actual shouting, and not the use of Macedonian itself, as the symptom (σύμβολον) of Alexander's agitated mental state (θορόβου).³⁶⁸ Certainly, the evidence for a prearranged signal and general tumult is tenuous.³⁶⁹ Curtius and Arrian, moreover, corroborate the emphasis on Alexander's shouting (Curt. 8.1.47; Arr. *Anab.* 4.8.8), which was a rare occurrence.³⁷⁰ Neither argument, however, fully examines Plutarch's narrative presentation in this scene, which is built around the tension between the Greek and Macedonian elements of Alexander's identity.

Plutarch employs the Macedonian tongue in this passage in a rather different way from our other references. In Curtius' *Historiae*, as we have seen, the author presents Macedonian as representative of ancestral custom (*patrius sermo*).³⁷¹ Other passages from Plutarch (and elsewhere) also present the tongue in a similarly 'patriotic' fashion. In the *Antony*, he suggests that the Ptolemaic kings who gave up learning Macedonian were not honouring their ancestry (Plut. *Ant.* 27.5): 'The kings of Egypt before Cleopatra had not even made an effort to learn the Egyptian language, and some had given up Macedonian' (ἐνίων δὲ καὶ τὸ μακεδονίζειν ἐκλιπόντων). Two other references (Plut. *Eum.* 14.11; *PSI* XII 1284) show the use of Macedonian as an important symbolic factor in the relationship between Eumenes and the Macedonian soldiery. Regarding the fragment of Arrian's history of the Successors (*PSI* XII 1284),³⁷² Badian and Borza suggest reasons of practicality for the use

³⁶⁷ Hammond 1995.

³⁶⁸ Bosworth 1996c.

³⁶⁹ Cf. the use of θόρυβος in this sense earlier in the episode (51.3); at 51.6, however, the word has the adjective μέγας, and the phrase μέγας θόρυβος occurs in *Dem.* 23.3 in the sense here interpreted (see Bosworth 1996c, 21).

³⁷⁰ Bosworth 1996c, 24.

³⁷¹ See Chapter 1.2.2.

³⁷² See Bosworth 1978.

of the tongue, i.e. that fluency in Macedonian was needed to negotiate with a Macedonian commander.³⁷³ However, as Borza notes, Greek was the regular language of the court and thus negotiation could have easily been conducted in that tongue.³⁷⁴ Moreover, Arrian rarely makes reference to a speaker's language (see below Chapter 1.2.4), so the emphasis on Xennias' tongue in the fragment suggests that it is an exceptional circumstance. The sending of a Macedonian was, then, a symbolic act.³⁷⁵

In the Plutarchan passage, however, Macedonian appears to be used as a means of highlighting Alexander's 'barbaric' character at this point. The reference comes amidst what we might call Plutarch's 'barbarous digression': a series of episodes, some narrated out of chronological order, which highlight the descent into barbarity visible in Alexander (*Alex.* 48-55).³⁷⁶ A few chapters before the Cleitus episode, Plutarch narrates the Philotas affair while noting that Alexander was now an 'object of fear to many of his friends' (49.8: πολλοῖς τῶν φίλων φοβερὸν); this explicitly recalls and contradicts Alexander's earlier avowed intention not to become so (28.4: οὐ βούλομαι γὰρ εἶπε φοβερὸς εἶναι τοῖς φίλοις).³⁷⁷ This change of behaviour is part of Alexander's 'downward turn' in the *Life* after the burning of Persepolis; the tension in his identity between Greek, Macedonian and Persian is greater than ever before.³⁷⁸ Although Plutarch admits, however, that the murder of Cleitus may appear even more savage (ἀγριώτερα) *prima facie* than that of Philotas, he makes it clear that his account will relate the unfortunate circumstances which 'furnished

³⁷³ Badian 1982, 41; Borza 1992, 92 n.31.

³⁷⁴ *Contra* Badian 1982, 41.

³⁷⁵ Anson 2004, 208-9; cf. Bosworth 2002, 127, who argues that the Macedonians' display of approval for Eumenes in the *Eumenes* parallels that for Alexander after his recovery among the Malli; this further suggests the 'patriotic' element.

³⁷⁶ The anachrony is highlighted at 56.1. See Hamilton 1969, lxii-lxvi; Bosman 2011, 101. Arrian appears to have followed Plutarch's lead at *Anab.* 4.7-14; see Stadter 1980, 103-114.

³⁷⁷ Cf. Athen. 250F. Later, at 57.3, Alexander is also a φοβερὸς.

³⁷⁸ Buszard 2008, 189-190; Bosman 2011, 101-103.

occasion for the evil genius of Cleitus' (50.2).³⁷⁹ Evidently, the story was shocking to Plutarch, and he will attempt to explain this barbaric behaviour as best he can.³⁸⁰

The episode begins when Alexander is brought some 'Greek fruit' (ὀπώραν Ἑλληνικὴν) and wishes to share its beauty (τὴν ἀκμὴν καὶ τὸ κάλλος) with Cleitus (50.2). Here the Hellenism of the king is suggested by his admiration for the Greek produce. We then see Alexander enjoying the verses sung about the recently defeated Macedonians, before Cleitus chastises him for such mockery, his claims to divinity, and Persian affectation. Alexander then makes a comment to some nearby companions, the Greek origin of whom Plutarch makes plain: 'Do not the Greeks appear to you to walk about among Macedonians like demi-gods among wild beasts?' (51.4: οὐ δοκοῦσιν εἶπεν ὑμῖν οἱ Ἕλληνες ἐν τοῖς Μακεδόσιν ὥσπερ ἐν θηρίοις ἡμίθεοι περιπατεῖν).³⁸¹ Here the 'barbarism' of the Macedonians is highlighted by contrast with the Greeks. Plutarch also employs this technique earlier in the work when Alexander orders two Macedonians to be executed as 'wild beasts' (θηρία) for their behaviour towards the wives of Greek mercenaries; Alexander then contrasts this behaviour with his own treatment of Persian women (22.4-5).³⁸² Furthermore, before the battle of the Granicus (16.2) Alexander disregards the Macedonian custom of not taking the field with an army during the month of Daesius by

³⁷⁹ These circumstances include anger and drunkenness (ὀργὴν καὶ μέθην), linked throughout this *Life* and in other accounts of Alexander (e.g. *Alex.* 4.7; Arr. *Anab.* 4.9.1; Curt. 10.5.34; Vell. 2.41.1). Plutarch does, however, attempt to explain away tales of excess by claiming Alexander lingered at parties more through love of conversation than drinking (23.1-2); cf. Buszard 2008, 188-189.

³⁸⁰ Hamilton 1969, lxii-lxiii; Wardman 1955, 101: "The events which most perplexed [Plutarch] were the destruction of Thebes and the murder of Cleitus"; Brenk 1977, 219 n. 5; cf. *Dem.* 23.3. Note the euphemistic references to the murder of Cleitus as τὸ περὶ Κλεῖτον ἔργον (13.4), and here as τὰ περὶ Κλεῖτον (50.1); cf. Plutarch's comparison to the work of portrait painters, that they should not omit a flaw completely nor draw it too precisely (*Cim.* 2.3-4; cf. Stadter 1989, li-lii).

³⁸¹ The companions are from Cardia and Colophon; cf. Borza (1996, 131) for the theme of ethnic conflict between Greeks and Macedonians in the προσκύνησις episode (*Alex.* 53.3-54.3).

³⁸² These two passages are the only two in the *Alexander* where θήριον is used figuratively (cf. 60.10, 11; 64.3). The only other reference to mercenaries (μισθοφόροι) in the *Alexander* at 16.13 demonstrates that they are Greek.

proclaiming instead a second Artemisius (the month prior); Alexander there appears willing to override Macedonian custom. These examples, then, portray Alexander as rather more Greek than Macedonian in his preferences.

When Cleitus' insults finally get to him, however, Alexander is no longer able to restrain his anger (ὀργή) and hurls an apple at Cleitus: the erstwhile object of his 'Hellenising' admiration – the aforementioned Greek fruit – has now become a weapon in a Macedonian brawl.³⁸³ This anger for Plutarch represents “the triumph of passion over reason”, and it is significant that now Alexander's “Hellenic façade” cracks as he breaks into Macedonian speech (51.6).³⁸⁴ In Plutarch's view, the use of Greek at Alexander's most ‘barbaric’ moment would not have been appropriate: the inclusion of Macedonian thus emphasises this barbarity.³⁸⁵ As we have seen, the parenthetical comment that the cry was a ‘sign of great disturbance’ has been variously interpreted to refer to the use of Macedonian or to explain Alexander's shouting. However one takes it, however, μακεδονιστί describes the tongue used, and – at least for this particular incident – it is evidently part of this σύμβολον.³⁸⁶ Plutarch did not have to include this linguistic detail: that he did suggests it was a key element in revealing Alexander's barbaric loss of control at this point. Most

³⁸³ Note Bosworth's comment that apple-throwing “seems to have been an irritating feature of Alexander's banqueting behaviour; it did not in itself denote anger” (Bosworth 1996c, 20 n.4, citing Philodem. *De vitiiis* [Herc. 1675, col. iii. 32ff]; Plut. *Mor.* 737A). For Plutarch, however, the focus is on the loss of restraint due to anger. Alexander's throwing also recalls his hurling a cup at Philip's wedding earlier in the *Alexander* (9.9).

³⁸⁴ Whitmarsh 2002, 183; Asirvatham notes that this order occurs when Alexander is “at his most barbaric” (2010, 113). Leiwo interprets the snippet of Macedonian as Alexander ‘swearing’ (1996, 133).

³⁸⁵ We might compare Plutarch's emphasis (*Caes.* 46.2) that Caesar used Latin for the famous comment after Pharsalus, ‘they would have it so’ (the contrast being with Caesar's reverting to Greek when crossing the Rubicon: *Caes.* 32; *Pomp.* 60.4, which expressly mentions Greek); cf. Gelzer 1968, 193 and n. 3 for a discussion. Plutarch cites Asinius Pollio that Caesar, although writing the comment down in Greek (Ἑλληνιστί) later, uttered the statement in Latin (Ῥωμαϊστί) at the time. Pelling's emendation of the manuscript would reverse the languages (Pelling 2011, 370-372), but in my view does not sufficiently consider Plutarch's attitudes to Greek and Latin throughout his works: indeed, Plutarch makes an explicit comment that Caesar's last recorded words were in anger to Casca — and in Latin (Plut. *Brut.* 17.5), in contrast to Suetonius (*Div. Iul.* 82.2) and Dio (44.19.5) who record his final words as (explicitly) Greek; cf. Russell 1980.

³⁸⁶ Bosworth 1996c, 20.

previous approaches to this passage, however, have focused on the historical reality of the Macedonian tongue and overlooked the complex thematic interplay of Greek and Macedonian identity in this episode.³⁸⁷

Indeed, the parenthesis here is perhaps another way for Plutarch to distance himself from the barbarian Alexander at this moment. Chapters earlier, Alexander had ordered the 30,000 *Epigonoι* to be instructed in Greek language, which implies the ubiquity of Greek in Alexander's forces on Plutarch's presentation (47.6). Plutarch, therefore, was compelled to depict the use of Macedonian as atypical, so that we do not lose sight of Alexander's essential Hellenism.³⁸⁸ Or, rather, that reference highlights the exceptional 'barbarity' of Alexander's use of Macedonian even further and may have justified its insertion. Moreover, Plutarch aims to show that the use of Macedonian is exceptional because Alexander's surrender to passion is exceptional: 'barbarian' behaviour and language must go together.³⁸⁹

Conclusion

Plutarch presents Alexander's use of Macedonian as part of a heightened moment of barbarity, an exception to his general 'Hellenising' image displayed throughout the *Life* in the episodes discussed. It is particularly apt considering that Cleitus' criticisms concern Alexander's evolving identity. The switch to Macedonian here draws attention to Alexander's overall decline which Plutarch is portraying at this point, which is ultimately

³⁸⁷ E.g. Bosworth 1996c; Hammond 1995; Badian 1982, 41. Compare Whitmarsh 2002; Asirvatham 2005.

³⁸⁸ We should note that elsewhere Plutarch rebukes Alexander's successors intensely, often for their barbarian Macedonian origin (*Arist.* 6.2-5; *Pyrrh.* 7.3; 8.2; 12.2-12; *Demetr.* 3.3-5; 41.4-5; 42.8-11; *Arat.* 16.2, 4; 38.6; *Ag./Cl.* 37.7; *Phil.* 8.6; cf. *Mor.* 780f-781a; Swain 1990a, 152).

³⁸⁹ Whitmarsh suggests that Plutarch presents this scene as an inversion of traditional sympotic etiquette: "If Plato's and Xenophon's *Symposia* constitute the paradigms of philosophical friendship, then the Clitus episode represents the negative image of such serenity and self-control. This corruption of the symposium occurs implicitly because the Macedonians do not understand the proper etiquette" (2002, 183); cf. Justin's comment about Alexander at this banquet (12.6.13): *non armatus in acie quam in convivio terribilior*.

corrected on a linguistic level when Alexander inscribes Greek on the tomb of Cyrus. Plutarch's typically 'Second Sophistic' concern for the 'barbarisation' of Greek comes through particularly in the episode at Siwah, and in his choice of Macedonian for Alexander's most terrible act.

4. Arrian: First in the Greek Language

Introduction

Arrian's stated goal was to write the Alexander history to end all Alexander histories, striving to take the 'first place in Greek φωνή as Alexander was first in arms' (1.12.5: καὶ ἐπὶ τῷδε οὐκ ἀπαξιῶ ἐμαυτὸν τῶν πρώτων ἐν τῇ φωνῇ τῇ Ἑλλάδι, εἶπερ οὖν καὶ Ἀλέξανδρον τῶν ἐν τοῖς ὅπλοις).³⁹⁰ In emphasising his foremost position in Greek writing, Arrian aligns himself with the Greek historiographical tradition.³⁹¹ His stress on Greek φωνή, however, is not found in the proems of the works to which he alludes in this preface. This detail establishes the fundamental importance of the Greek language to him and his contemporaries; Greek, and particularly an educated, Atticising Greek, was a marker of elite identity in the Second Sophistic.³⁹² This comment, in a programmatic part of his work, may have broader significance for Arrian's history, particularly regarding his depiction of languages. We shall here explore his presentation of the Greek tongue in two case studies – one from the *Anabasis* and one from the *Indica* – as well as his sole reference to a Greek dialect.

³⁹⁰ On the interpretation of this passage, see esp. Moles 1985; Marincola 1989; cf. Gray 1990; Bosworth 1980a, 104-107; Stadter 1980, 60-66; Stadter 1981; Toth 2009.

³⁹¹ For allusions in his prefaces to predecessors like Homer, Herodotus, and Thucydides, see Moles 1985; Marincola 1989; Gray 1990.

³⁹² See e.g. Swain 1996; Kim 2010.

Greek Language

The Sidetans

The first *logos* concerning Greek language in the *Anabasis* is recorded about the people of Side in Pamphylia. Arrian records a tradition, allegedly preserved among the Sidetans, concerning their linguistic development upon arrival from Aeolian Cyme (1.26.4):

Ἀλέξανδρος δὲ ἐπὶ Σίδης ἦει. εἰσὶ δὲ οἱ Σιδῆται Κυμαῖοι ἐκ Κύμης τῆς Αἰολίδος· καὶ οὗτοι λέγουσιν ὑπὲρ σφῶν τόνδε τὸν λόγον, ὅτι, ὡς κατήραν τε ἐς τὴν γῆν ἐκείνην οἱ πρῶτοι ἐκ Κύμης σταλέντες καὶ ἐπὶ οἰκισμῷ ἐξέβησαν, αὐτίκα τὴν μὲν Ἑλλάδα γλῶσσαν ἐξελάθοντο, εὐθὺς δὲ βάρβαρον φωνὴν ἴεσαν, οὐδὲ τῶν προσχώρων βαρβάρων, ἀλλὰ ἰδίαν σφῶν οὔπω πρόσθεν οὔσαν τὴν φωνήν· καὶ ἔκτοτε οὐ κατὰ τοὺς ἄλλους προσχώρους Σιδῆται ἐβαρβάριζον.

Alexander now went towards Side, whose inhabitants are Cymaeans from Aeolian Cyme; according to their own account of themselves, when the first emigrants from Cyme put into land and disembarked to found a colony, they at once forgot completely the Greek tongue and spoke a barbarian language straight away, and not that of the neighbouring barbarians, but their own unique, new tongue; and from that time Sidetans spoke like barbarians but not like the other neighbouring people.

Historically, the Sidetan tongue “does not appear as unique as Arrian suggests”.³⁹³ It is probably part of the Indo-European Anatolian language family.³⁹⁴ This is Arrian’s only account of a language’s *logos* in the *Anabasis* and the sole reference to this particular story in extant literature, so it is all the more striking.³⁹⁵

Arrian owed much to Herodotus, and his inclusion of the Sidetan tale – evidently found in Aristobulus or Ptolemy – may have been influenced by the earlier historian’s many similar ‘language narratives’.³⁹⁶ Herodotus’ discussion of the Pelasgian tongue seems particularly relevant (Hdt. 1.57.2-3): he suggests that the original Pelasgian language was barbarian

³⁹³ Bosworth 1980a, 167.

³⁹⁴ A Luwic dialect’, according to Adiego, related to Carian, Pisidian, and Lycian (Adiego 2007, 4, 345; cf 200); Melchert 1994, 44.

³⁹⁵ It is noteworthy that this tradition is not found in Strabo, despite his several references to Side (12.3.16, 7.1; 14.3.2, 4.2, 6.2).

³⁹⁶ E.g. Hdt. 1.57.3; 1.172; 2.42.4; 4.106; 4.108.2; 4.109; 4.117; 6.119.4.

(βάρβαρον γλῶσσαν ἰέντες), since their descendants who existed in Herodotus' day, the people of Creston and Placia, speak a language of their own, which is not like that of their neighbours (καὶ γὰρ δὴ οὔτε οἱ Κρηστωνιῆται οὐδαμοῖσι τῶν νῦν σφέας περιουκούντων εἰς ὁμόγλωσσοι οὔτε οἱ Πλακιηνοί, σφίσι δὲ ὁμόγλωσσοι); Herodotus concludes that the people of Creston and Placia preserve their original manner of speech from before their migration (δηλοῦσί τε ὅτι τὸν ἡνείκαντο γλώσσης χαρακτῆρα μεταβαίνοντες ἐς ταῦτα τὰ χωρία, τοῦτον ἔχουσι ἐν φυλακῇ). There appear several parallels with Arrian's description of the Sidetans: Arrian's phrasing with regard to the Sidetans' new language (βάρβαρον φωνὴν ἔεσαν) recalls Herodotus' description of the original Pelasgian tongue (βάρβαρον γλῶσσαν ἰέντες); the novelty of the Sidetans' tongue – differing from their neighbours' as Arrian emphasises – is similar to Herodotus' description of the language of Creston and Placia, also their own and unlike their neighbours'.³⁹⁷ Moreover, the focus on language alone and not *nomoi* also recalls the Pelasgian passage.³⁹⁸

Arrian seems to be engaging with Herodotus, but not in mere imitation. He pushes his own agenda through Herodotean allusion.³⁹⁹ While Herodotus highlights the preservation of the original Pelasgian tongue in modern times, Arrian presents the Sidetans' language as new and unique. In each context, however, the barbarian tongue prevails. We might compare Diodorus' treatment of the Boeotians moved into Asia, and his focus on what they preserved, rather than lost (discussed above). Arrian's presentation of the Sidetans, however, perhaps reflects a concern – visible throughout his corpus – about the loss of

³⁹⁷ Strabo mentions that Pelasgians occupied Cyme (whence the Sidetans) when the Greeks first emigrated there, but quickly disappeared (13.3.3); perhaps this influenced Arrian in his allusion to Herodotus' Pelasgian tale.

³⁹⁸ Cf. on Diodorus' Boeotians in Asia above (Chapter 1.2.1). Cf. also Pausanias (a contemporary of Arrian) and his description of the Messenians' retention of their customs and Doric dialect (Paus. 4.27.11).

³⁹⁹ Note Marincola's comment, in relation to Arrian, that "allusion can function just as well by contrast as by similarity" (1989, 187).

Greek through non-Greek influence. In the *Periplus*, for example – a letter to the princeps Hadrian – Arrian discusses his restoration of an altar inscription. He claims the letters were not sufficiently distinct, carved as they were on rough stone; and also that the Greek inscription was inaccurately carved, as it was ‘written by barbarians’ (*Peripl. M. Eux.* 1.2: τὸ δὲ Ἑλληνικὸν ἐπίγραμμα καὶ ἡμαρτημένως γέγραπται, οἷα δὲ ὑπὸ βαρβάρων γραφέν).⁴⁰⁰ He decides to rebuild the altar and engrave clear letters. As Rood puts it, “it’s as if his own response (restoring the Greekness of the inscription) is a way of combating barbarism”.⁴⁰¹ The historian presents himself as meticulously concerned with Greek epigraphic linguistic accuracy in the service of his *princeps*.

Later in the *Periplus*, he refers to the name changes of several cities on the Black Sea: ‘They say that Apsaros was once called Apsyrτος... The name was subsequently corrupted (διαφθαρῆναι) by the barbarians who live around there, just as many others were corrupted too’ (*Peripl. M. Eux.* 6.3).⁴⁰² We might also think of Arrian’s comments in a fragment about how the Lazi changed the Greek fort-name Cotiacon to Cotaïs, ‘destroying the harmony of the word owing to ignorance of the language’ (*FGrH* 156 F109 = Procop. 8.14.48: τῇ τῆς φωνῆς ἀγνοίαι τὴν τοῦ ὀνόματος διαφθείροντες ἁρμονίαν). This interest may be symptomatic of his place in broader Second Sophistic discourse concerning language ‘purity’. Although often seen as “far from a purist” in the realm of Atticism,⁴⁰³ the above examples seem to suggest that Arrian was indeed participating in the debate, but in a somewhat different fashion. His narratorial persona is clearly interested in the preservation

⁴⁰⁰ Rood suggests there was a *topos* of faded inscriptions, citing Thuc. 6.54.9, Dem. 59.76, Lucian *Ver. Hist.* 1.7, Paus. 6.15.8 (Rood 2011, 147); see also Moles 1999, 50-51; Zadorojnyi 2013, 373.

⁴⁰¹ Rood 2011, 147; see also Anderson 1989, 177; Zadorojnyi 2013, 373: “Arrian is quick to intervene on behalf of Hadrian but also of Hellenic *paideia*”.

⁴⁰² Rood draws the same connection, observing that “the focus on barbarians as responsible for the name-shift from Apsyrτος to Apsarus mirrors the threat to Hadrian’s inscription at Trapezus” (2011, 148). Bosworth notes that etymological digressions were prominent in the *Bithyniaca* and suggests that “the erudite elucidation of place names was obviously a passion” (1993, 253 n.141).

⁴⁰³ Kim 2010, 479; cf. Bosworth 1980a, 34-5.

of the Greek language from non-Greek influence to some extent; instead of his own style, however, Arrian used historical *exempla* and aspects of his political life to this end.⁴⁰⁴

The story of the Sidetic tongue is a strange tale, Herodotean in its ‘marvellous’ nature: a new language apparently sprung ‘immediately’ from nowhere, or perhaps from the mere fact of being on barbarian soil. Arrian’s insertion of this tale may hint at the threat posed to Greek identity by surrounding oneself with non-Greeks; Alexander’s own later ‘Persianisation’ is a major theme of the final few books. His arrival from the Greek world soon results in his adoption of barbarian dress, and Arrian emphasises this ‘acculturating’ aspect of Alexander’s behaviour: he makes it a focus of the ‘barbarous digression’ in Book 4, explicitly condemning Alexander’s adoption of barbaric ἐσθής (4.7.4), and in his final judgement in Book 7 he feels compelled to excuse this practice as an act of policy (7.29.4).⁴⁰⁵ The Sidetan language narrative may *prima facie* appear to be a mere interesting digression, but it holds thematic relevance to the work as a whole, alluding to a Herodotean context of barbarism and hinting at Alexander’s own impending ‘Persianisation’.

A Greek near Harmozia

The ideal of preserving Greek in a barbarian environment is also found in the example of the Greek sailors encountering another Greek in Arrian’s *Indica*, an account based on Nearchus’ voyage from India to Persia. As we have seen, the surviving Alexander

⁴⁰⁴ The examples adduced here are Greek terms and inscriptions ‘corrupted’ by foreign influence, which is a somewhat different matter from Arrian’s use of Celtic and Iberian “loan words and borrowings” in the *Tactica*, which Busetto has argued “could emulate and reassert at the linguistic level – more or less consciously – the emperor’s openness toward the foreign military elements” (2013, 239). The technical *Tactica* examples might be a special case, however, since there were no Greek equivalents for such terms.

⁴⁰⁵ Bosworth (1981, 17) notes that the ‘barbarous digression’ is a standard series of rhetorical *topoi*, mentioned by Livy (9.18.4) and Plutarch (*Alex.* 50-56); cf. Stadter 1980, 80, 103-114; Bosworth 1995, 45-101. This does not reduce its importance as a theme in the *Anabasis*, however, as the digression indicates. Arrian is simply engaging with this discourse.

historians were rather intrigued by hints of pre-existing Hellenism which Alexander's expedition encountered (e.g. Diodorus' Boeotians in Asia; Curtius' Gortuae; the 'mutilated Greeks' in several sources).⁴⁰⁶ Just prior to meeting up with Alexander in Carmania (325 BCE), Nearchus and his men disembarked at Harmozia (*Ind.* 33.3-8):

They disembarked, and had a welcome rest from their numerous hardships, remembering the miseries they had endured by sea and on the coast of the Fish-eaters and reflecting on the desolation of the country, the bestial nature of the men (τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ὅπως θηριώδεες), and their own difficulties. Some of them went off inland from the sea and dispersed from the main force with varying quests. There they met a man in a Greek cloak, dressed in other ways like a Greek, and also speaking Greek. Those who first sighted him said that they burst into tears, so contrary to expectation did it seem after all these miseries to see a Greek, and to hear Greek spoken (ἐνταῦθα ἄνθρωπός σφισιν ὥφθη χλαμύδα τε φορῶν Ἑλληνικὴν καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ὡς Ἕλληνα ἐσκευασμένος, καὶ φωνὴν Ἑλλάδα ἐφώνεε. τοῦτον οἱ πρῶτοι ἰδόντες δακρῦσαι ἔλεγον· οὕτω τι παράλογόν σφισι φανῆναι ἐκ τῶν τοσῶνδε κακῶν Ἕλληνα μὲν ἄνθρωπον ἰδεῖν, Ἑλλάδος δὲ φωνῆς ἀκοῦσαι). They asked where he came from and who he was; and he said that he had strayed from Alexander's camp and that the camp, and Alexander himself, were not very far distant. Shouting and clapping, they brought him to Nearchus, and he told Nearchus everything, and that the camp and the king himself were five days' journey distant from the coast. He also promised to show Nearchus the hyparch of this district, and did so. With his help Nearchus decided how to go inland to the King.

The 'Odyssean' touches here are apparent in the sailors arriving at a place of rest after trials, disembarking, and exploring the surrounds.⁴⁰⁷ The men they had encountered recently are described as 'bestial' (θηριώδεες);⁴⁰⁸ this prepares the reader for the clear contrast provided by the 'civilised' Greek man they encounter. He looked like a Greek, wearing a 'Greek *chlamys*', something Plutarch in the *Fortune* explicitly cites as a traditional marker of Greek identity: '[Alexander bade all men that] they should not distinguish between Greek and barbarian by Greek *chlamys* and shield, or scimitar and *candys*; but the distinguishing mark of the Greek should be seen in *arete*, and that of the barbarian in *kakia*' (*Mor.* 329C-D). And he spoke like a Greek, a welcome relief to the

⁴⁰⁶ For the mutilated Greeks, Diod. 17.69.2-9; Curt. 5.5.5-24; Just. *Epit.* 11.14.11-12

⁴⁰⁷ Pearson 1960, 134-135.

⁴⁰⁸ Cf. *Ind.* 24.9; 27.2; Diod. 17.105.3.

sailors who had been deprived of their cultural community for so long.⁴⁰⁹ We are reminded of the reaction of Sophocles' Philoctetes upon seeing Neoptolemus' Greek dress and hearing his φωνή (Soph. *Phil.* 219-235).⁴¹⁰ Within Alexander historiography, however, we might compare Alexander's discovery of those displaced Greeks who had been mutilated by the Persians: Curtius describes them as unrecognisable 'except in voice' (*praeter vocem*).⁴¹¹ Arrian's account places rather more emphasis on the speaking of Greek and illustrates well its emotive significance, as much for Arrian as for Nearchus' men.

Greek Dialects

The anonymous Boeotian man

The only explicit reference to a Greek dialect in the *Anabasis* is an understudied fragment of Nearchus in which Alexander converses with an anonymous older Boeotian man, who addresses the king in his native 'Boeotian tongue' (βοιωτιάζοντα...τῇ φωνῇ) (*Anab.* 6.13.5 = *FGrH* 133 F 2). The reference is found in the aftermath of Alexander's near-fatal injury at the hands of the Mallians in 326 BCE, after the king had daringly leapt into the city on his own (6.9.5-11.8).⁴¹² Arrian, in Bosworth's words, "reproduces a highly charged section of first-hand narrative from Nearchus".⁴¹³ After we are told of the fears of Alexander's men that their king was dead, we hear of their relief when they finally see the man himself approaching by ship and landing on shore. Arrian cites Nearchus, who says that Alexander was annoyed with those of his friends who blamed him for taking risks more suited to a

⁴⁰⁹ Cf. the Macronian peltast and his recognition of his own tongue and *patris* in Xenophon's *Anabasis* (4.8.1-8); Ma 2004.

⁴¹⁰ Cf. also the Scythians, Anarcharsis and Toxaris, meeting in Athens in Lucian's *Scythian* (3-4).

⁴¹¹ Diod. 17.69.2-9; Curt. 5.5.5-24.

⁴¹² Cf. Diod. 17.98.3-99.4; Plut. *Alex.* 63.2-14; Curt. 9.4.26-6.1; Just. 12.9.5-10.1.

⁴¹³ Bosworth 1996a, 55.

common soldier than a commander (6.13.4).⁴¹⁴ Arrian then suggests *in propria persona* that Alexander was upset because he knew that his friends were right, before describing him as made vulnerable by his passion for glory (6.13.4). He then again cites Nearchus for the incident with which we are primarily concerned, that of the Boeotian man who approaches Alexander and offers consolation (6.13.5). The man is described as ‘some rather old Boeotian man’ (ἄνθρωπον δέ τινα πρεσβύτερον...Βοιωτίον), and Arrian states that Nearchus did not name him (τὸ δὲ ὄνομα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐ λέγει).⁴¹⁵ The man is said to be aware that Alexander was vexed by his friends' criticism, and for that reason he expresses to the king, in his native Boeotian dialect (βοιωτιάζοντα ἅμα τῇ φωνῇ), this simple sentiment: ‘Alexander, these are the deeds of heroes’ (ταῦτα φάναι· ὦ Ἀλέξανδρε, ἀνδρῶν τὰ ἔργα).⁴¹⁶ The Boeotian follows this pithy statement by quoting a line of verse (a “tragic truism”, attributed to both Aeschylus and Sophocles) to the effect that a man of action pays a debt of suffering (τῷ τι δρῶντι καὶ παθεῖν ἐστὶν ὀφειλόμενον).⁴¹⁷ Nearchus notes that henceforth the Boeotian was held in high esteem by Alexander (καὶ τοῦτον ἔν τε τῷ παραυτίκα εὐδοκιμῆσαι καὶ ἐπιτηδειότερον ἐς τὸ ἔπειτα Ἀλεξάνδρῳ γενέσθαι).⁴¹⁸

Scholars have not typically considered Alexander’s encounter with the Boeotian man to be of great interest. Jacoby chose not to discuss the passage in the context of the fragments of

⁴¹⁴ Bosworth (1996a, 58-59) notes that Porus is described in the same terms at 5.18.4, but there the comparison to a soldier is complimentary, for Arrian “commends it in Porus and explicitly criticizes it in Alexander”; cf. also Just. 11.14.5.

⁴¹⁵ Bosworth suggests that in so doing Nearchus imitated the Herodotean practice of deliberately omitting names of “delinquents” (Bosworth 1996a, 61); cf., however, Herodotus’ reference to the guilt of the delinquent *par excellence*, Ephialtes, and indeed his argument for correct identification of the guilty party (Hdt. 7.214). The narrative use of anonymity by Xenophon, however, may be a more pertinent influence (see Tsagalis 2009, 465-470).

⁴¹⁶ For the punctuation of the Greek text, see Bosworth 1996a, 59 n. 90.

⁴¹⁷ Aesch. F 456 (Nauck, Radt) = 665 (Mette); Soph. F 209 (Nauck) = 223b (Radt). See Bosworth 1996a, 60. Whitby (BNJ, *ad loc.*) suggests that “the attribution of it to an ordinary soldier, and a Boeotian at that since they were renowned for their stupidity, indicates that it had passed into the general stock of aphorisms”.

⁴¹⁸ Cf. 1.17.12; 1.24.2 (both refer to Alexander’s winning favour).

Nearchus.⁴¹⁹ It is sometimes – but not often – mentioned in passing in general accounts of the aftermath of the Mallian campaign.⁴²⁰ Neither of the major prosopographical works on Alexander’s campaigns, Berve and Heckel, include reference to the anonymous Boeotian (even while Heckel mentions some 138 *anonymi*).⁴²¹ The meeting with this anonymous Boeotian had little effect on the course of the expedition, which may partly explain this general scholarly disregard; furthermore, the man’s anonymity and presence in the *Anabasis* alone raise doubts about his historicity. Indeed, the Boeotian’s role as a ‘flatterer’ might suggest a more literary purpose for the inclusion of this man in the narratives of Nearchus and Arrian.

The only significant discussion of the episode’s historical and literary dimensions is found in A. B. Bosworth’s *Alexander and the East*.⁴²² He plausibly argues for several allusions to Xenophon’s *Anabasis* at this point in Arrian’s text, as the historian “superimposes vocabulary reminiscent of one of the most famous passages of Xenophon’s *Anabasis*”; that is, the scene after the execution of the Greek generals, when the survivors discuss what to do.⁴²³ For example, when Alexander’s men fear that he has died, they first consider the hostile peoples surrounding them and the geographical obstacles which hinder their homeward journey (6.12.2); the same occurred in Xenophon (3.1.2-3), and Arrian’s vocabulary mirrors his predecessor’s.⁴²⁴ In this context, Bosworth argues that Arrian’s anonymous Boeotian alludes to Xenophon’s ‘false Boeotian’, Apollonides, who chimes in

⁴¹⁹ *FGrH* 133 F 2; he simply refers the reader to Curtius’ parallel account, which does not include any reference to a Boeotian (Curt. 9.6.3-27).

⁴²⁰ E.g. Lane Fox (1973, 382) notes “his rough accent”; Wilcken (1967, 191) mentions he spoke “in his dialect”; cf. also O’Brien 1992, 177. The Boeotian is omitted by e.g. Cartledge 2004; Bosworth 1988.

⁴²¹ Heckel 2006; Berve 1926.

⁴²² Bosworth 1996a, 53-65.

⁴²³ Bosworth 1996a, 55.

⁴²⁴ Bosworth rightly notes, for example, the rarity of ἀδιάβατος, though he claims that, besides this instance in Arrian, “in classical prose it is found only in the work of Xenophon” (1996, 56), citing also *Anab.* 2.1.11 and *Hell.* 5.4.44. We might note, however, that it is also found in Diodorus’ book on Alexander (17.55.2).

during the debate following the deaths of the generals, as we have seen (Xen. *Anab.* 3.1.26). Bosworth claims that the two figures serve similar functions: just as Apollonides “opposes the eminently sensible suggestions of Xenophon”, so too “Arrian's Boeotian nullifies the justified reproaches of Alexander's friends—and was rewarded and promoted, not dismissed in ignominy as was the speaker in Xenophon”.⁴²⁵ Arrian’s choice of language invites the reader to “draw an analogy between Alexander's men and the leaderless Ten Thousand.”⁴²⁶ Indeed, both armies face leadership crises.⁴²⁷ Bosworth rightly notes the rarity of the linguistic construction referring to the Boeotian dialect;⁴²⁸ he concludes that Arrian has taken Nearchus' report and phrased it in language evocative of the incident in Xenophon, one of Arrian's stylistic models.⁴²⁹

I am in general agreement with Bosworth’s argument here. Arrian has shown complex engagement with Xenophon’s *Anabasis* elsewhere.⁴³⁰ He also probably named his work after Xenophon’s and, of course, called himself ‘the new Xenophon’.⁴³¹ I think there is more to be said, however, about the significance of Alexander’s anonymous Boeotian interlocutor within the *Anabasis*. This episode is not found elsewhere;⁴³² I would suggest that it provides Arrian with an opportunity to depict Alexander’s remorse over the razing of Thebes.

⁴²⁵ Bosworth 1966a, 56.

⁴²⁶ Bosworth 1996a, 56; Xen. *An.* 3.1.26-32. It is interesting that, as the Boeotian alludes to tragedy and epic, Arrian alludes to historiography.

⁴²⁷ Bosworth 1996a, 56-8.

⁴²⁸ It is found once elsewhere, in a contemporary of Arrian (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 43.5); Bosworth notes this occurrence in passing (1996a, 56 n.78).

⁴²⁹ Bosworth 1996a, 61.

⁴³⁰ Rood 2011.

⁴³¹ Stadter 1967. Arrian also explicitly refers to the Ten Thousand at *Anab.* 2.7.8.

⁴³² Although Bosworth notes that the actual sentiments spoken by the man are reflected in Curt. 9.6.18-19; Bosworth 1996a, 59 (a typographical error gives the Curtius passage as 8.6.18-19).

The king had famously destroyed the Greek city early in his reign, and Arrian's account of the city's annihilation in Book 1 is essentially apologist: he shows Alexander as reluctant to attack; blames the initial onset on someone else (Perdiccas); and ascribes the eventual decision to raze the city to the 'allies' rather than Alexander himself, in contrast to our other sources (1.7.10-1.9.10).⁴³³ This presentation necessitates omission of any remorse on Alexander's part, since Arrian has exonerated the king of blame. By contrast, in other accounts Alexander is immediately remorseful: Plutarch, for example, notes the change in the king's character in that the event made him milder (πρᾶότερος) toward many, and later there was not a Theban who did not get what they asked from him (Plut. *Alex.* 13.2-3). Within the *Anabasis*, Alexander shows little explicit remorse: Alexander's speech at Opis – which offers a version of events from before his reign and summarises his own achievements – mentions Philip's subjugation of Thebes, but omits his own (7.9.4-6).

Alexander is on one occasion depicted as having sympathy for Thebes, however, if not remorse as such: Arrian refers to an incident in which Alexander releases two Theban envoys, who had appealed for Darius' help, partly from compassion for the destroyed city (2.15.3-4):

καὶ οὗτοι ὥς ἦκον παρὰ Ἀλέξανδρον, Θεσσαλίσκον μὲν καὶ Διονυσόδωρον καίπερ Θηβαίους ὄντας εὐθὺς ἀφῆκεν, τὸ μὲν τι κατοικίσει τῶν Θηβῶν, τὸ δὲ ὅτι συγγνωστὰ δεδρακέναι ἐφαίνοντο, ἡνδραποδισμένης ὑπὸ Μακεδόνων τῆς πατρίδος σφίσιν τε ἦντινα ἡδύναντο ὠφέλειαν εὐρισκόμενοι καὶ εἰ δὴ τινα καὶ τῇ πατρίδι ἐκ Περσῶν καὶ Δαρείου· ταῦτα μὲν ὑπὲρ ἀμφοῖν ἐπιεικῇ ἐνθυμηθεῖς, ἰδίᾳ δὲ Θεσσαλίσκον μὲν αἰδοῖ τοῦ γένους ἀφιέναι εἶπεν, ὅτι τῶν ἐπιφανῶν Θηβαίων ἦν, Διονυσόδωρον δὲ ἐπὶ τῇ νίκῃ τῶν Ὀλυμπίων.

When [the envoys from Athens, Sparta and Thebes] came to Alexander, he immediately released Thessaliscus and Dionysodorus, though they were Thebans, partly out of pity for Thebes, and partly because they seemed to have acted in a pardonable manner. For their native city had been reduced to slavery by the Macedonians, and they were trying to find whatever succour they could for themselves and perhaps also for their native city from Darius and the Persians. Thinking thus compassionately about both of them, he

⁴³³ On its 'apologetic' nature, see Bosworth 1980a, 74-75, 78-9, 89-91.

released them, saying that he dismissed Thessaliscus individually out of respect for his pedigree, for he belonged to the ranks of the distinguished men of Thebes. Dionysodorus also he released because he had been conqueror at the Olympic games.⁴³⁴

We might note here the passive construction which minimises Alexander's agency in Thebes' destruction: 'their native city had been reduced to slavery by the Macedonian'.⁴³⁵ This is in line with Arrian's 'apologist' account of the city's destruction, which we have discussed. Arrian presents Alexander as moved, at least in part, by the plight of the Thebans; however, this seems to be Arrian's own insinuation, as Alexander's reasons appear to have had more to do with their particular 'pedigree' and Olympic success than general Theban sympathy. This evidence may point to another purpose for Arrian's reference to the dialect of the anonymous Boeotian, in addition to comparison with Xenophon's *Ten Thousand*: it helps to explain Alexander's kindness to someone who is essentially a flatterer, as part of the king's sympathy for and consequent favour to Thebans on Arrian's presentation. While we do not hear if this Boeotian was specifically Theban, the reference to the dialect is sufficient to trigger Theban connotations.

Throughout his work, Arrian consistently highlights the intimate associations of Thebes for Alexander, which will have bearing on our reading of 'the Boeotian man'. In the aftermath of the destruction of Thebes, Arrian explicitly reports that Philip's and Alexander's ξένοι, the Macedonians' πρόξενοι, and the house of Pindar had all been spared.⁴³⁶ Arrian also

⁴³⁴ While Arrian here also refers to the presence of envoys from Athens and Sparta, Curtius mentions those from Athens and Sparta but omits the Thebans (Curt. 3.13.15; see Bosworth 1980a, 233-234). Alexander's treatment of the different envoys is used by Arrian to represent the king's attitudes to their respective city-states at this time, and may account for his inclusion of the Thebans.

⁴³⁵ Worthington 2010.

⁴³⁶ 1.9.9-10; cf. Plut. *Alex.* 11.12, who speaks "more vaguely" of ξένοι of the Macedonians (Bosworth 1980a, 90). The juxtaposition of the references to πρόξενοι and Pindar's house might suggest that Arrian was reminded of Pindar's own role as πρόξενος of Athens at Thebes (Isoc. 15.166). It is also possible that with this reference Arrian recalled his beloved Xenophon's dear friend, Proxenos the Theban (Xen. *An.* 2.1.10; for their friendship, see Dillery 1995, 182-183). This is, perhaps significantly, the only occurrence of πρόξενος in all of Arrian's corpus.

mentions Epaminondas in his comparison of Thebes with other infamous Greek catastrophes, which may have been intended to evoke the tradition that Philip had spent part of his boyhood in Thebes under that man's direction.⁴³⁷ Throughout the *Anabasis*, references abound to 'Theban Heracles' and 'Theban Dionysus', ancestors of Alexander with whom he is depicted in competition.⁴³⁸ Indeed, Thebes held many literary associations, which Arrian exploits: we have seen the reference to Pindar but the city was also, of course, the setting for various plays by the great tragedians.⁴³⁹

Arrian has Alexander quote Euripides at one point in the *Anabasis* (7.16.6) -- but perhaps more significant is the tragic quote from the Boeotian himself. The ubiquity of Thebes in Greek tragedy is remarkable and all three major tragedians employed the city as a setting. Several depicted Thebes being attacked. The Boeotian's quoted verse (τοῦ ἱαμβείου), to the effect that a man of action pays a debt of suffering (ὅτι τῷ τι δρῶντι καὶ παθεῖν ἐστὶν ὀφειλόμενον), seems to have been a tragic platitude, as examples are ascribed to fragments of both Aeschylus and Sophocles.⁴⁴⁰ Bosworth recalls Euripides' *Archelaus*, an important play from a poet with Macedonian connections, and highlights its theme of glory won by effort: "The Boeotian's quotation may not have come from Euripides, but it...brought

⁴³⁷ 1.9.4; Leon 2012, 123. Justin reports Philip as a hostage *in domo Epaminondae* (7.5.2-3; cf. 6.9.7; 11.4.5, where a Theban prisoner reminds Alexander of Philip's time there). Diodorus (16.2.2-4; cf. 15.67.4) has Philip entrusted to Epaminondas' father, who provides a "Pythagorean philosopher" to educate both boys (cf. Nep. *Epam.* 2.2). Plutarch has Philip under the care of one Pammenes; he also mentions that Philip became a zealous follower of Epaminondas (Plut. *Pelop.* 26.4; see Hammond 1997; Aymard 1954). There seems little doubt as to Epaminondas' influence on Philip during his time in Thebes.

⁴³⁸ Theban Heracles: 2.16.1, 4.28.2; 5.26.5; Theban Dionysus: 4.10.6, 5.1.2, 5.26.5. Justin has a Theban prisoner try to convince Alexander not to attack the city 'from his superstitious regard for Hercules, who had been born at Thebes, and from whom the family of the Aeacidae was descended' (11.4.5). Thebes was also the home city of Semele, the mother of Dionysus, whom Alexander consciously imitated in his travels (Bosworth 1996b): in Plutarch's *Life*, Alexander blames the wrath of Dionysus for the murder of Cleitus and the mutiny in India (13.4), and the god "comes to represent the traits in Alexander which lead him to take his most disastrous actions: his drinking and his temper" (Mossman 1988, 87).

⁴³⁹ Cf. Justin's reference to this fact being brought up in the debate concerning the city's fate: *Adiciunt et scelerum priorum fabulas, quibus omnes scaenas repleverint* (11.3.11).

⁴⁴⁰ Bosworth 1996a, 60.

home a whole literary topos with considerable force.”⁴⁴¹ Indeed, Nearchus may have made more of the quote with which Arrian deals rather briefly and in indirect speech. His cursory reference removes any specificity and one might wonder if that was exactly his intention: to evoke a general tragic atmosphere, reminiscent of Thebes and its long, dramatic (in all senses of the word) history. Likewise, the earlier comment from the Boeotian that ‘these are the deeds of heroes’ is also non-specific enough to have provided justification, in Alexander’s mind, not only to his recent heroics among the Mallians, but also retroactively perhaps to his actions years earlier at Thebes. Significantly, before introducing the Boeotian, Arrian stresses Alexander’s emotional state.

Although Arrian minimises Alexander’s role in Thebes’ destruction, he nevertheless demonstrates the significance of the city for Alexander personally, and even presents him as sympathetic (if not remorseful) to its plight after the fact. Arrian suggests that, because of the emotional resonance that Thebes held for Alexander in the wake of its destruction (and indeed throughout his life), the king cannot be blamed for appreciating this blatant flatterer and his words. Indeed, in Arrian’s final assessment of Alexander, he urges that the reader consider his youth, unbroken success, and ‘courtiers who associate with kings to flatter but not improve them’ (7.29.1); the significance of Thebes, however, makes the Boeotian more than a regular flatterer. By highlighting the man’s ethnicity by means of the dialect heard by Alexander (as opposed to only providing his ethnic), Arrian perhaps invokes the emotive power and associations that come with hearing a particular tongue – just as Nearchus’ sailors heard Greek.

⁴⁴¹ Bosworth 1996a, 60; for Alexander and Euripides, see Bosworth 1996b; Brown 1967.

Overall conclusion – Chapter 1.2

Compared to the three classical Greek historians, a greater concern for the preservation of the Greek tongue is evident in the extant Alexander historiographers, coexisting with an appreciation for Alexander's 'Hellenising' attitude and spreading of Greek culture and language across the East. Diodorus mentions the Greek tongue in ways that suggest he approves of Alexander as 'culture-hero' (such as the Greek education of Persian women), and minimises internal divisions within the Greek-speaking community: he never once mentions dialects in the extant portions of his universal history. Plutarch is similar with respect to the Greek language, noting the education of the *Epigonoι* in Greek and Alexander's symbolic inscription on Cyrus' tomb. He refers to Macedonian 'dialect' only to highlight Alexander's loss of Hellenic σωφροσύνη in the Cleitus episode.

Arrian's Sidetans in the *Anabasis* and Nearchus' sailors' reaction to the Greek man in the *Indica* both reflect a kind of cultural anxiety, a fear of losing Greek in a barbarian context. This is visible throughout his corpus in various manifestations. His one reference to a Greek dialect appears in a negative context (from a flatterer) and alludes to the destruction of Thebes in order to explain Alexander's acceptance of this man. Curtius, on the other hand, employs the politics of language in the trial of Philotas as a key part of his characterisation of Alexander's turn away from Macedonian *mores* and descent into 'barbarity'. His Roman context informs his presentation as much as his source material. He is also concerned with the corruption of language by foreign influence; in his case, however, he appears to have had Latin in mind when writing about Macedonian being pushed out by Greek.

In broad strokes, the metalinguistic treatment of 'Greek' language is similar to that of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon: the common cultural gravitas of 'Greek' is evident,

while dialects occur generally as markers of intra-Greek division. The ‘threats’ to Greek (or Macedonian) evident in these authors’ presentations of Alexander’s campaigns does differ from classical historiography, however. They are evidently linked to the cultural *agon* of the contemporary settings of Republican and Imperial Rome: while the overarching political power belonged to the Romans, the Greeks still held much cultural and linguistic capital. The cross-section of ancient historiography provided by the extant Alexander historians allows us a broader perspective on how historians employed their material to talk as much about the present as the past.

Chapter 2.1: Minor Bilingual Intermediaries

Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon

Introduction

The remaining two chapters will discuss the depiction of those who speak languages other than their native tongue. Chapter 2 will be concerned with minor bilingual intermediaries: interpreters (those who are bi- or multilingual and translate the speech of others present) and bilingual envoys (men whose bi- or multilingualism is a key factor in their being sent). Chapter 3 will explore major bilingual figures, historical actors who know or learn another language to act in their own interest, rather than as agents of others.

In depicting encounters between figures from different language communities, historians must choose between depicting their conversations as occurring in one mutually intelligible language *without* direct acknowledgement of the language difference; *with* acknowledgement of the language (perhaps by referring to one character's bilingualism); or relating that the conversations took place in multiple languages by mentioning interpreters or other bilingual intermediaries. Why such figures are mentioned at certain points in a text, and not others, is one of the central questions of this topic. Scholars tend to shrug it off as 'cumbersome' for ancient historians to mention the presence of interpreters on every occasion – but then why mention them at all? What factors govern the authorial decision to cite an interpreter's presence? Such dismissal overlooks the varied treatment of bilingual intermediaries across ancient historiography: for example, Thucydides mentions only one, compared with fifteen in Xenophon's *Anabasis*. There can be variation across one author – Xenophon mentions only one interpreting episode in the rest of his corpus – or even within one text: Herodotus includes interpreters in Books 1-4

but none in Books 5-9, which encompass the entire narrative of the Ionian Revolt and Persian Wars.

In her near-comprehensive review of the extant evidence for ancient interpreters, Wiotte-Franz claims that “reference to the interpreter in ancient literature is as a rule random, and depended on the attitude of the author, depending on whether he was open to this theme, such as Herodotos and Xenophon, or showed little interest, like Thucydides or Polybios”.⁴⁴² The ‘openness’ to the theme of multilingualism does appear to be a factor: generally speaking, the more interest a historian shows in non-Greeks and their languages (and, indeed, language more generally), the likelier he is to mention bilingual intermediaries. The chief extant historiography of Alexander the Great demonstrates this well: those four historians deal with the same period and many of the same episodes, and were all writing in a Roman context – yet they differ greatly in their presentation of interpreters and multilingualism. As we shall see in Chapter 2.2, Curtius evinces much greater interest in languages more generally, and consequently mentions interpreters multiple times, while Arrian, less interested in languages, refers only twice to interpreters. Xenophon, however, is an arguable exception to Wiotte-Franz’s suggestion (see Chapter 2.1.3): his *Anabasis* contains multiple interpreters, but shows little interest in other aspects of languages and their use. In reality, interpreters must have been used often in ancient inter-cultural encounters; therefore, because mention of interpreters is not universal, it suggests either random inclusion (as Wiotte-Franz suggests), or deliberate mention for historiographical reasons. Through scrutinising the contexts in which historians mention and comment on minor bilingual intermediaries, I shall argue for a kind of middle ground: that while reasons

⁴⁴² Wiotte-Franz 2001, 170. I disagree with Wiotte-Franz about Polybius, as a future study will show.

for inclusion are not always clear, it can often be shown to be deliberate when understood in narrative context.

Recurrent themes and motifs

There are certain recurring motifs in the treatment of bilingual intermediaries throughout Greek historiography. It will be helpful to raise these here in the introduction, since they will be mentioned throughout Chapter 2 (and, occasionally, Chapter 3). These include: interpreters as signifying cultural – as well as linguistic – distance between peoples; as symbols of their leader’s power; and as figures of suspicion, in what has been labelled the ‘interpreter as traitor’ motif. Let us briefly explore the latter before launching into the classical historians.

‘Interpreter as traitor’

The ‘interpreter as traitor’ motif is found throughout ancient literature, though apparently more common during the Roman period.⁴⁴³ Perhaps the most famous example is the δῖγλωσσος whom Themistocles executes for betraying his language and people to the barbarian cause (Plut. *Them.* 6.2).⁴⁴⁴ Mairs refers to an ancient view of interpreters as “compromising their cultural identity and their own speech community”.⁴⁴⁵ Indeed, the vocabulary of multilingualism is often suggestive of impurity: the Latin *bilinguis*, literally meaning ‘two-tongued’, often carried connotations of perfidy and in context could refer to ‘contaminated’ speech.⁴⁴⁶ The Greek equivalent, δῖγλωσσος, is used of a Greek only once, and could also carry ‘treacherous’ connotations.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴³ See, in general, Mairs 2011.

⁴⁴⁴ Discussed more fully in Chapter 3.2.3; cf. also Chapter 2.2.3.

⁴⁴⁵ Mairs 2011, 65. Cf. Gera 2007, who highlights the untrustworthiness of interpreters and the view of language-learning as facilitating treachery.

⁴⁴⁶ E.g. Plaut. *Pers.* 2.4.28; *Truc.* 4.3.7; Phaedr. 2.4.25; Verg. *Aen.* 1.661; Hor. *Sat.* 1.10.30; see Poccetti 1986.

⁴⁴⁷ Dubuisson 1983; Rochette 2001; see esp. Chapter 2.2.4 on Arrian.

Not all interpreters were traitors to their language, however; many are depicted in moral terms as untrustworthy, a different kind of negative portrayal. In the *Verrines*, Cicero attacks the corrupt *interpretes* of the former Sicilian governor.⁴⁴⁸ Caesar, when in need of particular confidentiality in Gaul, dismissed his regular interpreters in favour of more trusted associates.⁴⁴⁹ Indeed, it seems the ancient fear of interpreters was so entrenched that Livy, when searching for an appropriate metaphor to describe Roman concerns about the size of the Carthaginian army, employed this metaphor: ‘fear is an interpreter always inclined to the worse side’ (Liv. 27.44.10: *metu interprete semper in deteriora inclinato*). On occasion, other multilingual individuals – who do not serve as interpreters – are also portrayed as untrustworthy, suspicious, or even traitorous. Cleopatra and Mithridates, for example, are depicted by Roman sources as conversant in multiple languages; this may be due to their status as dangerous enemies of Rome.⁴⁵⁰

On the other hand, interpreters are occasionally described as ‘faithful’.⁴⁵¹ Such praise, however, perhaps suggests that these are exceptions to the rule: if most interpreters were considered *fidus*, then certain individuals would not have felt compelled to praise those who were. Cicero writes a letter of recommendation for the son of his interpreter, Marcilius (Cic. *Fam.* 13.54), describing the boy's father as incredibly trustworthy (*singularem et prope incredibilem...fidem*) and calling him his ‘friend and interpreter’ (*amici atque interpretis mei*). Mairs notes that “part of the reason for this praise and affection is [Cicero's] knowledge that not all interpreters were so honest and dependable”.⁴⁵² Plutarch

⁴⁴⁸ Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.108; 2.3.85, 2.4.58; Mairs 2011, 71-73.

⁴⁴⁹ Caes. *B Gall.* 1.19.3; 1.47, 53; cf. 5.36; Mairs 2011; 73-75.

⁴⁵⁰ Plut. *Ant.* 27.4-5; Val. Max. 8.7.16; Quint. *Inst. Orat.* 11.2.50; cf. Gell. 17.17; Pelling 1988, 191; Harrison 1998, 6.

⁴⁵¹ On the *fidus interpretes* as translator of written text, see Rochette 1996.

⁴⁵² Mairs 2011, 72.

(*Ant.* 46) mentions an unknown man who approaches Antony's camp, asking for someone who could speak Parthian or Syrian; Antony sends Alexander of Antioch because he was a trusted (συνήθης) friend. Sallust (*Iug.* 109) describes a meeting between Sulla and Bocchus, stressing its secrecy with reference to the trusted mediator and the exceptional fidelity of the interpreters present (*ab utroque tantummodo fidi interpretes adhibentur*). As with Caesar in Gaul, only the most honourable individuals could be employed for such a sensitive meeting. Good moral character, it seems, was viewed as a bulwark against potential deception on a linguistic (or other) level.

This motif is not restricted to historiographical texts either. In Aristophanes' *Acharnians* (91-114), the 'King's Eye', a Persian ambassador in Athens, speaks in his native tongue which is then translated by an Athenian interpreter. The Persian says, according to the envoy, that the King will send gold to the Athenians. Dicaeopolis, however, communicates with the King's Eye through sign language and receives an affirmative response to his question about whether the Athenian ambassadors were deceiving the people (ἄλλως ἄρ' ἐξαπατώμεθ' ὑπὸ τῶν πρέσβεων); a comic scene, but one dependent on the plausibility of interpreters as untrustworthy individuals. In the Roman sphere, Plautus' *Poenulus* represents Hanno as knowing 'all languages' and capable of concealing that knowledge (*et is omnis linguas scit, sed dissimulat sciens se scire: Poenus plane est*) (*Poen.* 112). Later in the play, Hanno suddenly switches from Punic into Latin: as a result, he is abused for his linguistic deceitfulness and described as having the double tongue of a snake (*bisulci lingua quasi proserpens bestia*) (*Poen.* 1029-1034). The suspicion of multilinguals was a sufficiently widespread cultural phenomenon to be found beyond historiography.

1. Herodotus

Introduction

Herodotus' depiction of bilingual intermediaries has been relatively neglected. Even when considering the sources and value of his evidence, scholars have often underappreciated the importance of interpreters to the *histor*'s activity (contrary to Herodotus' own words, as we shall see). When acknowledged, the presence of interpreters is often left unanalysed, let alone accompanied by any attempt to evaluate literary function.⁴⁵³ This has been true of Herodotus' comments on language more generally until relatively recently.⁴⁵⁴

The first scholar, I believe, to address Herodotus' interpreters on a historiographical level was Harrison in his 1998 article on foreign languages in the *Histories*.⁴⁵⁵ He argues that Herodotus, like other contemporary authors, generally follows the "convention that barbarians speak Greek", which he implies started with Homer.⁴⁵⁶ He suggests there is little design: "Though we may wonder in some instances whether the presence of interpreters constitutes a marker of the especially alien nature of the dialogue at issue...there is by no means always any apparent rhyme or reason to the presence or absence of interpreters."⁴⁵⁷ He compares Xenophon's *Anabasis* and its "more realistic appreciation of language difference": by contrast, Herodotus' interpreters are "rather more the products of narrative convenience than of any great experience of the practicalities of language difference... It is

⁴⁵³ E.g. Evans 1982, who comments on Herodotus' being "at the mercy of his interpreter" for translations of foreign words, without much further comment (nor discussion of the one example of Herodotus explicitly using an interpreter, 2.125.6).

⁴⁵⁴ See Introduction.

⁴⁵⁵ Harrison 1998. Before Harrison, several studies touched on the issue with little engagement with Herodotus as writer (Gehman 1914; Lejeune 1948; Mosley 1971; Rotolo 1972; Rochette 1996).

⁴⁵⁶ Harrison 1998, 11: "Herodotus does not appear to bother himself—any more than his model, Homer—with the question of the language spoken".

⁴⁵⁷ Harrison 1998, 11-12.

Xenophon, rather than Herodotus, who appears to be the exception to the rule”.⁴⁵⁸ Harrison unfortunately does not elaborate on what he means by ‘narrative convenience’. Evidently, he acknowledges the ‘literary’ aspect and narrative choice behind Herodotus’ inclusions but does not seek to examine these elements in greater depth.

Since Harrison, some thought-provoking contributions have appeared, most notably Munson’s book on Herodotus and foreign languages.⁴⁵⁹ Few scholars, I should note, have distinguished between interpreters in historical narrative and those showing the activity of the *histor*.⁴⁶⁰ I shall argue that the *histor*’s interpreters are presented as accurate in their conveying of information, and that this bolsters the *histor*’s historiographical authority. On the other hand, interpreters in historical narrative symbolise distance of various kinds: cultural distance; distance in understanding; and distance in power.

Herodotus the histor and his interpreters

Scholars of Herodotus have long been exercised with the question of his sources. Whom exactly did he mean by ‘the Persians’ or ‘the Egyptians’? How did he converse with these non-Greeks? Such questions have led to much speculation about Herodotus’ own linguistic knowledge. There is no need to rehearse these arguments here; suffice to say there is insufficient evidence that Herodotus had any depth of knowledge of any language other than Greek. In this, I am in agreement with the current consensus.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁸ Harrison 1998, 13-14.

⁴⁵⁹ Munson 2005. Cf. also de Bakker 2007; Hollmann 2011.

⁴⁶⁰ Cf. de Bakker 2007, 63.

⁴⁶¹ See, most recently, Abe 2014; Munson (2005, 29) has further references.

We might, then, conjecture that he employed the services of interpreters to engage with non-Greek-speaking informants. Interpreters are virtually absent from Greek literature until Herodotus.⁴⁶² Although we only see the *histor* employ an interpreter on one occasion (in Egypt), Herodotus refers to the presence of interpreters (ἐρμηνεῖς) on a total of seven occasions, and once to bilingual envoys.⁴⁶³ These consist of the Egyptian interpreter class (2.125.6; 154.2; 164.1); interpreters in Scythia (4.24); and the interpreters and bilingual envoys in the service of the Persian King, which are the only references in historical narrative (1.86 [Cyrus]; 3.19.1 [Cambyses]; 3.38.4; 3.140.3 [Darius]). External evidence for interpreters in the ancient Near East suggests that they were a relatively common feature of royal courts.⁴⁶⁴ From Sumerian and Akkadian evidence we know of some twenty references to such figures between 2300-700 BCE.⁴⁶⁵ In the seventh century, Assurbanipal was surprised at the lack of interpreters in his court who could translate the speech of a Lydian envoy.⁴⁶⁶ With respect to Persia, as Lewis puts it: “The search for Herodotus’ sources for Persian affairs has...mostly been conducted under the influence of a strange presupposition that there was a political and linguistic iron curtain between Greeks and Persians.”⁴⁶⁷ Strange, indeed, if we consider the evidence for Greeks in the Persian court, including the Greek tablet from Persepolis and Herodotus’ own references to Greek-

⁴⁶² The exception is Aesch. *Ag.* 1060-1063; cf. 616.

⁴⁶³ None of the figures are named; by contrast, compare e.g. Gaulites the bilingual envoy in Thucydides and Pigres the ἐρμηνεύς in Xenophon. We noted above that our focus in this chapter is interpreters and bilingual envoys, and defined the latter as “men whose bi- or multilingualism is a key factor in their being sent”; since Mys of Europus’ linguistic knowledge is not portrayed as a factor in his being sent to the oracles, we shall not discuss here the Ptoan Apollo episode (8.133-135); on which see Robert 1950. That story indeed raises several issues about Herodotus’ views of foreign languages and oracular language which I shall explore in the monograph that emerges from this thesis.

⁴⁶⁴ West 1997, 608.

⁴⁶⁵ Gelb 1968.

⁴⁶⁶ Cylinder E. v 9-13 (Piepkorn 1933, 16f.).

⁴⁶⁷ Lewis 1985, 104.

Persian interpreters.⁴⁶⁸ Their absence in Books 5-9, then, suggests that the historian made narrative choices about when and how to include such figures.⁴⁶⁹

The multilingual *histor*

First, it is worth examining the *histor*'s presentation of his own 'interpreting' activity. While we cannot be confident in Herodotus' knowledge of foreign languages, the text of the *Histories* is replete with 'translations' of foreign words or metalinguistic glosses – that is, when the narrator steps outside the immediate narration to act as a kind of ἑρμηνεύς himself, in order to comment that a word means this or that in Egyptian, Persian, etc.⁴⁷⁰ A similar phenomenon is evident in the fragments of Hecataeus of Miletus: he occasionally offers etymologies of the names of people or places (in Greek and non-Greek tongues), often apparently in metanarrative.⁴⁷¹ Additionally, the Homeric narrator's references to words from the language of the gods are an arguable forerunner to this technique.⁴⁷² The Herodotean *histor*'s first-person comments, however, take this phenomenon a step further. The self-presentation of the Herodotean narrator *in propria persona* (i.e. the *histor*) is generally, in Munson's words, "a multilingual character, familiar with the principal languages" of the wide world of the *Histories*.⁴⁷³ Such a portrait provides an impression of

⁴⁶⁸ On the Greek tablet (*Fort.* 1771), see Hallock 1969, 2. Lewis discusses the tablet with respect to other evidence for Greek presence in Achaemenid courts (Lewis 1977, 12-15).

⁴⁶⁹ See the conclusion of 2.1.1.

⁴⁷⁰ On the term, see Munson 2005, 30-66; cf. Hartog 1988, 237-248.

⁴⁷¹ E.g. *FGrH* 1 F 370: 'Hecataeus calls it Amalcian on the far side of the Parapanisos River, by which it washes the shores of Scythia, a name which in the local tongue means frozen'; F 6a: 'Zeus, however, was aware of this defilement and overturned the table (*trapeza*), from which the region Trapezeus and the city Trapezous receive their names'; cf. also F 21; 272; 284; 322. See Jacoby 1912, col. 2750; Drews 1973, 15-19.

⁴⁷² There are six references to divine language in Homer, four including an equivalent in the language of men (*Il.* 1.403; 2.813-14; 14.290-1; 20.74), and two which do not (*Od.* 10.305; 12.61); see Clay 1972 on this 'dionumia/monumia'. Güntert 1921 (esp. 89-130) is the classic study; more recently, see Gera 2003, esp. 49-54. West (1997, 352-3) offers some Near Eastern parallels to divine language.

⁴⁷³ Munson 2005, 29. The *histor* is distinct from the historical person Herodotus; as Dewald puts it, "the real Herodotus shares many of the same characteristics, but he also has many thoughts and feelings not revealed by the first-person authorial interjections. The comments of the *histor* reveal the kind of authority Herodotus wants us to see him exercising in the text" (Dewald 1987, 153). Cf. her updated views in Dewald 2002: her use of '*histor*' differs in that formerly she "used the term *histor* to signify the whole of Herodotus' authorial

linguistic omniscience, even sometimes presenting himself as more knowledgeable than the native speakers themselves.⁴⁷⁴

Some examples: as we have seen (Chapter 1.1.1), although it is now generally agreed that his observation on Persian names all ending in *sigma/san* at 1.139 is technically incorrect (based on Greek transliterations of male names), the *histor* nonetheless claims special insight into the language, even more than native speakers: this observation is something that ‘escapes the notice of the Persians themselves, but not us’ (τὸ Πέρσας μὲν αὐτοὺς λέληθε, ἡμέας μέντοι οὐ);⁴⁷⁵ and he encourages his readers to verify this fact for themselves: ‘You will find [this to be true], if you inquire...’ (ἐς τοῦτο διζήμενος εὐρήσεις).⁴⁷⁶ In another passage, Herodotus notes Greek translations of the names of Persian kings: ‘In the Greek language these names have the following meanings: Darius is the Doer, Xerxes the Warrior, Artaxerxes the Great Warrior. The Greeks would rightly call the kings thus in their language’ (6.98.3: δύναται δὲ κατὰ Ἑλλάδα γλῶσσαν ταῦτα τὰ οὐνόματα, Δαρεῖος ἐρξίης, Ξέρξης ἀρήιος, Ἀρτοξέρξης μέγας ἀρήιος. τούτους μὲν δὴ τοὺς βασιλέας ὧδε ἂν ὀρθῶς κατὰ γλῶσσαν τὴν σφετέρην Ἕλληνες καλέοιεν).⁴⁷⁷ The *histor* calls his own language, Greek, ‘their language’. In this manner, he stands outside of the Greek linguistic community for this observation, which perhaps gives the impression of external objectivity. In his judgement that such translations would be ‘right’, he claims special knowledge of both languages. In these examples, the *histor* is depicted as an expert in Persian or Greek-Persian translation.

persona”, but now “more narrowly, to signify the register of the authorial voice that conveys and tests information about the world” (2002, 272 n.15).

⁴⁷⁴ Brock 2003, 11: “Whether monoglot or polyglot, he clearly prides himself on his expertise in this area”.

⁴⁷⁵ It is unclear whether the first-person plural here refers to ‘I’ or ‘we’, whether referring to the Greeks or another group; on the difficulties, see Chamberlain 2001.

⁴⁷⁶ Hornblower and Pelling (2017, 220) label it ‘misplaced confidence’. On second-person addresses in Herodotus, see Brock 2003, 11; Dewald 1987, 155 n. 22.

⁴⁷⁷ This touches on the idea of the ‘correctness’ of names, the subject of Plato’s *Cratylus* and much sophistic discussion; see Guthrie 1971, 204-219; Munson 2005, 41-46.

The Herodotean *histor*'s linguistic omniscience extends also to other languages. Herodotus reports the common ancient view that Battus was named after his stutter (from the Greek *battarizo*, 'to stutter'). The *histor* then offers his own view, based on his knowledge of the Libyan language (4.155.1-2):

But in my opinion the boy was given some other name, and changed it to Battus on his coming to Libya, taking this new name because of the oracle given to him at Delphi and the honourable office which he received. For the Libyan word for king is Battus (Λίβυες γὰρ βασιλέα βάττον καλέουσι) and this (I believe) is why the Pythian priestess addressed him so in her prophecy, using the Libyan tongue (Λιβυκῇ γλώσσῃ) because she knew that he was to be king in Libya.

The Battus story, of course, involved Greek colonisation of the extremely linguistically foreign land of Libya;⁴⁷⁸ an acknowledgment of the multilingual circumstances might then be expected.⁴⁷⁹ Certainly, Pindar's version of the Battus story (*Pyth.* 5.55-59) had acknowledged a linguistic element, with Battus scaring away the 'deep-roaring' (βαρύκομποι) Libyan lions with his 'overseas language' (γλώσσαν...ὑπερποντίαν).⁴⁸⁰ Only Herodotus, however, includes an argument based on a Libyan word. Regardless of its historical truth – Corcella calls it "much less convincing" than the derivation from *battarizo*⁴⁸¹ – it seems clear that the *histor* here at least claims superior knowledge of a foreign language, and uses it to 'correct' widespread Greek views. In his role as ἐρμηνεύς, the Herodotean *histor* appears a multilingual expert.

Other non-Greek tongues also appear in the *histor*'s repertoire. When providing the name of Mitrdates' wife, the *histor* translates it from the Median: 'The man's name was

⁴⁷⁸ Libya is home to the Trogodytes, who screech like bats (4.183.4); the Atarantes, with no personal names (4.184.2-3); and Pygmies and Nasamonians, who cannot understand each other's languages (2.32).

⁴⁷⁹ Cf. another Libyan gloss at 4.192.3.

⁴⁸⁰ Cf. Paus. 10.15.6-7.

⁴⁸¹ Asheri et al. 2007, 681.

Mitradates, and his wife was a slave like him; her name was in the Greek language Kyno, in the Median Spako: for *spax* is what the Medes call a dog' (1.110.1: οὐνομα δὲ τῇ γυναικὶ ἦν τῇ συνοίκεε Κυνὸν κατὰ τὴν Ἑλλήνων γλῶσσαν, κατὰ δὲ τὴν Μηδικὴν Σπακὼ· τὴν γὰρ κύνα καλέουσι σπάκα Μηδοί).⁴⁸² The *histor* also claims specialised knowledge of the Scythian tongue, when explaining the name of the Arimaspians (4.27):

It is from the Issedones that the tale comes of the one-eyed men and the griffins that guard gold; this is told by the Scythians, who have heard it from them; and we, the others, customarily take our cue from the Scythians, and call these people by their name in the Scythian language, Arimaspians; for the Scythians say *arima* for 'one', and *spou* is 'eye' (παρὰ δὲ Σκυθέων ἡμεῖς οἱ ἄλλοι νενομίκαμεν καὶ ὀνομάζομεν αὐτοὺς σκυθιστὶ Ἀριμασπούς· ἄριμα γὰρ ἔν καλέουσι Σκύθαι, σποῦ δὲ ὀφθαλμόν).

Here, the *histor* claims knowledge of Scythian to explain the etymology of the name of the Arimaspians.⁴⁸³ Although, again, this “does not find certain confirmation in Iranic roots”,⁴⁸⁴ he nevertheless claims certainty in his explanation. Moreover, he is now happy to be part of a linguistic community of ‘others’ who follow the Scythian naming custom: in the passage on the Persian kings, he had called the Greek tongue ‘their language’, and now he is part of ‘we, the others’ (ἡμεῖς οἱ ἄλλοι).⁴⁸⁵ While the *histor* may vary in his community allegiances, there is consistency in his claims of linguistic omniscience when it comes to translating foreign words.

⁴⁸² At 1.122.3, she is called Kyno again – the Greek name – instead of Spax, to highlight the relation to the Greek for dog. Cf. 6.98.3; despite translating the Persian kings’ names into Greek, Herodotus uses the ‘Persian’ forms elsewhere. This is probably down to convention (cf. his resorting to conventional continent names at 4.45.5).

⁴⁸³ Already mentioned at 3.116.1-2; 4.13; cf. 4.14.3. Cf. also the Scythian name for Amazons, *Oiorpata* (4.110.1).

⁴⁸⁴ Asheri et al. 2007, 601. Cf. also Chamberlain 1999, 278ff.

⁴⁸⁵ On certain other occasions, the *histor* appears to stand outside the linguistic community of the Greeks, e.g. 1.7.2; 4.48.2; 7.63; 9.20. On the first-person plural in Herodotus, see Chamberlain 2001.

Egypt

The appearance of linguistic omniscience for foreign words, then, is a feature of the *histor*'s persona; he is a ἑρμηνεύς who knows foreign languages intimately. The picture of Egypt, however, complicates matters somewhat. As we shall see, Book 2 contains several important references to interpreting. Similarly, it includes the most first-person interventions of any book, and also the most metalinguistic glosses of foreign words.⁴⁸⁶ These latter two features have often been understood as a product of his autopsy, the fruit of his own experience travelling and learning in Egypt: that is, because he presents himself as having seen and heard more things, he makes more first-person comments on physical monuments or Egyptian words. There are approximately eighty 'metalinguistic glosses' in the *Histories* (in which the *histor* translates a foreign word in metanarrative), the highest number (roughly twenty-four) occurring in Book 2.⁴⁸⁷ There seems to be a connection between the *histor*'s critical stance, based on autopsy, and the prevalence of glosses. Are we to assume linguistic omniscience to the point of learning the languages of Egypt to question his informants?

Despite the *histor*'s apparent complete multilingualism, we find him using an interpreter in Egypt to translate an inscription from the Great Pyramid of Cheops (2.125.6):

σεσήμανται δὲ διὰ γραμμάτων Αἰγυπτίων ἐν τῇ πυραμίδι ὅσα ἔς τε συρμαίην καὶ κρόμνυα καὶ σκόροδα ἀναισιμώθῃ τοῖσι ἐργαζομένοισι· καὶ ὥς ἐμὲ εὖ μεμνήσθαι τὰ ὁ ἑρμηνεύς μοι ἐπιλεγόμενος τὰ γράμματα ἔφη, ἑξακόσια καὶ χίλια τάλαντα ἀργυρίου τετελέσθαι.

⁴⁸⁶ For the interventions, see Marincola 1987; Fornara 1971, 19; for the glosses, see Hartog 1988, 237-248; Harrison 1998; Munson 2005, 30-66. It also contains the most foreign inscriptions (West 1985, 297; cf. 280).

⁴⁸⁷ By my count; while Harrison 1998 includes tables, they are unfortunately incomplete. We can perhaps discern a similar link between glosses and alleged autopsy in Diodorus' *Bibliothēke*: in Book I, also concerned with Egypt and where Diodorus allegedly lived for a time, there are the most foreign glosses (eight out of fifteen in total throughout the *Bibliothēke*, with four in Book 3 being the second most). Similarly, concerning inscriptions in the *Bibliothēke*, ten are found in Book I, with the next greatest number being four in Book 5. Certainly, Diodorus was a close student of Herodotus with regards to structure (Green 2006, 23), so there may be influence in presentation.

It was indicated, through the Egyptian characters on the pyramid, how much was spent on radishes and onions and garlic for the workers: sixteen hundred talents of silver was spent, if I remember well what the interpreter said to me, after he read the writing.

In a unique passage in ancient historiography, Herodotus chooses to present himself here as reliant on an interpreter on site.⁴⁸⁸ In this instance, however, the interpreter was (ostensibly) reading a written inscription and relaying a translation orally to Herodotus, a somewhat different process than that for which ἐρμηνεῖς are normally employed in the *Histories*.⁴⁸⁹ Outside of Herodotus, occasionally a historian will evince awareness of problems in the translation of foreign inscriptions: one clear example comes from Arrian's *Anabasis*, where Arrian recounts the famous inscription in 'Assyrian letters' on the tomb of Sardanapalus (Arr. *Anab.* 2.5.3-4): "'But you, stranger, eat and drink and play, as other human things are not worth this'... The Assyrians also said that 'play' was a euphemism for the original Assyrian word (καὶ τὸ παῖζε ῥαδιουργότερον ἐγγεγράφθαι ἔφασαν τῷ Ἀσσυρίῳ ὀνόματι)". This is rather rare, however, and the explicit presence of an interpreter in the Herodotean passage is, to my knowledge, unparalleled. There may be, then, a distinction for the *histor*: when he admits some doubt as to his own recollection of the interpreter's words, we might see this as indicating the *histor*'s dependence in this case on the oral report of the inscription rather than the written inscription itself. Perhaps reading an inscription in a foreign tongue is a limit to his multilingual 'omniscience'.

⁴⁸⁸ Diod. 1.64.3 follows Herodotus in recording the inscription and its contents, while Pliny (*NH* 36.17) cites Herodotus and others before saying: 'Some of these writers inform us that fifteen hundred talents were expended upon radishes, garlic, and onions'. Neither, however, mentions Herodotus' use of an interpreter.

⁴⁸⁹ Herodotus describes this 'written-to-oral' translation process quite clearly (ὥς ἐμὲ εἰς μνηστῆσαι τὰ ὁ ἐρμηνεύς μοι ἐπιλεγόμενος τὰ γράμματα ἔφη). The subject of ἔφη must be ὁ ἐρμηνεύς rather than τὰ γράμματα, because when Herodotus wishes γράμματα to 'say' something, he uses λέγω (1.124.1, 187.1, 5; 2.106.4, 136.3; 3.88.3; 4.91.1; 7.228.1; 8.22.1; cf. also 2.102.4, 141.6). Herodotus displays little interest in hieroglyphics here or elsewhere, if indeed that is what was written on the pyramid. This is perhaps surprising; cf. his interest in the origins of the Greek alphabet (5.57-61). In another section he mentions the 'sacred' and 'demotic' forms of Egyptian writing (2.36.4); hieratic is omitted, as Lloyd notes (1976, *ad loc.*). He does not describe the differences between the scripts. He also (mistakenly) refers to the Hittite reliefs of the Karabel pass (2.102.2-5) as being inscribed with 'Egyptian sacred characters' (γράμματα ἱερὰ Αἰγύπτια); see West 1985, 300-302.

Moreover, the doubt expressed regarding his memory of the interpreter's words presumably refers to the exorbitant cost, seemingly implicit in his subsequent speculation about the high cost of other resources (2.125.7: εἰ δ' ἔστι οὕτω ἔχοντα ταῦτα...). The reported cost has led many scholars to argue that Herodotus "has been misinformed, or has misunderstood or misremembered what he has been told".⁴⁹⁰ It is certainly likely that the ἑρμηνεύς was creative in his translation, perhaps adapting the contents to Greek expectations.⁴⁹¹ Nevertheless, what seems to emerge from the passage is that the *histor* himself does not doubt *the interpreter's translation*, only *his own memory* of that translation.⁴⁹² The passage from Arrian above displays that historian's awareness of translation problems, but such awareness is apparently lacking in the Herodotean passage. There appears to be a gap between the Herodotean *histor*'s understanding on a linguistic level – that is, the interpreter's translation itself – and his understanding, on a cultural level, of such financial extremes. It might be worth comparing the *histor*'s vivid interaction with a γραμματιστής: 'But as to the sources of the Nile, no one that conversed with me (τῶν ἐμοὶ ἀπικομένων ἐς λόγους οὐδεὶς), Egyptian, Libyan, or Greek, professed to know them, except the γραμματιστής of the sacred treasures of Athena in the Egyptian city of Saïs. I thought he was joking when he said that he had exact knowledge (εἰδέναι

⁴⁹⁰ Gould 1989, 24; cf. also Evans 1982, 10; West 1985, 302; Hartog 1988, 239 n.76; Fehling 1989, 138; Asheri et al 2007, 332. How and Wells 1912 suppose it to be 'mistranslated', or that the guide, unable to read hieroglyphs either, "concealed his ignorance by a complete invention" (*ad loc.*). Above all, see Lloyd 1988, 69-71.

⁴⁹¹ See Lloyd (1988, 69-71) on the historical situation at the pyramid, who points out that "neither in the [Old Kingdom] nor in [Herodotus'] time did [Egyptian] state finance operate a money-economy" (71), as implied by the interpreter's translation. See Moyer (2002) on the broader importance of taking account of ideological manipulation of the past by Herodotus' informers; cf. Marincola 2007, 53. Bosworth argues for a similar phenomenon in the context of Alexander's campaigns (1996, Chs. 3 and 4, esp. 72; 98; 124-125; 161-163); he speaks of "the remarkable complicity between questioner and informant" (1996, vi). On the possibilities for what inscriptions Herodotus might have seen, see Lloyd 1988, 69-71.

⁴⁹² Cf. How and Wells' comment (*ad loc.*), that "it can hardly be inferred from this, as some have done, that [Herodotus] trusted his memory in his observations, and made no notes. *He only wishes to emphasize the accuracy of a surprising statement*" (emphasis added). Pace Hartog 1988, 239; Lloyd (Asheri et al 2007, 436).

ἀτρεκέως), but this was his story... This γραμματιστής, then, if he spoke the truth, showed, I think (εἰ ἄρα ταῦτα γινόμενα ἔλεγε, ἀπέφαινε, ὥς ἐμὲ κατανοέειν) that there are strong eddies and an upward flow of water...’ (2.28). Herodotus again expresses reservations about the truth of the content but does not doubt what he heard – through what must have been an interpreter.

The pyramid passage hints at the role of interpreters behind Herodotus’ ἱστορίη: no doubt there were countless other occasions on which he employed their services but omits to mention them. Egypt, however, is arguably a special case in the *Histories*: Herodotus directly explains the historical circumstances owing to which he could obtain information about such an exotic country, and it is apparently due chiefly to a class of Greek/Egyptian interpreters. Herodotus recounts the pharaoh Psammetichus’ gift of Egyptian land to the Ionians and Carians who had helped him obtain power (2.154.1). The ruler also ‘entrusted to them [the Ionians and Carians] Egyptian boys to be taught the Greek language thoroughly, and from these, who learned the language, are descended the present-day Egyptian interpreters’ (2.154.2: ἀπὸ δὲ τούτων ἐκμαθόντων τὴν γλῶσσαν οἱ νῦν ἑρμηνέες ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ γεγόνασι).⁴⁹³ He later mentions these ἑρμηνεῖς as part of the seven classes (γένεα) of Egypt (2.164.1).⁴⁹⁴

More significantly, Herodotus explains that ‘from our dealings with these [Ionian and Carian] settlers in Egypt, *we Greeks have accurate knowledge* (οἱ Ἕλληνες... ἐπιστάμεθα

⁴⁹³ Evidently, these were Greek-speaking Carians like Herodotus himself; they may have also spoken Carian, of course. On these issues, see Abe 2014. Diodorus also mentions the Carian and Ionian mercenaries (1.66.12), but nothing on the creation of the interpreting class.

⁴⁹⁴ Hartog interprets this ‘descent’ (γεγόνασι) as meaning that “an interpreter’s skills were handed down from father to son” (1988, 239), but Lloyd considers it “questionable whether the ‘interpreters’ were, in the main, descendants of these lads” (Asheri et al 2007, 355). Fehling sees the number seven here, just as with the seven interpreters/languages at 4.24, as a “typical number” in Herodotus (1989, 226). Lloyd (Asheri et al 2007, 363) also notes that Egyptian social structure is a “favourite theme” of Greek writers (e.g. Plat. *Tim.* 23-4; Isoc. *Busiris* 15).

ἀτρεκέως) of the history of Egypt from the reign of Psammetichus onwards; for these were the first *alloglossoi* to become established in Egypt' (2.154.4).⁴⁹⁵ Interpreters, then, are integral to Herodotus' ἱστορίη in Book 2. These are evidently the figures who facilitated Herodotus' research in Egypt, illustrated by the episode at the pyramid. They are responsible for the accuracy of Greek information about Egypt, on Herodotus' presentation: once again the *histor* displays trust in the interpreters' skills, labelling it 'accurate knowledge'. This time, however, in contrast to the earlier comment on Persian kings' names, he presents himself as one of the Greeks ('we Greeks'). Given the importance of such interpreters for Greek knowledge of Egypt, it is perhaps then understandable that Herodotus might wish to present an example of his research using an interpreter in Book 2, the most heavily methodological book in the *Histories*. Through employing and referring to the use of interpreters, the Herodotean *histor* avoids the kind of problems which autopsy in a foreign environment can bring about when one does not know the language.⁴⁹⁶ By discussing the origins of the interpreter class in Egypt and showing himself employing one, the *histor* explains how he surmounted one of the greatest obstacles in conducting research in such a foreign country as Egypt.⁴⁹⁷

Scythia

At this point, the *histor*'s apparent multilingual omniscience has been called into question by the unique situation in Egypt; the Greeks owe their knowledge of Egyptian history to interpreters, of whom the *histor* makes use. We can compare the Egyptian situation with

⁴⁹⁵ Greek mercenaries in Egypt under Psammetichus also called themselves ἀλλόγλωσσοι in an inscription from Abu Simbel (*ML* 12); the word is rare (see *LSJ*). On Carian mercenaries in Egypt, see Williams and Villing 2006.

⁴⁹⁶ Cf. Plb. 3.58.4-8 on this issue.

⁴⁹⁷ Already in the early third century BCE, however, Manetho did not consider Herodotus quite so successful in overcoming the language barrier and often refuted Herodotus and his ἀγνοία on Egyptian matters: see *FGrH* 609 F1 = Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1.73; cf. F 19; T 7a; 9; 11a. See also F 13 with Lang's *BNJ* commentary.

its ‘symmetrical image’, Scythia.⁴⁹⁸ The difficulty in gaining access to the far northern reaches beyond Scythian territory is made clear; the ‘bald men’ are so remote that Scythians had to communicate through seven interpreters and seven languages (4.24):

Now as far as the land of these bald men, there is thorough knowledge of the country (πολλή περιφανείη τῆς χώρας) and the *ethnea* on the near side of them; for some of the Scythians make their way to them, from whom it is easy to obtain knowledge (πυθέσθαι), and from some of the Greeks, too, from the Borysthenes port and the other Pontic ports. Such Scythians as visit them transact their business through seven interpreters and seven languages (Σκυθέων δὲ οἱ ἂν ἔλθωσι ἐς αὐτούς, δι’ ἑπτὰ ἑρμηνέων καὶ δι’ ἑπτὰ γλωσσέων διαπρήσσονται).

Scholars have focused attention on the specific number of interpreters. Most have envisaged a chain of seven interpreters, each speaking two languages.⁴⁹⁹ Some have argued the figure corresponds to the number of peoples in the preceding narrative, assuming a different language for each *ethnos*.⁵⁰⁰ One scholar compares the Egyptian interpreter ‘class’ (2.154.2; 164.1), and asserts on the basis of this passage that “the Scythians also had classes of interpreters”.⁵⁰¹ Others have questioned the number as a symbolic or ‘folk-tale’ element, and rightly so: the number seven in the *Histories* tends to occur in ‘fabulous’, geographical, and ethnographical contexts, including two other occasions in the Scythian *logos* (4.22.1; 123.2).⁵⁰² Moreover, the particularly large and specific number of interpreters and languages in this passage does indeed raise issues of symbolism.

⁴⁹⁸ For Herodotus’ ‘symmetry’ between Egypt and Scythia, see 2.2; 2.15; 2.33-34; 2.91.1; 4.5.1; 4.76.1; Immerwahr 1966, 315-317; Hartog 1988, 14-19; Thomas 2000, 78, who notes “such symmetry is not strictly bipolar to the exclusion of other symmetries”.

⁴⁹⁹ Some, however, have understood this passage, rather oddly, to mean that the Scythians “took with them seven interpreters, each of whom spoke seven different languages” (Mosley 1971, 2; see also, recently, Hawkins 2010, 222).

⁵⁰⁰ E.g. Asheri et al 2007, 599; cf. also Munson 2005, 28 n. 47; Rawlinson 1880, *ad loc.* *Contra*: Fehling 1989, 226.

⁵⁰¹ Corcella in Asheri et al 2007, 418; there is, however, no parallel evidence for Scythia comparable to Psammetichus’ establishment of such a class in Egypt (2.154.2), and this view overlooks the *topos* of groups of interpreters in ancient historiography (discussed below). It is possible, however, that simply by calling them ἑρμηνεῖς Herodotus is implying a degree of specialisation, for every other ἑρμηνεύς in the *Histories* appears specialised (cf. the *ad hoc* nature of the Fish-eaters, not labelled ἑρμηνεῖς: 3.19); but if this be so, Corcella has not shown it.

⁵⁰² Powell 1938 notes seventy-three occurrences of ἑπτὰ in Herodotus. See Fehling 1989, 225-226; Skrzinska 1989, 90; Munson 2005, 28 n. 47.

What does it signify about these peoples that they are so very distant linguistically? Fehling discussed the more general phenomenon of ‘relays of informants’ for information from the extreme fringes of Herodotus’ world, citing examples such as the ‘fourth hand’ information regarding the Nile (2.32-33), and paralleled in the northern lands beyond the Scythians (e.g. third-hand information about the one-eyed men and griffins at 4.27).⁵⁰³ Regarding the seven interpreters/languages at 4.24, Fehling claims “the sentence has the hall-mark of a formula and indicates that the motif of linguistic difficulty has more than purely practical significance here; it marks the crossing of the bounds of the known world. In fact there is no other passage where the mundane necessity of having interpreters is mentioned at all”.⁵⁰⁴ Of course, his latter comment is objectively wrong (and disproved throughout this chapter), but the former warrants further scrutiny. To what extent does this reference to extreme linguistic difficulty signify “the crossing of the bounds of the known world”?

A multitude of interpreters is in fact a recurring motif in ancient historiography, and this is only the first such example. This *topos* often represents a vast cultural gulf between one interlocutor and the other. For example, Strabo records a comment from Mandanis, the Indian *gymnosophist*, to Onesicritus, the source of the tale, who had been sent by Alexander to hear the sages’ wisdom (15.1.64).⁵⁰⁵ This passage occurs in a section recounting the exotic customs, practices, and beliefs of the Indian sages. Mandanis asks ‘that he might be pardoned if – conversing through three interpreters (ἐρμηνεῖς) who, except for language (φωνή), understood no more than the masses – he should be unable to set forth anything [in his philosophy] that would be useful; for that, he added, would be like expecting water

⁵⁰³ Fehling 1989, 98-99. See also Fehling 1994 for a view of Herodotus’ access to and presentation of ‘sources’ of information for the edges of the earth, distancing himself from claims to knowledge about the margins as part of his self-presentation as a historian; cf. Nesselrath 1995.

⁵⁰⁴ Fehling 1989, 100.

⁵⁰⁵ He is called Mandanis in Strabo alone; Arrian and others call him Dandamis (see Bosworth 1988b, 72-75).

to flow pure through mud!’ The reference to a multitude of interpreters highlights the cultural difference of the *gymnosophists* in a similar way to the neighbouring discussion of exotic customs; the language was another strange, distant element of their culture. Moreover, such a language barrier is said to be problematic for conveying philosophical principles, since while the interpreters could understand what was being said on the level of the words (φωνή), they could not understand the wisdom itself. This comment, then, is one of the most insightful from the ancient world about the nature of interpreting (at least through many interpreters).⁵⁰⁶

Perhaps most illustrative of the use of many interpreters to represent vast cultural difference is a fascinating tale found in Plutarch's *Sulla*. Near Apollonia, in a *nymphaeum* described in fantastical terms,⁵⁰⁷ a satyr was caught sleeping and brought to the Roman general (*Sull.* 27.1-2), where he was asked through many interpreters (δι’ ἐρμηνέων πολλῶν) who he was. He uttered nothing intelligible, emitting a bestial cry; Sulla dismissed him. This is a strange tale, and little commented upon.⁵⁰⁸ The encounter is perhaps “a metaphor for [Sulla’s] character” with the satyr representing his libidinous and drunken excess, a motif in the *Life*.⁵⁰⁹ As for the language of the beast, it might be expected that he makes no intelligible sound. However, in the context of the interpreters’ motif, the lack of human language could perhaps be viewed through the common ancient perception of barbarian languages as animal-like.⁵¹⁰ A satyr, a mythical half-human/half-beast, is as linguistically

⁵⁰⁶ A similar sentiment, concerning language barriers' hindrance to the discussion of philosophy, is found in Lucretius' famous comment (later echoed by authors such as Cicero and Quintilian) regarding the ‘poverty’ of Latin in this respect (*patrii sermonis egestas*: *Lucr.* 1.136-145; 3.260; see Fogen 2000).

⁵⁰⁷ Cf. Strabo’s equally fantastical description of the same *nymphaeum* (7.5.8).

⁵⁰⁸ Cf. Pausanias’ sailors’ tale of satyrs on a remote island (1.23.5-6); he notes, however, that when the satyrs ran down to the sailors’ ships, they ‘did not utter a sound’ (φωνὴν μὲν οὐδεμίαν ἰέναι).

⁵⁰⁹ Duff 1999, 167-168.

⁵¹⁰ Barbarian speech linked to animal sounds: *Hdt.* 2.54-57; 4.183; *A. Ag.* 1050-2; *S. Trach.* 1060, *Ant.* 1002, *E. Ba.* 1034-5, *Ar. Av.* 199-200, *Ran.* 679-82, *Pax.* 681. The analogy of barbarian speech and the sound of birds is perhaps suggested of the Trojans at *Hom. Il.* 3.1-9; Harrison 1998, 18 n. 80. Cf. Rose’s suggestion of

barbarian as one might get, and the narrative suggests Sulla anticipates this exoticism to some extent by employing ‘many’ interpreters. Ultimately, the creature is too foreign for human attempts at communication. The story is humorous, but part of the humour may be dependent on the motif of a group of interpreters, as if the satyr were simply a particularly ‘exotic’ barbarian. It could suggest that Plutarch is playing with his audience’s expectations of an established historiographical motif.

The examples I have discussed here about groups of interpreters often reinforce or even emphasise an author’s depiction of particularly vast cultural differences.⁵¹¹ However, while such differences could cause difficulties in communication – as in the case of Mandanis in Strabo, or the satyr in Plutarch – it is important to note that in Herodotus, despite the number of interpreters required to speak with the ‘bald men’ and their neighbours, the *histor* appears confident in the interpreters’ ability to obtain accurate information. There is ‘*thorough knowledge* of the region and surrounding *ethnea*’ (4.24). The multitude of interpreters might highlight the cultural foreignness of such peoples as being “beyond the bounds of the known world”, but in the *histor*’s estimation it does not hinder translation or the harvesting of accurate data.

Conclusion – Herodotus the *histor* and his interpreters

At the end of our examination of the *histor*’s presentation of interpreters, there is an apparent emphasis on their reliability. In addition to the ‘thorough knowledge’ of the region provided by the ‘bald men’ through interpreters, the *histor*’s experience at the Egyptian

an ancient association between satyrs and ‘muteness’, an argument based primarily on this passage and Verg. *Ecl.* 6.13f (Rose 2006, 26 n.65); we might note, however, that he does not remain silent but emits a cry.

⁵¹¹ Cf. also Plb. 1.67.9; Plin. *NH* 6.5.15.

pyramid indicates that his distrust was not of the interpreter, but of his own memory (2.125.6). Likewise, he trusts in the material concerning Egyptian history which is obtained from Greek interpreters in Egypt, labelling it ‘accurate’ (2.154.4). Elsewhere, while learning foreign languages can get some of Herodotus’ characters in trouble, there is rarely a depiction of language barriers being insurmountable.⁵¹² His apparent belief in the process of oral translation as fundamentally accurate is intriguing, especially considering the *histor*’s scepticism elsewhere concerning specific stories which he had heard.⁵¹³ Such a view also appears to place Herodotus (or at least the *histor*) on one end of an ancient historiographical spectrum of ‘trust in interpreters’ – we might imagine on the other end Curtius Rufus, the first-century CE Alexander historian writing in Latin, who regularly emphasises the potential of interpreters for double-dealing and builds such views into several key episodes.⁵¹⁴

How then to explain this apparent trust in interpreting? Two main possibilities present themselves. On the one hand, it could be argued that Herodotus may simply have believed that language could be translated so easily. After all, he expresses few reservations about the act of translating in the passages already discussed, and the same is true throughout the *Histories*. As I have said, there is insufficient evidence that he knew any non-Greek language, and monolingual individuals apparently tend to consider translation to be a simple word-for-word exchange.⁵¹⁵ Indeed, there was a school of thought in the ancient

⁵¹² One exception is the Nasamonians and Pygmies in Libya, who cannot understand each other’s languages; however, the Pygmies are still able to operate as guides (2.32). Cf. also the Scythian men who cannot learn the Amazonian language (4.114.1), overcome by the Amazons’ learning the Scythian tongue, albeit ‘incorrectly’ (4.117). For the aforementioned ‘trouble’, consider these examples: the Median children (1.73); Scyles (4.76-78); the half-Athenian, half-Pelasgian boys on Lemnos (6.138). Cf. also Histiaeus, whose speaking in Persian fails to save him (6.29); on which, Chapter 3.1.

⁵¹³ E.g. 3.16.7.

⁵¹⁴ See Chapter 2.2.

⁵¹⁵ In the context of modern legal interpreting, Inghilleri (2003) discusses certain ‘norms’ or cultural expectations, within a monolingual monoculture, of the role of interpreters, and how these expectations can affect the interpreting process. These include expectations of an interpreter’s ‘invisibility’ and that they be merely a ‘conduit’ rather than an ‘advocate’ regarding the translation. Concerning the distinction, this

world that language was merely a collection of *onomata* (names, nouns, words) and acquiring language was a matter of ‘learning *onomata*’ (e.g. *Dissoi Logoi* DK B 90 6 (12); cf. Pl. *Crat.* 431a-c; 438).⁵¹⁶ Herodotus’ glosses throughout the *Histories* are limited to single words, and some have suggested that he subscribed to such a linguistic worldview.⁵¹⁷ One might claim that the *histor*’s faith in interpreters is further evidence for this.

A more likely interpretation, however, concerns the role of the *histor* as ἐρμηνεύς. If we recall Dewald’s description of the *histor*’s comments as “reveal[ing] the kind of authority Herodotus wants us to see him exercising in the text” and “suggest[ing] how he wishes us to understand his authorial role”,⁵¹⁸ then perhaps one of Herodotus’ goals in representing the *histor*’s faith in interpreters is conditioning his audience to trust the *histor*’s own interpreting activity – that is, his metanarrative translations of foreign words or his comments on the nature of particular languages. Herodotus is a kind of ἐρμηνεύς too, and this presentation of interpreting activity could be a means of claiming historiographical authority over the act of translating.

In this regard, then, it is worth observing that there are in fact some limits to the *histor*’s knowledge of languages as ἐρμηνεύς. As I have demonstrated, he can translate words from many languages and explain etymologies. The boundaries of his knowledge, however,

comment from a court interpreter in the USA, who was ordered to translate ‘word for word’ (i.e. as ‘conduit’) can help clarify: “You have to translate exactly what [the client] is saying even if you feel he means something else. Otherwise you might guess wrong... You must use the same exact word he uses, *what he says*, *not what he means to say*. Most of the time, the respondents are not well-educated. They don’t say what they want to say or in the order that they want to say it” (2003, 257; emphasis added).

⁵¹⁶ On this idea of ‘language as nomenclature’, see Gera 2003, esp. ch. 4; also pp. 45; 53 n.117; 180; 201; Harrison 1998, 20.

⁵¹⁷ Hartog 1988, 243; Harrison 1998, 20-21; Munson 2005, 32. While non-Greek words may be limited to single words, the *histor* translates the Egyptian word *Asmakh* with many words in Greek: ‘The name for these Deserters is *Asmakh*, and this term translates, in Greek, as ‘those who stand on the left hand of the king’ (2.30.1). The term’s designation as *epos*, however (as in 2.2.4), signifies a more complex meaning: see Hollmann 2000.

⁵¹⁸ Dewald 1987, 153.

appear to emerge when it comes to the origin and development of certain languages.⁵¹⁹ That is, his research can find out what words mean in contemporary languages, or how foreign terms can consist of different words (e.g. Arimaspians), but he cannot always explain how a language came to be. For example, he cannot say ‘accurately’ (ἀτρεκέως) what language the ancient Pelasgians spoke (1.57.1). Nevertheless, he argues from contemporary data (the speech of modern-day ‘Pelasgians’) that the Pelasgians had spoken a barbarian tongue (1.57.2). With similar vocabulary, the *histor* cannot decide which of the Carian and Caunian languages has come to resemble the other: ‘The Caunian language has become like the Carian, or the Carian like theirs, for I cannot *accurately* (ἀτρεκέως) decide’ (1.172.1). Similarly, the conclusions of Psammetichus’ experiment to determine the first language (and thus the first people) appear to be overridden by the *histor*’s own research into the geography of Egypt (2.2; 2.15); the implication seems to be that determining the first language is a limit of inquiry.⁵²⁰ This apparent lesser degree of certainty about the past is not exclusive to linguistic inquiry, however, and speaks to questions around Herodotus’ *spatium historicum*.⁵²¹

It is worth emphasising that all these examples consist of the *histor*’s own comments indicating the limits of his knowledge; perhaps by saying so, he enhances the value of when he does know something about languages’ origin or development – for example, that the language of the Sauromatae is essentially Scythian spoken incorrectly from the beginning (4.117); or that the Ammonians’ language is a mixture from their Egyptian and Ethiopian

⁵¹⁹ In addition to reading foreign inscriptions; see above on 2.125.

⁵²⁰ See Vannicelli 1997; Munson 2005, 23.

⁵²¹ E.g. von Leyden 1949/50; Hunter 1982, 86-90; 103-7; Vandiver 1991, 1-10; Cobet 2002, 405-411.

settlers (2.42).⁵²² The *histor*'s presentation of interpreters, then, works to bolster his historiographical authority as ἐρμηνεύς.

Bilingual intermediaries in historical narrative

We now move on to discuss Herodotus' presentation of bilingual intermediaries in historical narrative. As noted earlier, there are three references to anonymous interpreters and one to bilingual envoys; in each case, the intermediaries are agents of the Persian King (1.86, Cyrus; 3.19.1, Cambyses; 3.38.4; 3.140.3, Darius).

Cyrus' interpreters for Croesus

The first interpreters in the *Histories* appear when Croesus is on the pyre (1.86):

Croesus heaved a deep sigh and groaned aloud after long silence, calling out three times the name "Solon". [4] Cyrus heard and ordered the ἐρμηνεῖς to ask Croesus whom he was invoking. They approached and asked, but Croesus kept quiet at their questioning, until finally they forced him and he said, "I would prefer to great wealth his coming into discourse with all despots." Since what he said was unintelligible, they again asked what he had said (ὥς δέ σφι ἄσημα ἔφραζε, πάλιν ἐπειρώτων τὰ λεγόμενα), persistently harassing him. He explained that first Solon the Athenian had come and seen all his fortune and spoken as if he despised it. Now everything had turned out for him as Solon had said, speaking no more of him than of every human being, especially those who think themselves fortunate. While Croesus was relating all this, the pyre had been lit and the edges were on fire. [6] When Cyrus heard from the interpreters what Croesus said, he changed his mind and reflected that he, a human being, was burning alive another human being, once his equal in good fortune. In addition, he feared retribution, reflecting how there is nothing stable in human affairs.

For the interpreters, Croesus' words are not initially clear in meaning (ἄσημα). It is not a problem of linguistic translation, however; they can understand his language (Lydian), but are not aware of Croesus' back story.⁵²³ Once Croesus explains the story, all is understood.

⁵²² Cf. also his knowledge that there are actually four variations of *glossa* among the Ionians (1.142), and the language of the Trogodytes, who 'speak a language like no other, but squeak like bats' (4.183.4). These four examples are the only passages in the *Histories* when Herodotus uses the verb νομίζω to describe languages; I discuss its significance in relation to *nomos* in the Introduction.

⁵²³ Munson 2005, 75; Hollmann 2011, 246. Munson compares the scene between Cambyses and the defeated Psammenitus (3.14), which is "structurally analogous" but "lacks the dimension of understanding or not

The word ἄσημα ('unintelligible') literally means 'unmarked', as of bullion (cf. Hdt. 9.41.3; Thuc. 2.13.4; 6.8.1); its common metaphorical sense, however, is something like 'incomprehensible' or 'signless', verging on 'cryptic' or 'riddling' in the case of prophetic or oracular utterances (e.g. Hdt. 2.2.3; 5.92b.3; Aesch. *PV.* 662; Eur. *Alc.* 522; *Hipp.* 269).⁵²⁴ Herodotus uses the term also for non-comprehension of words in one's own language (e.g. 5.92b.3), which means that ἄσημα cannot refer to a language barrier, only the 'knowledge barrier' of Croesus' back story; his words are like a cryptic oracle.

The interpreters appear to symbolise the difference in power and understanding between Croesus and Cyrus at this point, since this gap is soon bridged and the interpreters disappear.⁵²⁵ After Cyrus hears what Croesus says about Solon through the interpreters, he 'changes his mind' (μεταγνόντα), reflecting that he is burning alive another human being, once his equal in good fortune (ἐννώσαντα ὅτι καὶ αὐτὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐὼν ἄλλον ἄνθρωπον, γενόμενον ἐωυτοῦ εὐδαιμονίῃ οὐκ ἐλάσσω, ζῶντα πυρὶ διδοίῃ). Cyrus orders the fire be extinguished, but it is too entrenched. At this point, Croesus, seeing the people trying to put out the fire, 'learns of Cyrus' change of heart' (1.87.1: ἐνθαῦτα λέγεται ὑπὸ Λυδῶν Κροῖσον μαθόντα τὴν Κύρου μετάγνωσιν). He invokes Apollo, whose rain finally extinguishes the fire. This is the fulfilment of one of Herodotus' suggested motives for Cyrus' placing him atop the pyre in the first place – because he 'wished to know' (βουλόμενος εἰδέναι) whether a god would save him (1.86.2).⁵²⁶ Cyrus thus 'learns' that Croesus is dear to the gods and a good man (οὕτω δὲ μαθόντα τὸν Κῦρον ὡς εἶη ὁ Κροῖσος

understanding the hidden message of an utterance. Accordingly, no attention is drawn to language" (2005, 75 n. 34).

⁵²⁴ Another Herodotean passage (2.2.3) uses ἄσημος to refer to the inarticulate babbling of babies, which Psammetichus knows will not provide evidence of a proper language: 'Psammetichus both did these things and gave these orders because he wished to hear what language they would utter first, once past the stage of *unintelligible whimperings* (ἁσήμεων κνυζημάτων)'.

⁵²⁵ De Bakker 2007, 64; cf. also Stahl 1975 and Pelling 2006a for the broader themes.

⁵²⁶ Cf. Christ 1994, 198.

καὶ θεοφιλὴς καὶ ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός). Accordingly, he brings Croesus down from the pyre, where they converse without interpreters (καταβιβάσαντα αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τῆς πυρῆς εἰρέσθαι τάδε...). No longer simply king and prisoner, their common ‘humanity’ is now realised.

Interpreters, of course, can only ever be present where a language barrier exists, but most inter-cultural encounters in the *Histories* do not acknowledge such barriers. When Croesus is on the pyre, the interpreters represent the gulf of power and understanding between Cyrus the king and his doomed prisoner Croesus. Once they are on a more ‘equal’ footing (Croesus is still prisoner after all, cf. 1.88.1) and finally understand the value of Solon’s words, there is no need for interpreters.

Cambyzes’ bilingual Fish-eaters for the Ethiopian king

Our next two examples of bilingual intermediaries in historical narrative both concern Persian kings’ inquiries into semi-fantastical peoples, the Ethiopians and the Callatian Indians.⁵²⁷ In each case, the presence of bilingual envoys (Fish-eaters) or an interpreter (Callatian Indians) draws attention to cultural differences, whilst also reflecting Persian royal power.

The first case is the Fish-eaters whom Cambyses sends to Ethiopia as spies (κατάσκοποι) because they know the Ethiopian tongue (3.19).⁵²⁸ These Fish-eaters arguably function as ‘surrogate-ethnographers’ for Herodotus himself, as their dialogue with the Ethiopian king results in the conveyance of much factual information about Ethiopia and, indeed,

⁵²⁷ See Skinner (2012, 95-99) on the Ethiopians in the Greek imagination before Herodotus.

⁵²⁸ On this episode see Demont 2009; Irwin 2014; Török 2014.

Cambyzes' own Persia.⁵²⁹ These inquiries, moreover, have strategic significance: Cambyzes wants to find out as much as possible about Ethiopia before invading, including the truth (ἀληθείας) of the legend of the Table of the Sun, all under the pretext (τῷ λόγῳ) of bringing gifts for the Ethiopian king (3.17).⁵³⁰ Thus, this *logos* appears to mirror Herodotus' own historical activity in the *Histories*: his routine practice is to provide an 'ethnography' of a country before or when it is conquered in his historical narrative. The question is why Herodotus chooses to mention the linguistic reason for Cambyzes' choice in this instance: the King sends for 'those of the Fish-eaters who knew the Ethiopian language' (3.19.1: τῶν Ἰχθυοφάγων ἀνδρῶν τοὺς ἐπισταμένους τὴν Αἰθιοπίδα γλῶσσαν). It is clear, of course, that this would facilitate communication, but we must remember that referring to characters' languages is not something Herodotus does regularly, and these are the only envoys in the *Histories* explicitly said to be sent owing to their linguistic knowledge. I would suggest that this detail reflects the unique and exotic nature of the Ethiopians and their wisdom, and that the Fish-eaters' exceptional role as 'ethnographers' demands some knowledge of the Ethiopian tongue.

This exotic distinctiveness is illustrated early in the narrative. When the Fish-eaters are sent off bearing gifts and with orders as to what to say (3.20.1), Herodotus mentions that 'the Ethiopians are said to...employ *nomoi* different to all men' (3.20.1-2: λέγονται εἶναι...νόμοισι δὲ καὶ ἄλλοισι χρᾶσθαι αὐτοὺς κεχωρισμένοισι τῶν ἄλλων ἀνθρώπων). This is similar to what he had said in Book 2 about the Egyptians, who have 'instituted *ethea* and *nomoi* contrary for the most part to those of the rest of mankind' (2.35.2: πολλὰ πάντα ἔμπαλιν τοῖσι ἄλλοισι ἀνθρώποισι ἐστήσαντο ἥθεά τε καὶ νόμους).⁵³¹ The historian thus

⁵²⁹ The term comes from Munson 2005, 74; cf. Irwin 2014, 30. See further below.

⁵³⁰ Renier (1973) esp. 21–8; Christ 1994, 180; Demont 2009, 186–7 n. 28; Irwin 2014, esp. 27–30.

⁵³¹ Török makes the same connection between these two passages (2014, 99). There is much overlap between the history and cultures of Egypt and Ethiopia in the *Histories* (e.g. 2.30: Ethiopians adopted some Egyptian

indicates that the Ethiopians are particularly exotic beings, and by describing this information as hearsay (λέγονται) simultaneously points to the need for the kind of detailed information-gathering that will be carried out by the κατάσκοποι. Like the ‘bald men’ in Scythia, the ‘long-lived’ Ethiopians represent an area beyond the bounds of the known world.⁵³²

The strangeness of the Ethiopians is further apparent in the dialogue between the Fish-eaters and the Ethiopian king; their cultural distance from both Persians and, by implication, Greeks, is plain. The king quickly ascertains the Fish-eaters’ actual status as spies and Cambyses’ purpose in sending them; he presents them a large bow to give to Cambyses, saying that only when Persians can draw it as effortlessly as he can should they make war on the Ethiopians (3.21). The king then asks about the gifts from Cambyses, and his interpretations highlight his unique culture. Upon hearing how the cloak came to be dyed, he claims dyed garments and their wearers are liars (3.22.1); he soon makes a similar comment about perfume (3.22.3). He mistakes gold jewellery for chains (3.22.2), a misunderstanding evidently based on the fact that Ethiopian prisoners wear gold chains, which we learn when the king provides the Fish-eaters with a tour (3.23.4). He displays no knowledge of wine, a source of great fascination to him, along with the Persian diet (3.22.3). The Ethiopians, the king says, eat boiled meat and drink milk (classic markers of non-Greek customs), and he puts his people’s long life down in part to ‘not eating dung’, which is his understanding of the ‘Persian’ bread-making process (referring to the manure used to cultivate wheat: 3.22.4).⁵³³ The foreignness of the Ethiopians is perhaps why the

customs with the deserters and became more civilised; 2.42: Ammonians are joint colony of Ethiopians and Egyptians, having a language between both; cf. also 2.104; 106; 110; 137; 139).

⁵³² Ethiopia continues to be depicted as linguistically (and culturally) exotic in later Greek literature too, e.g. Heliodorus’ *Aithiopika* (on which, see Shalev 2006).

⁵³³ Demont stresses the ‘Greekness’ of such Persian customs (2009, 197-200).

Fish-eaters, specifically, are required – they are ‘middle men’ in several senses: not only do they convey Cambyses’ wishes and gifts, the Fish-eaters also represent a “dietary middle ground” between the meat-eating Ethiopians and the bread-eating Persians (and Greeks).⁵³⁴

As noted, the Fish-eaters in this episode act as ‘surrogate-ethnographers’ for Herodotus.⁵³⁵ This term refers to the inquiring role carried out by these figures, obtaining much information about Ethiopia through quizzing the king.⁵³⁶ On other occasions, certain figures in the *Histories* are presented as mirroring Herodotus’ own inquiring behaviour,⁵³⁷ and oral inquiry is indeed part of Herodotus’ own practice of *ιστορίη*. As we have seen earlier, obtaining information from far-flung, exotic, non-Greek peoples often demands bilingual intermediaries, such as the seven *ἐρμηνεῖς* beyond Scythia. In that case, interpreters facilitated ‘thorough knowledge of the region and surrounding *ethnea*’ (4.24). Likewise, the Egyptian interpreter class provided ‘accurate knowledge’ of Egyptian history for Herodotus (2.154.4), and we saw with the *histor*’s experience of an interpreter in Egypt that his distrust was not of the interpreter, but of his own memory (2.125.6). Bilingual intermediaries facilitate the *histor*’s work greatly and obtaining information from Ethiopia, one of the most exotic places, evidently also requires people who speak the language. We may recall that the *histor* often includes metalinguistic glosses of foreign words and translates their meaning; in this way, he acts as both inquiring historian and bilingual (or multilingual) intermediary. The Fish-eaters, as ‘surrogate’ *histores*, must be depicted with knowledge of the Ethiopian tongue in order to access their uniquely exotic foreign wisdom.

⁵³⁴ Munson 2005, 74; de Bakker 2007, 65. The Egyptians, on the other hand, eat bread, fish, and some boiled meat (2.77.4-5).

⁵³⁵ Munson 2005, 74.

⁵³⁶ They are also, of course, ‘surrogate-ethnographers’ for Cambyses. Munson 1991 delves deeper into the Cambyses *logos* and that king’s role as ‘perverted *histor*’ (esp. 59-62).

⁵³⁷ E.g. Christ 1994; Demont 2009; Grethlein 2009; de Bakker 2016.

The fact that Cambyses can also source Fish-eaters to act as spies and travel on his behalf beyond the bounds of the known world speaks to the immense power of the Persian King.

Darius' interpreter for Callatian Indians

Later in Book 3 and still in the Cambyses *logos*, there is another episode containing a Persian king's 'inquiry' into exotic peoples which includes a bilingual intermediary: the famous, temporally untethered tale about Darius' comparing the funerary rites of the Greeks and Callatian Indians (3.38).⁵³⁸ Like the Ethiopians, the latter are somewhat fantastical in the Greek imagination, and at 3.97 the Callatians are even linked to the Ethiopians through similarity of semen.⁵³⁹

Herodotus is arguing that Cambyses must have been truly deranged to have mocked sacred and customary things, because 'if it were proposed to all nations to choose which seemed best of all customs, each, after examination, would place its own first' (3.38.1). As proof (τεκμήριον), he offers this anecdote about Darius (3.38.3-4):

When Darius was king, he summoned the Greeks who were with him (καλέσας Ἑλλήνων τοὺς παρόντας) and asked them for what price they would eat their fathers' dead bodies. They answered that there was no price for which they would do it. [4] Then Darius summoned those Indians who are called Callatae, who eat their parents, and asked them – the Greeks being present and understanding through an interpreter what was said (παρόντων τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ δι' ἑρμηνέος μανθανόντων τὰ λεγόμενα) – what would make them willing to burn their fathers at death. The Indians cried aloud, urging that he should not speak of so horrid an act (οἱ δὲ ἀμβώσαντες μέγα εὐφημέειν μιν ἐκέλευον). So firmly rooted are these beliefs; and it is, I think, rightly said in Pindar's poem that *nomos* is king of all.

This passage has often been seen as an example of Herodotus' "cultural relativism", concerned as it is with how different peoples view their own (often radically divergent)

⁵³⁸ Irwin (2014, 28) also connects this passage with the Fish-eaters episode in terms of the "inversion of observer and observed", since the Persian king, "ostensibly the object of Herodotus' own inquiry, turns inquirer".

⁵³⁹ Cf. also 3.100-101; and the 'Kallatai' in Hecataeus (*FGrH* 1 F 298); Torok 2014, 111 n.389.

customs.⁵⁴⁰ Any potential problem of multilingual communication between the Persians, Greeks, and Callatians is here bridged by the presence of an interpreter – though it is worth noting that this is framed as being for the benefit of the Greeks. Although the story makes clear that the Greeks (and Greek customs) are just as foreign to the Callatians, the suggestion that the Greeks employ the interpreter because of the particularly exotic nature of the Callatians in the eyes of Herodotus’ Greek audience seems sound.⁵⁴¹ For one thing, the interpreter is not mentioned when Darius (a Persian) speaks to the Greeks, but only once he has summoned the Callatians and Herodotus has noted that they ‘eat their parents’ (καλέσας Ἰνδῶν τοὺς καλεομένους Καλλατίας, οἱ τοὺς γονέας κατεσθίουσι). The Greeks serve as an internal audience for Darius’ display, while Herodotus’ external audience understands that the Callatians’ funerary customs are more ‘barbarian’ than those of Greeks and Persians (much like the Ethiopians, discussed above). We have seen elsewhere how ‘superlatively savage’ (often dietary) customs frequently go together with incomprehensibility of tongue: in addition to the Ethiopians, who eat boiled meat and speak in a tongue that required Fish-eaters to communicate with them, we might compare Thucydides’ treatment of the Eurytians, whose difficult tongue is mentioned alongside their consumption of raw meat (Thuc. 3.94.5; see above Chapter 1.1.2). Linguistic difference is necessary, of course, for the interpreter’s presence in Darius’ experiment, but their primary purpose seems to be to symbolise the vast cultural distance between the Callatians and the Greeks on the level of funerary *nomoi*.⁵⁴²

⁵⁴⁰ Humphreys 1987, 212; Christ 1994, 187-189; Thomas 2000, 125-127 (on the ‘sophistic relativism’ of the passage); 194 (on the ‘language of proof’); Munson 2005, 76-78.

⁵⁴¹ Stephanie West, at Harrison 1998, 11; cf. Braund 1998, 173; Munson 2005, 76-77.

⁵⁴² de Bakker 2007, 64.

Darius' interpreters for Syloson

Our final passage also concerns Darius' use of ἑρμηνεῖς. This is the fabled anecdote about Syloson and the cloak.⁵⁴³ As we shall see, there is no mention of an interpreter when Darius and Syloson first meet; only when Darius is king. I will suggest that the interpreters form part of the symbolism of royal authority in the Persian court and represent the changed power dynamics between the two individuals, in addition to their cultural difference.

In recounting Darius' conquest of Samos, Herodotus explains how it came about. He notes that, with respect to Cambyses' invasion of Egypt, many Greeks came with the army for trade and sightseeing, and one of these was Syloson, brother of Polycrates, in exile from Samos (3.139.1). Herodotus then describes Syloson's first meeting with Darius (3.139.2-3):

This Syloson had a stroke of good luck (εὐτυχίη). He was in the *agora* at Memphis wearing a red cloak, when Darius, at that time one of Cambyses' bodyguards and as yet a man of no great importance (δορυφόρος τε ἐὼν Καμβύσεω καὶ λόγου οὐδενός κω μεγάλου), saw him, and desiring the cloak came and tried to buy it. [3] When Syloson saw Darius' eagerness, by divine chance (θείη τύχη) he said, "I will not sell this for any money, but I give it to you free if you must have it so much." Extolling this, Darius accepted the garment.

Herodotus emphasises Darius' lowly status here as Cambyses' 'bodyguard', despite its historical improbability.⁵⁴⁴ Van der Veen rightly points out that "stress seems to be laid on the trivial nature of the origin of Darius' first campaign, the gift, the giver and the receiver all being of little consequence at the time".⁵⁴⁵ This is recalled later in the tale, when Darius expresses his gratitude to Syloson because 'it was you who gave me a present when I had

⁵⁴³ Cf. Strab. 14.1.17; Aelian *Var. Hist.* 4.5; Julian, *Or.* 3.117b; *Epistle* 29; Themistius 67A, 109.

⁵⁴⁴ How and Wells 1912, *ad loc.*; Legrand 1967, *ad loc.*; Asheri et al. 2007, *ad loc.* Many have understood *doryphoros* here to be a reference to 'spear-bearer' in the sense of the Persian royal title, *arstibara*, "one of the most important dignitaries of the Great King" (Asheri et al. 2007, *ad loc.*). Cf. also Darius' role as *idiotes* before becoming king (7.3.2); this probably refers to Darius' not being son of a king, unlike Cambyses and Xerxes (Briant 2002, 110).

⁵⁴⁵ Van der Veen 1995, 142.

as yet no power' (3.140.4: σὺ κεῖνος εἷς ὃς ἐμοὶ οὐδεμίαν ἔχοντί κω δύναμιν ἔδωκας). Darius' transition from low status to king is at the core of the story, and Herodotus notes the divine luck of Syloson's kindness to a man who would later wield great power. We should also note that in this passage, while both Darius and Syloson are of apparently equal status (or at least neither holds significant power over the other), Herodotus does not mention interpreters between them. Darius the Persian and Syloson the Greek would have required such an intermediary to communicate, but as is typical in the *Histories*, there is no reference to the intercultural logistics.

This situation changes, however, in the next stage of the story. Initially thinking he had lost his cloak out of foolishness (εὐηθία), Syloson later learns that the new king is the same man from the Memphis *agora*, so he goes to visit him in Susa (3.140.1-5):

Syloson went up to Susa and sat in the King's antechamber (πρόθυρον), saying that he was a benefactor (εὐεργέτης) of Darius. [2] When the doorkeeper (πυλῶρ) brought word of this to the King, Darius was astonished (θωμάσας) and asked: "But to what εὐεργέτης among the Greeks can I owe thanks? In the little time since I have been King hardly one of that people have come to us, and I have, I may say, no use for any Greek man. Nevertheless, bring him in, so that I may know what he means." The doorkeeper (πυλῶρ) brought Syloson in and the ἑρμηνεῖς asked him as he stood there who he was and what he had done to call himself the King's benefactor (στάντα δὲ ἐς μέσον εἰρώτων οἱ ἑρμηνεῖς τίς τε εἶη καὶ τί ποιήσας εὐεργέτης φησὶ εἶναι βασιλέος). Then Syloson told the story of the cloak and said that it was he who had given it. [4] "Most generous man," said Darius, "it was you who gave me a present when I had as yet no power (σὺ κεῖνος εἷς ὃς ἐμοὶ οὐδεμίαν ἔχοντί κω δύναμιν ἔδωκας)..." [5] Syloson answered, "Do not give me gold, O King, or silver, but Samos, my country, which our slave has, now that my brother Polycrates has been killed by Oroetes; give me this without killing or enslaving".

The architecture and bureaucracy of royal power is relatively prominent in this scene: Herodotus mentions the King's antechamber and doorkeeper, each serving as a barrier to accessing Darius. This contrasts with Syloson's first contact, bumping into Darius in the *agora*; indeed, in their first encounter, Darius was himself part of the bureaucracy of royal

power as a bodyguard.⁵⁴⁶ This new distance between ruler and ruled is emblematic of autocracy in the *Histories*; the ‘despotic template’, in Dewald’s words, begins with the tale of Deioces in Book 1 and his building of despotic power through physical barriers (the seven circles of walls around the palace) and subordinates doing his bidding (bodyguards, spies).⁵⁴⁷ The interpreters now present between Darius and Syloson form part of this same bureaucracy; we will remember that all ἐρμηνεῖς in Herodotus’ historical narrative are agents of the Persian King. These figures represent the vast chasm that has grown between the two men in terms of power and also understanding of the past; once Syloson has recounted the cloak story, Darius and Syloson converse freely without interpreters (as with Croesus and Cyrus).⁵⁴⁸

Conclusion

Herodotus uses interpreters in historical narrative to several symbolic ends. First, to symbolise the initial gap in understanding which exists between characters of different cultural backgrounds who attempt to communicate. Speaking ‘directly’ to each other in the narrative is only possible when both parties finally understand what was not previously recognised (Cyrus and Croesus; Darius and Syloson); only then do the interpreters become unnecessary.⁵⁴⁹ Similarly, interpreters can symbolise the particularly ‘exotic’ (in Greek eyes) customs and lifestyle of a ‘fantastical’ non-Greek people (Ethiopians and Fish-eaters; Darius and Callatians). Such cultural distance is overcome by the presence of bilingual intermediaries; in the case of the Fish-eaters, their role as ‘surrogate ethnographers’ for

⁵⁴⁶ Doorkeepers (πυλῶνται) in Herodotus, interestingly, all occur in Book 3 in stories about Darius (3.72.5; 77.2; 118.2; 140.2, 3; 156.2).

⁵⁴⁷ Dewald 2003, 27-28; cf. Thomas 2012.

⁵⁴⁸ de Bakker 2007, 64.

⁵⁴⁹ de Bakker comes to a similar conclusion (2007, 64).

Herodotus necessitates the kind of linguistic knowledge that we have seen displayed by the *histor* in his role as a sort of *hermeneus*.

Bilingual intermediaries in Herodotus' historical narrative also operate as markers of the power and status of Persian Kings. Regarding the Callatian Indians story, Munson argues that the reference to the interpreter specifies that "the Greeks had the means to understand *these* [linguistic] codes, and that this item of difference is the least problematic of all" (that is, compared to *nomos*).⁵⁵⁰ But is it the Greeks who have the means to cross this linguistic boundary, or is it rather the Persian King? He calls the different parties together, as well as dictating proceedings. We noted at the start of this section that the four references in historical narrative all refer to bilingual intermediaries as agents of the King; in addition to symbolising the cultural or conceptual gap yet to be bridged, such intermediaries also reflect the vast power of Persian monarchs. Elsewhere in Greek historiography it is a marker of great power to command many peoples of many different tongues successfully (e.g. Xen. *Cyr.* 1.1.5; Plb. 11.19.3-4; Diod. 29.19.1). The King's bilingual intermediaries in Herodotus' narrative seem to reflect this (potentially despotic) power.

2. Thucydides

Thucydides is generally uninterested in the logistics of communication between Greeks and non-Greeks, except for three notable instances. The first is Themistocles' learning of Persian in exile in Book 1, which will be discussed in Chapter 3.1.2. The second is the translation of a Persian letter in 'Assyrian characters' in Book 4. The third is the reference

⁵⁵⁰ Munson 2005, 77.

to the Carian δῖγλωσσος, Gaulites, in Book 8, the bilingual intermediary whom we will discuss in this section.

Gaulites the Carian

While Herodotus' intermediaries are always anonymous, Thucydides contains only a single bilingual envoy and he is named. In Book 8, Tissaphernes sends Gaulites the Carian (8.85.1-2):

The discontent of the army with Astyochus and Tissaphernes had reached this pitch, when Mindarus arrived from Lacedaemon to succeed Astyochus as admiral, and assumed the command. Astyochus now set sail for home;[2] and Tissaphernes sent with him as ambassador one of his confidants, Gaulites, a bilingual Carian (ξυνέπεμψε δὲ καὶ Τισσαφέρνης αὐτῷ πρεσβευτὴν τῶν παρ' ἑαυτοῦ, Γαυλίτην ὄνομα, Κᾶρα δῖγλωσσον), to complain of the Milesians for the affair of the fort, and at the same time to defend himself against the Milesians, who were, as he was aware, on their way to Sparta chiefly to denounce his conduct, and had with them Hermocrates, who was to accuse Tissaphernes of joining with Alcibiades to ruin the Peloponnesian cause and of playing a double game.

Carians seem to have often served as Greek-Persian intermediaries: scholars usually compare Cyrus' Pigres in Xenophon's *Anabasis* (a Carian name, unlike Gaulites, which was Greek – this may partly explain Thucydides' acknowledgment of his being Carian).⁵⁵¹ Gaulites was likely to have been trilingual in Greek, Carian, and Aramaic. For Thucydides, however, δῖγλωσσος no doubt meant, in Gomme's words, "simply Greek and non-Greek"; the scholiast agrees (καὶ τὴν βάρβαρον καὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα γλῶσσαν ἐπιστάμενον).⁵⁵² We may compare Pategyas in Xenophon's *Anabasis*, who shouts 'in barbarian and Greek' (1.8.1;

⁵⁵¹ Xen. *Anab.* 1.2.17; 1.8.12; Gomme et al. 1981, 281; Hornblower 2008, 997; Manning 2018, 6. Cf. the Samian Gaulites with Cyrus in Xen. *Anab.* 1.7.5: if it is the same person (Briant 2002, 626; Manning 2018, 5 n.21), then either Thucydides or Xenophon is wrong about his origin (Lewis 1977, 14 n.68). On the significance of naming in Thucydides – who names roughly half as many individuals as Herodotus – see Hornblower 2000, esp. 134-135; 139-140.

⁵⁵² Hude, p. 426; Gomme et al. (1981, 281); Dubuisson 1983, 207; Rochette 2001, 179 n.17; Hornblower 2008, 997. Lewis (1977, 14) acknowledges Gaulites' probable trilingualism, but suggests Thucydides is here thinking of his two tongues as Greek and 'Persian'; cf. also Robert 1950, 38. The scholiast of 4.109.4 (βαρβάρων διγλώσσων) suggests πολὺγλωσσος should have been used in that instance.

see Chapter 1.1.3); in each case, accuracy about the specific languages is not the chief concern of the historian.

Thucydides seems to refer to Gaulites' status as διγλωσσος because it helps explain why Tissaphernes sent this particular Carian. Moreover, the man was one of his confidants (τῶν παρ' ἐαυτοῦ). This signals the gravity of the embassy for Tissaphernes; it may also suggest that regular interpreters could not be trusted for such an important mission. Compare Caesar in Gaul, who on one occasion (*B. Gall.* 1.19.3) dismissed his 'day-to-day interpreters' (*cotidianis interpretibus*) in favour of a Romanised Gaul, C. Valerius Procillus, whom Caesar describes as 'chief of the province of Gaul, an intimate friend of his, in whom he held the highest confidence in all matters' (*principem Galliae provinciae, familiarem suum, cui summam omnium rerum fidem habebat*). At another point (*B. Gall.* 1.47) Caesar decides not to send Roman envoys to Ariovistus the German, but again chooses Procillus 'because of his fidelity and knowledge of the Gallic tongue' (*propter fidem et propter linguae Gallicae scientiam*), which Ariovistus also spoke.⁵⁵³ Thucydides is not as clear about Tissaphernes' reasons for choosing Gaulites, and his work ends before we find out anything more about this envoy; however, the emphasis on Gaulites as close to Tissaphernes and διγλωσσος may suggest a particular trust placed in this bilingual envoy, and even perhaps a higher level of linguistic ability in Greek, though we cannot be sure of this. In any case, it seems evident that Thucydides wishes to convey the gravity of the embassy and Tissaphernes' use of Gaulites.

⁵⁵³ Cf. *B. Gall.* 1.53; 5.36; Mairs 2011; 73-75.

3. Xenophon

Introduction

Xenophon's *Anabasis* contains fifteen references to bilingual intermediaries. There are eleven references to figures labelled ἑρμηνεύς, who are indisputably interpreters of language, even if occasionally operating more as bilingual envoys. Moreover, though we cannot be sure, those figures about whom we learn nothing else are probably all non-Greek, for the only named ἑρμηνεῖς, Pigres and Abrozelmēs, have Carian and Persian names respectively.⁵⁵⁴ On one occasion, a Greek (Timesitheus the Trapezuntian) is described as 'interpreting' (ἑρμηνεύω) between Xenophon and the Mossynoecians (5.4.4-5). On another, an anonymous Macronian peltast who knows the local tongue (4.8.4: γινώσκει τὴν φωνὴν τῶν ἀνθρώπων) acts as interpreter between Xenophon and the Macronians (4.8.4-7). Seuthes' cupbearer, who knows Greek (ἐλληνίζειν γὰρ ἠπίστατο), helps Seuthes understand a conversation among the Greeks (7.3.25). One other instance concerns a man who is a bilingual messenger, but not an interpreter: Pategyas, who makes an announcement 'in both barbarian and Greek' (1.8.1: ἐνετύγχανεν ἐβόα καὶ βαρβαρικῶς καὶ ἑλληνικῶς).

It was not necessary for Xenophon to make so many references to these intermediary figures. As Gera puts it: "Xenophon could have easily disregarded them, for literary convention allowed interpreters and the mechanics of translation to be ignored altogether. Normally in Greek writings, speakers, whatever their nationality, simply communicate in

⁵⁵⁴ 1.2.17 (Cyrus' interpreter, Pigres); 1.8.12 (Cyrus' interpreter, Pigres); 2.3.17-18 (Tissaphernes' anonymous interpreter to the Greeks); 2.5.35 (the Greeks' anonymous interpreter); 4.2.18-19 (Xenophon's anonymous interpreter to the Carduchians); 4.4.5 (Tiribazus' anonymous interpreter to the Greeks); 4.5.10 and 4.5.34 (anonymous, Persian-speaking interpreter/s for the Greeks); 7.2.19 (Xenophon's anonymous interpreter to Seuthes); 7.6.8-9 (Seuthes' anonymous interpreter for Greek); 7.6.43 (Seuthes sends his own interpreter, Abrozelmēs, to Xenophon).

Greek.”⁵⁵⁵ Moreover, Xenophon appears otherwise uninterested in the languages he encounters – unlike Herodotus, for example, for whom language was a key aspect of his ethnography. This makes the range and number of interpreters found in the *Anabasis* somewhat unexpected. Writing decades after the event, Xenophon’s references to interpreters must have been determined by memory and literary considerations.⁵⁵⁶ There are many occasions on which interpretation must have taken place, but Xenophon does not mention it. One clear example concerns the delegation from the King in which Phalinus the Zacynthian is present as a Greek-speaker (2.1.7ff). According to Plutarch, however, Ctesias claimed to have been present as a ἑρμηνεύς; Plutarch suggests that, since Xenophon did not mention it, this could not be true (Plut. *Artax.* 13.3-4). Indeed, Xenophon had read Ctesias (1.8.26-27) and must have known of his claim. If it was false as Plutarch asserts, we might have expected Xenophon to dismiss it explicitly; if it were true, then Xenophon omitted it deliberately to some end. In any case, we can assume that Xenophon made a historiographical decision not to discuss that alleged ἑρμηνεύς for whatever reason.

As Stoneman notes, the study of Xenophon’s interpreters is still a neglected topic; scholars tend to mention them in passing, and with little literary analysis.⁵⁵⁷ Gera observes that interpreters are virtually absent from the *Hellenica*.⁵⁵⁸ She claims the same for the “fictional, multi-lingual world of the *Cyropaedia*”, arguing that this is particularly significant “since it seems to indicate that when Xenophon is left to his own devices, *polyglossia* plays no part in his imaginary world.”⁵⁵⁹ The implication is that the *polyglossia*

⁵⁵⁵ Gera 1999, 1. Regarding his frequent mentions of interpreters, Lane Fox calls Xenophon “exceptional among surviving Greek historians” (2004, 205).

⁵⁵⁶ Gera 1999, 1.

⁵⁵⁷ Treatments of interpreters in the *Anabasis*: Gehman 1914; Harrison 1998, 13; Colvin 1999, 68-70; Wiotte-Franz 2001; Stoneman 2015, 70. Gera’s 1999 Liverpool paper on the topic remains unpublished.

⁵⁵⁸ She notes in passing the one instance of ‘interpreting’ in the *Hellenica* at 7.1.37 (Gera 1999, 1 n.2).

⁵⁵⁹ Gera 1999, 1. Not entirely accurate, however, as *polyglossia* is evident in two passages of the *Cyropaedia*: Cyrus ruled over many *ethne*, despite their not being *homoglottos* with him or each other (*Cyr.* 1.1.5); during the attack on Babylon, Cyrus sends ‘those who knew Assyrian language’ (τοὺς συριστὶ ἐπισταμένους) to

of the *Anabasis* exists only because of its status as ‘eyewitness’ account; however, this perhaps plays down the literary function of such figures in the narrative.⁵⁶⁰ As I hope to show, the presence of interpreters can form part of broader authorial strategies. For reasons of space, not all references in the *Anabasis* can be discussed. I have chosen two illuminating case studies: Cyrus’ use of his interpreter, Pigres; and Xenophon’s own use of interpreters.

Pigres: Cyrus’ interpreter

In the case of Pategyas the bilingual messenger, as we have seen, Xenophon is not concerned with accuracy regarding the languages involved; his aim is to highlight the existence of the two different cultures – ‘Greek and barbarian’ – in the one army. The historian also makes this ethnic mixture clear early on when he depicts Cyrus communicating with the Greek soldiers on two occasions through Pigres, who is labelled ἑρμηνεύς but who functions more as bilingual intermediary (1.2.17; 1.8.12). These two instances, moreover, both occur when cultural differences between Greeks and non-Greeks are at issue.

Pigres at the army review

The first mention of an ἑρμηνεύς in the *Anabasis* occurs when the Cilician queen requests to view Cyrus’ army before the battle of Cunaxa and he holds a review of his ‘Greeks and barbarians’ (1.2.14-18). A later comment from Cyrus highlights the Greeks’ military superiority and its importance to him: ‘Men of Greece, it is not because I have not barbarians enough that I have brought you here to fight for me; but because I believe that

proclaim to people inside their homes not to come outside, else they will be killed (Cyr. 7.5.31). Gera notes only the latter passage (1999, 1 n.2).

⁵⁶⁰ It also perhaps pushes the extent to which Xenophon himself would have seen his *Cyropaedia* as “fictional”.

you are braver and stronger than many barbarians’ (1.7.3). But as Harman asks, “is [the army review] Cyrus’ display, asserting his military might, or is this an act of self-assertion by the Greeks which insists upon their independence from Cyrus’ command?”⁵⁶¹ Indeed, a certain air of Greek ‘exceptionalism’, if not autonomy, is visible in Xenophon’s account down to the micro-level. Cyrus desires to display the prowess of his ‘Greeks and barbarians’, and differences between the two groups are raised: first, the barbarian soldiers ‘march past’ (παρήλαυνον) Cyrus in formation, but when it comes to the Greeks, then it is Cyrus who ‘drives past’ (παρελαύνων) them in a chariot (1.2.16). There is a subtle shift in agency here whilst employing the same verb, though its significance is unclear; these circumstances do seem, however, to mark off the Greeks as exceptional and different in behaviour from the non-Greeks in Cyrus’ army.

The same is true in the next stage. Cyrus halts his chariot and, sending ‘Pigres the interpreter’ to the Greek generals (1.2.17: πέμψας Πίγρητα τὸν ἐρμηνέα παρὰ τοὺς στρατηγοὺς τῶν Ἑλλήνων), Cyrus orders (ἐκέλευσε) the Greeks to advance. The label ἐρμηνεύς here seems to reflect Pigres’ official role rather than strictly his function in this scene, where he operates more as bilingual intermediary, conveying a Persian message to the Greeks. The soldiers follow the order to advance, but break into a run ‘of their own accord’ (ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου); this frightens the barbarians, including the queen, and the Greeks’ subsequent ‘laughter’ (σὺν γέλωτι) is shared by no one else.⁵⁶² The queen is dazzled by the Greeks and Cyrus is pleased to see ‘the fear with which the Greeks inspired the barbarians’ (1.2.18). Cyrus’ sending of Pigres, I would suggest, also forms part of this presentation of the Greeks as culturally and behaviourally separate from the ‘barbarian’

⁵⁶¹ Harman 2013, 90.

⁵⁶² Harman 2013, 90.

part of the army – which seems to include Cyrus himself, despite being under his command: while they do not disobey his orders, Xenophon implies that they add their own ‘twist’ to the order to advance by breaking into a run. We have seen similar symbolic use of interpreters in Herodotus, where their presence can signal cultural distance between peoples. Here, Xenophon reminds his readers that the Greeks are in a different league culturally and linguistically, as well as militarily.

Pigres at Cunaxa

Pigres is mentioned for the second time as an ‘interpreter’ after the Persians begin their advance at Cunaxa (1.8.12):

At this moment Cyrus rode along the line, attended only by Pigres, his interpreter, and three or four others (παρελαύνων αὐτὸς σὺν Πίγρητι τῷ ἑρμηνεῖ καὶ ἄλλοις τρισὶν ἢ τέτταρσι), and shouted to Clearchus (τῷ Κλεάρχῳ ἐβόα) to lead his army against the enemy's centre, for the reason that the King was stationed there; ‘and if’, he said, ‘we are victorious there, our whole task is accomplished’.

Pigres’ role in this episode was presumably to convey Cyrus’ Persian orders in Greek, though Pigres himself is not described as speaking or giving the orders; Cyrus is the subject of the verb (ἐβόα).⁵⁶³ Pigres is Cyrus’ tool; reference to his presence and role as ἑρμηνεύς is seemingly enough to signal the translation taking place and the cultural difference on which it depends. While the Greeks had not disobeyed Cyrus’ orders in the army review, they had displayed some ‘independent’ behaviour; here, however, Clearchus does not follow Cyrus’ commands to attack the centre (1.8.13; 21-23). Cyrus himself ends up doing so, where he meets his fate (1.8.24-27). Xenophon will note later in Clearchus’ eulogy that he did not like ‘being commanded by others’ (2.6.15: ἀρχεσθαι δὲ ὑπὸ ἄλλων οὐ μάλα ἐθέλειν ἐλέγετο). Plutarch states what may be implicit in Xenophon’s text: by not following

⁵⁶³ Cf. Herodotus’ description of Leotychidas’ appeal to the Ionians, acknowledging his use of a herald and then presenting his speech as if spoken himself (Hdt. 9.98).

Cyrus' orders, Clearchus is more to blame for Cyrus' death than the prince himself (*Artax.* 8.2-7).⁵⁶⁴ As with the Greeks in the army review, orders through Pigres are not heeded in full and result in highlighting 'independent' behaviour on the part of the Greeks.

Xenophon and interpreters

It is now worth examining Xenophon's own use of interpreters. As we have seen in Herodotus and Thucydides, interpreters are typically employed by powerful figures, and the *Anabasis* is no exception (Cyrus, Tissaphernes, Tiribazus). Xenophon places himself on a similar level in depicting his own use of intermediaries as leader. Before his rise to leadership in Book 3, an interpreter in the Greek ranks is only mentioned once, and then not for purposes of communication between languages but rather the man's ability to identify Persian individuals – in that case, Tissaphernes' brother, at the time of the Persian massacre of Greek generals, whom the interpreter 'said... that he saw and recognised' (2.5.35: ἔφη...ὅρᾱν καὶ γινώσκειν). The ἑρμηνεύς is described only generally as 'the interpreter of the Greeks' (ὁ δὲ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἑρμηνεύς) and is not depicted as being employed directly by any one Greek. When we next see interpreters in the Greeks' retinue, however, they are directed by Xenophon. Moreover, in the one instance when that is not the case, the interpreter seems to have more agency than when Xenophon directs.

The first of these episodes is Xenophon's meeting with the Carduchians about a truce and returning the Greek dead (4.2.18-19). Xenophon 'conversed with them through an interpreter' (ὁ Ξενοφῶν διελέγετο αὐτοῖς δι' ἑρμηνέως); like Tissaphernes earlier (2.3.17: ἔλεγε πρῶτος Τισσαφέρνης δι' ἑρμηνέως), Xenophon speaks through the interpreter, who

⁵⁶⁴ Laforse (2000, 76 n.6) considers Xenophon's account here to be hardly a 'ringing endorsement' of Clearchus.

functions as a tool with little agency. The same is true later in Book 4 when Cheirisophus and Xenophon jointly question an Armenian komarch through their Persian-speaking interpreter (4.5.34: Χειρίσοφος καὶ Ξενοφῶν κοινῇ δὴ ἀνηρώτων τὸν κόμαρχον διὰ τοῦ περσίζοντος ἐρμηνέως τίς εἴη ἡ χώρα). The interpreter again has little agency, serving Xenophon and Cheirisophus as ἐρμηνεύς.

An earlier passage provides a compelling contrast, however, for apparently the same Persian-speaking interpreter had spoken for Cheirisophus previously in Armenia, without Xenophon: at 4.5.9-11, Cheirisophus and his men had encountered ‘women and girls’ at a spring, who had asked them who they were (αὗται ἡρώτων αὐτοὺς τίνας εἶεν); in response, the ἐρμηνεύς – with no direction from Cheirisophus evident in the narrative – replied ‘in Persian’ with the cunning lie that they were travelling from the King to the satrap (ὁ δ’ ἐρμηνεύς εἶπε περσιστὶ ὅτι παρὰ βασιλέως πορεύονται πρὸς τὸν σατράπην). It is unclear whether this is the same interpreter from 4.5.34, but the fact that both intermediaries are depicted with Cheirisophus and as Persian-speaking at least invites comparison between the two passages. Xenophon seems to present a contrast in interpreter-use between, on the one hand, Cheirisophus left to his own devices (4.5.10), and on the other, Cheirisophus with Xenophon (4.5.34): the interpreter has agency with the former, uncontrolled by Cheirisophus, and no agency with the latter – the presence of Xenophon, it is implied, minimises the interpreter’s agency. We might also note that Cheirisophus’ men, as Xenophon finds them upon his arrival, had been communicating with Armenian servants through gesture rather than language, ‘as if the boys were deaf and dumb’ (4.5.33: ὥσπερ ἐνεοῖς). When in the next passage Cheirisophus, now with Xenophon, is shown speaking to the komarch through an interpreter, the relative sophistication of communication seems pronounced.

This contrast would not be out of place in this section of the *Anabasis*, where Xenophon is concerned with suggesting key differences in leadership style between himself and Cheirisophus.⁵⁶⁵ For example, Xenophon's concern for the hunger, frostbite, and snow-blindness among the Greeks (4.5.1-22, esp. 4.5.7-8; 16-21) contrasts with Cheirisophus' neglect of those men not under his immediate command (4.5.11; 22). This portrait culminates in the Xenophontic narrator's criticism of Cheirisophus for his 'ill-treatment and carelessness' (4.6.3: *κάκωσις καὶ ἀμέλεια*) concerning the same komarch with whom the generals had earlier conversed through an interpreter (4.5.34), and whom Xenophon had then given to Cheirisophus as guide (4.6.1), only for the man to escape after being beaten and left unbound by Cheirisophus. Perhaps Xenophon's presentation of his own relatively steady control over both the Persian-speaking *ἐρμηνεύς* and the komarch-guide serves to depict Xenophon as the superior manager of intermediaries.

Such a presentation is arguably also evident in the scene with the Macronian peltast. The Greeks arrive in Macronian country, where the Macronians are drawn up in formation along the river, throwing stones and cheering one another on. At this point, there is a fascinating moment (4.8.4):

One of the peltasts came up to Xenophon, a man who said that he had been a slave at Athens, and that he knew the language of these people (*λέγων ὅτι γινώσκοι τὴν φωνὴν τῶν ἀνθρώπων*); "I think," he went on, "that this is my native country (*καὶ οἶμαι, ἔφη, ἐμὴν ταύτην πατρίδα εἶναι*), and if there is nothing to hinder, I should like to have a talk with them."

This passage has received much attention as rare evidence for the life of a slave at Athens.⁵⁶⁶ It is also, however, a rare gem in its detailed description of interpreter use.⁵⁶⁷ It

⁵⁶⁵ Flower 2012, 135-137.

⁵⁶⁶ Ma 2004; cf. Hunt 1998, 169.

⁵⁶⁷ Omitted by Diod. 14.29; as we will see in Chapter 2.2.1, however, Diodorus tends to omit interpreters.

is the only instance in the *Anabasis* where we learn details of an interpreter's origin. He is not labelled ἑρμηνεύς, unlike the Greeks' regular Persian-speaking interpreter (4.5.10; 34). That term implies a more formalised role than this evidently *ad hoc* position.⁵⁶⁸ The detailed attention which Xenophon pays to this episode probably reflects the unexpected good fortune of finding an intermediary for the Macronians.

One of Xenophon's interests here appears to be his own role in initially directing the interpreter. Indeed, at first the peltast seems to operate as an instrument of Xenophontic *historia*: Xenophon bids him to 'learn first who they are', and they reply 'Macronians'. He then asks the peltast to inquire 'why they are arrayed against us and want to be our enemies' (4.8.5); they reply, 'because you are coming against our land' (4.8.6). At this point, Xenophon no longer directs the questioning: 'the generals' (οἱ στρατηγοὶ) take over and explain the Greeks' non-threatening reasons for being there. This shift is left unexplained; the change to indirect discourse at 4.8.7 does not enlighten us, for the generals still employ direct speech in 4.8.6. We might perhaps imagine it to be rather the result of a hurried meeting between the Greek leaders (cf. 2.3.21), after comprehending the Macronians' mistaken view of the Greeks as 'invading'. Xenophon notes nothing explicitly, however, and simply switches the direction of the interpreting.⁵⁶⁹

It is worth asking how common such an image of dictated interpretation is and whether the Macronian is exceptional. Certainly, such closely monitored 'consecutive translation' is unparalleled in the *Anabasis* and, indeed, elsewhere in ancient literature.⁵⁷⁰ Gera suggests

⁵⁶⁸ Cf. Seuthes' cupbearer (see Chapter 3.1.3), and the Fish-eaters in Herodotus.

⁵⁶⁹ As noted by Roy 1967, 291, equally baffled.

⁵⁷⁰ Gehman 1914b, 12; Rochette 1996, 337. Gera (1999, 6) and Rochette (1996, 337) label it 'simultaneous translation' (i.e. the interpreter translates as the speaker speaks), but given the short questions, 'consecutive interpreting' seems to be meant (i.e. when the interpreter translates after the speaker has spoken); on such interpreting, see Mikkelsen and Jourdenais 2015, 79-111.

that Xenophon's direction of the initial dialogue is reflective of his view of the peltast as "lowly *instrumentum vocale*", left unnamed because he was "in essence a translation machine, but a machine which cannot be trusted: the slave is allowed no initiative or leeway of his own and is compelled to act as a *fides interpretes*, a faithful and slavish translator".⁵⁷¹ Beyond Xenophon's strict control over the conversation, however, there is little hint of the man's potential untrustworthiness. An ex-slave who has just rediscovered his *patris* might perhaps be considered *prima facie* one on whom an eye ought to be kept, and the unplanned, first time nature of his interpreting role – compared with the more official and presumably well-tested ἑρμηνεὺς – may have demanded tighter direction. But any suspicion on Xenophon's part is not explicit. The same is true with the Greeks' interpreters elsewhere: even when Cheirisophus' Persian-speaking interpreter lies to the water-carrying girls about the Greeks' reasons for being in Armenia, Xenophon makes no explicit comment about it. The Greeks, of course, had been the benefactors of that deception; all the same, it seems the potentially untrustworthy *ad hoc* interpreters of the later Alexander tradition do not find their precedent in Xenophon's *Anabasis*.

We might compare further the case of Timesitheus from Book 5, whom the Greeks send to the Mossynoecians, being their *proxenos* at Trapezus (5.4.2-11). Upon learning of their hostility to the Greeks, Timesitheus suggests contacting those Mossynoecians dwelling further on, who were enemies of the aforementioned Mossynoecians. He brings back their leaders, who meet with 'the generals of the Greeks' (οἱ στρατηγοὶ τῶν Ἑλλήνων) – but it is Xenophon alone who speaks, with Timesitheus acting as interpreter (5.4.5: καὶ ἔλεξε Ξενοφῶν, ἡρμῆνευε δὲ Τιμησίθεος). He proposes an alliance, which the Mossynoecians accept, and Xenophon asks for more details which they provide (5.4.8-11). Timesitheus is

⁵⁷¹ Gera 1999, 6.

not mentioned after the initial observation of his interpreting role.⁵⁷² Moreover, Xenophon's speech is much more substantial than the short staccato dialogue with the Macronians; clearly, Xenophon did not feel the need to depict such tight control over Timesitheus as the Macronian peltast. Timesitheus was Greek, of course, and on Xenophon's presentation the *proxenos* had already proven his willingness to employ his knowledge of local politics for the benefit of the Greeks. Nevertheless, Xenophon still presents himself as directing Timesitheus the interpreter.

Perhaps the closest parallel to Xenophon's treatment of the Macronian peltast is in his direction of – not an interpreter – but Medosades, Seuthes' ambassador. He had contacted Xenophon several times before Xenophon eventually met with Seuthes, and on their first meeting, Xenophon has Medosades go over their previous interactions in (7.2.23-28):

Seuthes had Medosades present also, the same man who went everywhere as his envoy. [24] After that Xenophon began the speaking: "You sent to me, Seuthes, first at Calchedon, this man Medosades, with the request that I make every effort on your behalf to bring the army across from Asia, and with the promise that if I should do this, you would treat me well—as Medosades here declared." [25] After saying this, he asked Medosades whether this statement of the matter was a true one. He replied that it was. "Medosades here came to me...." [26] Hereupon he again asked Medosades whether this was what he said, and he again agreed that it was. "Come, now," Xenophon went on, "tell Seuthes what answer I made you that first time at Calchedon." [27] "You answered that..." [28] "What then did I say," Xenophon asked, "at the time when you came to me near Selymbria?" "You said that..."

It is unclear whether Medosades knew Greek and acted as interpreter too, though it is possible given his role as Seuthes' preferred envoy to Xenophon.⁵⁷³ The historian does not make the linguistic side clear as he does with the Macronian; nevertheless, we have Xenophon again asserting control over an intermediary and dictating the conversation in a

⁵⁷² Harrison overlooks 5.4.5 in calling Timesitheus a "presumably bilingual envoy" (1998, 13 n.51); the use there of ἐμπνεύω makes his bilingualism clear.

⁵⁷³ Gera suggests it was "likely that he knew Greek" (1999, 3).

hostile barbarian environment (for the narrative of Xenophon's night-time arrival at Seuthes' camp had made the tension clear: 7.2.17-22).

The kind of 'stichomythic' back-and-forth dialogue common to these passages seems related to Xenophon's tendency towards what Marincola calls 'the give and take of speaker and audience'.⁵⁷⁴ In the case of the Macronian peltast, Xenophon could show off his quasi-Socratic method of leading conversation whilst also facilitating intercultural interaction between himself and non-Greeks. When the Macronians request pledges, the Greeks agree to a Macronian *nomos* in which each side gives the other a lance; the Macronians then help cut down trees, 'mingling freely with the Greeks' (ἐν μέσοις ἀναμεμιγμένοι τοῖς Ἕλλησι) (4.8.7-8). The implication is that such good relations – including understanding of a foreign *nomos* – were due to the fluent interaction of the Macronian peltast, facilitated by Xenophon's direction.⁵⁷⁵

Conclusion

These case studies have shown how Xenophon's references to interpreters are not devoid of meaning, and in fact often contribute to his broader authorial strategies. Pigres appears to mark occasions on which Greeks do not heed Cyrus' commands in full; the interpreter's presence serves to highlight the cultural difference between Greeks and Persians at the very moment that Greeks behave 'independently'. Xenophon's presentation of his own use of interpreters contributes to his self-presentation as leader, as one aspect of his tendency to control important conversations. As such, he gains credit for the fluent intercultural interactions facilitated by the presence of such interpreters.

⁵⁷⁴ Marincola 2017, 107, citing these examples: *Hell.* 4.1.4–15; 7.1.13; *Anab.* 1.6.1–11; 3.1.15–30, 4.6.14–19; 5.8.2–11. On such 'conversationalised narratives', see Gray 1981; 1989, 11–64. Cf. Thuc. 3.113; 5.85–113.

⁵⁷⁵ Ma 2004, 331; Lane Fox 2004, 206; Lendle (1995, *ad loc.*) compares the failed communications with the Carduchians.

Overall conclusion – Chapter 2.1

As we have seen, references to bilingual intermediaries in the classical historians can contribute to each author's unique concerns and historiographical strategies. In Herodotus, the accuracy of the information conveyed by the *histor*'s interpreters is shown to be a key element, which works to bolster the historiographical authority of the *histor*'s own activities as ἐρμηνεύς. In historical narrative, Herodotus' interpreters can symbolise an initial gap in understanding and power which is later bridged; a particularly vast cultural distance; and the great power of the Persian King. Thucydides' sole reference to the bilingualism of the envoy, Gaulites, suggests not only why Tissaphernes sent that particular Carian but also the seriousness of that embassy for Tissaphernes. Xenophon's depiction of Pigres seems linked to the Greeks' behaviour as separate from the Persians in Cyrus' army, and his own use of interpreters highlights his self-presentation as strong leader.

We have seen little so far of bilingual intermediaries as figures of suspicion, in what Mairs has called the 'interpreter as traitor' motif; this perspective will become more important in the extant Alexander historians. There are arguably traces of it in Herodotus' focus on the accuracy of interpretation, in Thucydides' emphasis on Gaulites as confidant of Tissaphernes, and in Xenophon's tight control over his interpreters – all perhaps suggest an implicit acknowledgement that bilingual intermediaries have the potential to be inaccurate, untrustworthy, or even treacherous. It seems, however, that these figures are not as explicitly scrutinised in classical historiography as they are in extant Alexander historiography, which we shall now discuss.

Chapter 2.2: Minor Bilingual Intermediaries

Extant Alexander Tradition

Introduction

Following in the tradition of Xenophon's *Anabasis*, the accounts of the extant Alexander historians include many examples of cross-cultural interactions employing bilingual intermediaries. Considering the common material, however – especially in the case of Diodorus and Curtius – it is noteworthy how few references to these figures occur in multiple sources. Evidently, each historian had his own concerns and interests in representing multilingual situations. I shall here examine, author by author, each historian's presentation of bilingual intermediaries. There is one interpreting figure who appears in each source, however: the Lycian bilingual at the Persian Gates. I will discuss this figure in a dedicated section at the end of the chapter to minimise repetition.

1. Diodorus

Diodorus mentions the use of bilingual intermediaries only twice in the *Bibliothèque* and both examples are found in Book 17. This is a significant and somewhat surprising statistic. While minor bilingual intermediaries are certainly not common in ancient historiography, in a work of this size one might expect more occurrences. The fragmentary nature of the extant text, of course, is a factor: *lacunae* in both Diodorus and Curtius at key points prevent us from comparing episodes where one author mentions issues of language difference.⁵⁷⁶ Moreover, at certain points where both record events in a similar fashion, Curtius mentions

⁵⁷⁶ Branchidae: Curt. 7.5.28-35; Destruction of Thebes: Diod. 17.13.6. Cf. the capture of the Macedonian king Perseus by L. Aemilius Paullus at Diod. 30.23: we only learn from other sources (Liv. 45.8.5-6; Plb. 29.20; Val. Max. 5.1.8) that Aemilius addressed Perseus in Greek: "Die antiken Geschichtsschreiber sahen darin einen Akt der Frömmigkeit und Menschlichkeit" (Wiotte-Franz 2001, 79).

a bilingual figure where Diodorus does not.⁵⁷⁷ As we shall see in the next section, however, this is due in part to Diodorus' more abbreviated account, on the one hand, as well as Curtius' particular interest in interpreters on the other. This means, of course, that it is more significant when bilingual intermediaries *are* mentioned in Diodorus' work. Nevertheless, the fact remains that, in a continuous historical narrative from the Greco-Persian Wars to the Diadochoi, Diodorus includes only two instances. Both cases concern anonymous figures: the bilingual Lycian (discussed at the end of this chapter); and the interpreters used to communicate the loss of Bucephalas among the Mardians.

Bilingual messengers and the loss of Bucephalas

Following the bilingual Lycian (17.68), the second bilingual intermediary situation in Book 17 occurs in the context of the loss of Alexander's horse, Bucephalas, in the land of the Mardians (17.76). Diodorus states that, after a skirmish with the natives, Alexander was destroying the Mardian country when his best horse was stolen. He ordered every tree to be felled, while proclaiming to the natives 'through men of the same speech (διὰ δὲ τῶν ὁμοφώνων) that if the horse were not returned, they should see the country laid waste to its furthest limit and its inhabitants slaughtered to a man' (17.76.5-8). There is a strong tradition of intermediaries in the sources for this episode: both Arrian and Plutarch refer to Alexander's use of 'heralds' to threaten the natives (Arr. *Anab.* 5.19.6: προεκήρυξεν; Plut. *Alex.* 44.3: κήρυκα πέμψας), but not explicitly the linguistic element. Curtius has a similar account to Diodorus': Alexander first fights the natives, pursues them further, and then during that time the horse is stolen. The king, 'aroused by greater anger (*ira*) and grief (*dolor*) than was seemly, ordered that the horse be traced and a proclamation issued through

⁵⁷⁷ Mithrenes/Leonnatus: Curt. 3.12.6 and Diod. 17.37.3-4; Omphis: Curt. 8.12.9 and Diod. 17.86. See Curtius section below.

an interpreter (*per interpretem*) that failure to return him would result in no Mardian being left alive' (Curt. 6.5.19). Evidently there the *interpretes* is functioning as a herald.

The variations between Diodorus and Curtius, on the one hand, and Plutarch and Arrian, on the other, perhaps suggest different sources. As Hamilton notes, in the accounts of Diodorus and Curtius, "Alexander proceeds from threats to action before Bucephalas is restored; in Arrian, as in Plutarch, the threat is sufficient."⁵⁷⁸ That all the sources nevertheless carry a tradition that Alexander did not threaten the natives *directly himself*, however, is significant. The reason for this must be, as Arrian observes, that the story functions as evidence of the fear that Alexander inspired – even when not himself present (Arr. *Anab.* 5.19.6). Most sources emphasise his anger: in Diodorus, Alexander is 'infuriated' (δυσφορήσας); Curtius refers to the king's excessive *ira* and *dolor*; in Plutarch, Alexander 'did not take it moderately' (ἤνεγκεν οὐ μετρίως); Arrian, while not referring explicitly to the king's emotional state, does not deny the threats to kill the Mardian to a man (πάντας ἀποκτενεῖν). Such rage from a young conqueror, who did not shrink from razing cities, was evidently sufficient to frighten the thieves into returning the horse. The theft was a canonical story, the bilingual intermediaries an integral detail: Diodorus was bound to include it.

Interpreters, shared language, and multilingualism

As we have noted, the Mardian intermediaries and the bilingual Lycian are the only two references to bilingual intermediaries in the *Bibliothèque* and both instances are found in Book 17. These are well-established stories in the Alexander tradition in which intermediaries play a key role, so Diodorus was perhaps bound to include them. Let us

⁵⁷⁸ Hamilton 1969, 120.

examine further, however, the significance of Diodorus' terminology. When Bucephalas is stolen, Alexander threatens the locals 'through ὁμόφωνοι'. While Curtius at this point uses the standard Latin term for interpreter, *interpretes*, Diodorus does not employ the equivalent, ἑρμηνεύς: that term he only ever uses in the religious sense of interpreting divine will.⁵⁷⁹ As we have seen with regard to the dying Thebans and Dioxippos, the important aspect of the term ὁμόφωνος for Diodorus is that the interlocutors share a tongue.⁵⁸⁰ The same word is used in other instances previously discussed: the Spartan embassy in Book 11 employs it to emphasise common ties with the Athenians (11.28.1), and the related term ὁμοφωνία suggests a shared bond among Xerxes' sailors at Salamis (11.17.2).

Indeed, the idea of a shared linguistic community, whether maintained or lost, is found throughout the *Bibliothēke*. In a programmatic passage in Book 1, Diodorus discusses the development of human language (1.8.4):

But since groups of this kind arose over every part of the inhabited world, not all men had the same language (οὐχ ὁμόφωνον πάντας ἔχειν τὴν διάλεκτον), inasmuch as every group organized the elements of its speech by mere chance. This is the explanation of the present existence of every conceivable kind of language (παντοίους...χαρακτῆρας διαλέκτων) and, furthermore, out of these first groups to be formed came all the original *ethne* of the world.⁵⁸¹

Diodorus starts with a negative: *not* all men had ὁμόφωνος διάλεκτος, and so began the plurality of language that exists today. Discussions of language development in the ancient world are by no means uncommon, of course; this passage, however, explicitly mentions the creation of linguistic diversity – comparably rare, particularly among Hellenistic

⁵⁷⁹ 2.30.3; 2.30.4. Cf. 23.16.1: Xanthippos the Spartan speaks to the Carthaginians δι' ἑρμηνέως (cf. Plb. 1.32, no interpreter mentioned). However, the vocabulary is not necessarily Diodoran here: throughout this fragment the Carthaginians are referred to as Σικελοί, whereas elsewhere Diodorus distinguishes the Sicels as forming only part of the Carthaginian army (13.114.1; 14.75.6-7; 16.73.2; cf. 14.7.1). Where Diodorus does mention a linguistic mediator, he prefers δῖγλωττος (17.68.5) or ὁμόφωνος (17.76.7), the latter used elsewhere in different contexts (1.8.4; 5.31.4; 11.28.2; 17.13.6).

⁵⁸⁰ 17.13.6; 17.100.1-101.6; see Chapter 1.2.1. On other senses of the word, see Petrocelli 2001, 76-77, n.25.

⁵⁸¹ For the passage's programmatic nature, see Sacks 1990, 57; cf. Burton 1972, 47-51.

writers.⁵⁸² Many descriptions of this ‘Golden Age’ portrayed a universal language, common to men, gods, and animals; in Gera’s words, “the implicit message...is that ideally, in the best of all possible worlds, everyone (and everything) should be able to converse together”.⁵⁸³ Diodorus could have included an account of an original universal tongue, but chose not to do so: perhaps, in his contemporary multicultural world, this did not seem plausible.⁵⁸⁴

He comes close in his description of Iambulus’ utopian island (2.55-60). The islanders articulate ‘every human language’ (πᾶσαν ἀνθρωπίνην διάλεκτον), the chirping of birds, and virtually any other sound (2.56.6). The Stoic ‘brotherhood of man’ may lie behind this depiction.⁵⁸⁵ However, since the islanders are represented as living in the present, they cannot speak a universal language: Iambulus’ tale offers them “the next best thing, the knowledge of all languages, human and otherwise... Given a world in which there is a wide variety of peoples and tongues, speaking all languages is the alternative to, virtually the equivalent of, a universal language.”⁵⁸⁶ Although, as we have seen, Diodorus plays down linguistic diversity within the Greek sphere by omitting reference to dialect difference, nevertheless he acknowledges its presence beyond the Greek-speaking world.⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁸² See Stevens (2005, 252–318) on linguistic diversity; Gera 2003 (esp. 163-181); Spoerri 1959, 134-143. Contemporaries Lucretius (5.1028-90), Cicero (*Rep.* 3.3), Horace (*Sat.* 1.3.103-4) and Vitruvius (2.1) all discuss language development, but none refer to linguistic pluralism (Lucretius’ passage discusses not diversity of languages but of words to describe different items). While Diodorus (1.8.2-3) and Vitruvius (2.1.1) may share a common source for the earlier stages of language development (Cole 1967, 60-9), only Diodorus’ ‘more detailed account’ (Gera 2003, 159) goes on to discuss linguistic diversity (1.8.4).

⁵⁸³ Gera 2003, 20-21. Cf. Pl. *Plt.* 269A-274E; esp. 271C-272D.

⁵⁸⁴ Cf. Plutarch’s utopian universal language (Plu. *De Is. et Os.* 370B). Diodorus does recount the Egyptian myth that Hermes (i.e. Theuth) was the first to articulate the ‘common language’ (1.16.1: κοινὴν διάλεκτον); Cole, however, shows that this refers to the development of a *koine* Egyptian tongue, not human language *per se* (Cole 1967, 108-19; 185 with n. 26).

⁵⁸⁵ Ferguson 1975, 124-129; Farrington 1937, 25-33; cf. Atkinson 2000, 312-313.

⁵⁸⁶ Gera 2003, 34. Cf. the ‘universal language’ of those Ethiopians (3.18.6) who ‘speak no language, but by movements of the hands which describe each object they point out everything they need’.

⁵⁸⁷ See Chapter 1.2.1 for Diodorus’ references to regional variations among non-Greek tongues. Compare also his references to languages which are unique and ‘difficult to understand’ e.g. 2.47.4; 5.14.3; 13.35.3.

2. Curtius Rufus

Introduction

Curtius displays a heightened awareness of language barriers and particularly the role of the interpreter.⁵⁸⁸ He includes ten references, the most of any other source by far. Already in the Philotas episode, we saw an old Macedonian accuse Philotas of listening to his ancestral tongue through an interpreter (6.11.4); this symbolised a cultural distance between Philotas and his own people, and this will be a recurring motif throughout the *Historiae*. I shall divide discussion here between named and anonymous intermediaries.

Named intermediaries

Mithrenes

Curtius' first bilingual intermediary is the Persian, Mithrenes. When Alexander learned that the Persian women were needlessly lamenting Darius' death, he first ordered 'Mithrenes, who had surrendered Sardis and knew Persian, to go and console them' (3.12.6: *ac primo Mithrenem qui Sardis tradiderat peritum linguae Persicae ire ad consolandas eas iusserat*).⁵⁸⁹ Alexander quickly changed his mind, however, 'fearing lest the sight of the traitor should renew the prisoners' anger and grief' (*veritus deinde ne proditor captivarum iram doloremque renovaret*), and instead sent Leonnatus to set the story

⁵⁸⁸ See comments in introduction to Chapter 1.2.2, above.

⁵⁸⁹ Mithrenes had been ὁ προύραρχος τῆς ἀκροπόλεως ('citadel commander'; cf. Arr. *Anab.* 1.17.3; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 73.2). Diodorus calls him 'satrap' (17.21.7), which may be an error (Bosworth 1980a, 128), "unless Mithrenes became interim satrap of Ionia after the death of Spithridates at the Granicus" (Heckel 2006, 320 n. 441). Gehman argues that Curtius is here speaking from the Greek standpoint when he refers only to Mithrenes' knowledge of *lingua Persica*, meaning that Mithrenes could speak "a language unknown to Alexander" (Gehman 1914b, 12). It is noteworthy, however, that in the episode of the Lycian prisoner, Curtius refers to his knowledge of both Greek and Persian (see below). This is likely because in that instance, the man is shown by Curtius to interact directly with Alexander, so the inclusion of his Greek knowledge, from Curtius' Roman standpoint, was necessary. In our passage here, however, Curtius includes the minimum detail necessary to make the point that Mithrenes was capable of communication with the Persian women.

straight regarding Darius. Initially scaring the women upon entry, it was only after Leonnatus spoke to them and corrected the misunderstanding that the mother of Darius would allow herself to be raised to her feet (3.12.7-12). Comparison of this account with Diodorus' is instructive: Diodorus omits Alexander's first order concerning Mithrenes and refers only to the sending of Leonnatus (Diod. 17.37.3-4). Neither Plutarch nor Arrian mention Mithrenes in this story; both include only Leonnatus (Plut. *Alex.* 21.1; Arr. *Anab.* 2.12.5).⁵⁹⁰ Justin conflates this tale and the later visit of Alexander to Sisygambis (Just. 11.9.12-16).⁵⁹¹ Only Curtius includes the details of Mithrenes and the drama caused by Leonnatus' entry.

That this episode was omitted by our other writers suggests that, if indeed it was to be found in their original sources, none of the extant authors considered it important enough to include in their works; it was, after all, a superfluous detail, since Mithrenes was never actually sent to the women. Atkinson puts this down to Curtius' significant interest in Alexander's treatment of 'collaborators'.⁵⁹² Heckel suggests that Mithrenes' portrayal throughout the *Historiae* as a traitor to Darius is "perhaps Curtius' own invention".⁵⁹³ If this be the case, then it is all the more revealing that Curtius would insert the detail about Mithrenes' linguistic ability here. In an episode written to illustrate Mithrenes as a traitor, Curtius' comment that he was sent because of his knowledge of Persian indicates that the historian came up with a legitimate reason to have Alexander send Mithrenes in the first place.⁵⁹⁴ It was not strictly necessary for Curtius to mention his linguistic knowledge: it

⁵⁹⁰ Bosworth notes that the sources agree so closely for this episode that "one must conclude that Leonnatus' mission was a standard story" (Bosworth 1980a, 220). Heckel suggests that it was rather Laomedon, the δῖγλωσσος (Arr. *Anab.* 3.6.6), who was sent to the Persian women (Heckel 1981); however, it is more likely that Laomedon's bilingualism extended only to documents (see Chapter 2.2.4).

⁵⁹¹ See Yardley and Heckel 1997, 138-139.

⁵⁹² Atkinson 1980, 247; cf. Atkinson 1998, 325.

⁵⁹³ Heckel 2006, 168; cf. 5.8.12; cf. Briant 2015, 157.

⁵⁹⁴ *Contra* Heckel 2016, 135.

could be assumed from his name and previous role as citadel commander of Sardis that he was Persian.

The reference to his knowledge of Persian then takes on further significance; Curtius may have felt that the Persian women would not appreciate the traitor Mithrenes speaking to them in their own tongue. We might compare Themistocles' execution of a Greek interpreter for giving Persian commands in the Greek tongue.⁵⁹⁵ This episode, then, may fit with the 'interpreter as traitor' motif, common in Curtius. Such a presentation, moreover, works in contrast to Alexander's later *faux pas* concerning Sisygambis, mother of Darius: in Book 5, Alexander sends her a gift of Macedonian wool; for Persian women, however, nothing was a greater disgrace than working wool. Alexander then comes to the queen and apologises for the cultural misunderstanding *in person*; evidently, on Curtius' presentation, the king has learned from his mistake of sending Mithrenes, the traitor, and Leonnatus, who initially scared the women (5.2.18-22.) The Mithrenes scene illustrates Curtius' keen interest in bilingual intermediaries and the problems that crossing cultural and linguistic boundaries can bring.

Melon

Curtius is the only source to mention Darius' interpreter, Melon. He is also the only named intermediary in Curtius designated as *interpretes*.⁵⁹⁶ This suggests a more 'official' position than Mithrenes, who was sent in an *ad hoc* fashion because he knew Persian. Melon is described in the lead-up to the discovery of Darius' body (5.13.7):

Ibi Melon, Darei interpretes, excipitur; corpore aeger non potuerat agmen assequi et deprehensus celeritate regis transfugam se esse simulabat. Ex hoc acta cognoscit.

⁵⁹⁵ Plut. *Them.* 6.3; see Chapter 1.2.3 and below.

⁵⁹⁶ Engels believes Cophes served as an interpreter too (7.11.5; Engels 1980, 332); certainly, it may be implied that he knew Greek as the son of Artabazus, whom Curtius tells us spent time at Philip's court (5.9.1).

There Melon, Darius' interpreter, was captured; being ailing in body, he had been unable to keep up with the army, and when caught by Alexander's swiftness he pretended to be a deserter. From him Alexander learned what had been done.

In one respect, Melon operates as evidence for the success of Alexander's earlier exhortation to his troops: 'Darius is not far away, deserted by his own troops or overwhelmed; on that body of his depends our victory, and so great a prize is the reward of speed (*celeritas*)' (5.13.4). Melon is then caught by this very *celeritas* (5.13.7).

He is identified as the source for information about Darius' capture by Bessus and, presumably, Bessus' next destination. Arrian at the same point mentions only that Alexander 'learned' (ἐπύθετο) what had happened, without giving the source of this information (Arr. *Anab.* 3.21.3-5).⁵⁹⁷ But Arrian does go into much greater depth about what Alexander heard concerning Darius and Bessus. Curtius, on the other hand, offers a pathetic description of Darius' erstwhile, aged interpreter. The detail that Melon attempted to pose (*simulabat*) as a deserter is suggestive of Curtius' interest in 'collaborators', which we have already seen.⁵⁹⁸ Melon's betrayal of information – facilitated by his Greek ability – further perhaps suggests the 'interpreter as traitor' motif. Reference to Melon, therefore, may be unique to Curtius because this figure appealed to Curtius' favourite themes.

Earlier in Book 5, we learn that Darius knew Greek (see Chapter 3.2), and the question arises: why would Darius need a Greek-Persian interpreter if he spoke Greek himself? However, as Atkinson notes, the king's use of an interpreter "does not prove that Darius had no knowledge of Greek."⁵⁹⁹ One can have sufficient ability for simple communication

⁵⁹⁷ Bosworth 1980a, 340.

⁵⁹⁸ Atkinson 1980, 247.

⁵⁹⁹ Atkinson 1994, 147; *pace* Heckel 1994, 72.

but require an interpreter for complex or higher-level matters. Xenophon's Seuthes, as we have seen, employed an interpreter while understanding 'most Greek' (*Anab.* 7.6.8).⁶⁰⁰ Indeed, if Melon were a native speaker, he could have supplemented Darius' knowledge of Greek language and culture, and facilitated a fuller understanding of any Hellenic interlocutors.

One possible explanation for Melon's only appearing in Curtius is the traditional use of interpreters by Roman political figures. Curtius' chief cultural model for a figure like the Great King was the Roman *princeps*: an educated, elite male, well versed in 'both our languages'.⁶⁰¹ This may have contributed to Curtius' willingness to depict Darius as bilingual, something not done by other extant sources. It was also general Roman practice to employ an interpreter when speaking to foreign subjects in a public setting, even if the Roman in question was privately capable of conversing in the relevant foreign language, as was often the case with Greek.⁶⁰² So, for instance, we hear of Cato at Athens addressing the crowd in Latin, before an interpreter translated his words into Greek (Plut. *Cat. Mai.* 12.4–5).⁶⁰³ This mode of operation functioned as a kind of 'linguistic assertion' of Roman domination.⁶⁰⁴ As we have noted in the Diodorus section above, although Greek was often admired privately (evident from Cicero's letters, for instance), there was a distinction drawn between private use and public display.⁶⁰⁵ While there is no clear evidence for the

⁶⁰⁰ See Chapter 3.1.3. Cf. also Heliod. *Aeth.* 7.19.7 (εἰποῦσα διὰ τοῦ ἑρμηνέως, συνιῆσα γὰρ τὴν Ἑλλάδα γλῶτταν οὐκ ἐφθέγγετο).

⁶⁰¹ The emperor Claudius complimented a 'barbarian' on his mastery of 'our two languages': *cuidam barbaro Graece ac Latine disserenti: 'cum utroque' inquit 'sermone nostro sis paratus'* (Suet. *Claud.* 42.1; cf. Cass. Dio 60.17.4, which was, however, a special case; see Kaimio 1979, 107). For this attitude toward Greek and Latin, see Dubuisson 1981, 274–286.

⁶⁰² Kaimio 1979, 95; Adams 2003b. Similarly, any member of the senate could demand an interpreter when a foreign representative addressed the senate, for "[the use of Greek] would sully the dignity of the House" (Gruen 1984, 268).

⁶⁰³ Cf. also when Pompey is addressed in Egypt first in Latin as *autokrator* (Plut. *Pomp.* 78.2).

⁶⁰⁴ Adams 2003b, 197–201.

⁶⁰⁵ Gruen 1984, 250–272.

extent of Melon's role, Curtius may have been influenced by his cultural context in depicting Darius as privately competent in the Greek language whilst having an interpreter in his employ.

Anonymous intermediaries

It is noteworthy that most of the interpreters mentioned in the *Historiae* are anonymous (Melon being the exception); in this way, Curtius follows in the tradition of Herodotus – who never once names an ἐρμηνεύς – and Xenophon, who includes many unnamed interpreters in his *Anabasis*. Indeed, only Xenophon's *Anabasis* and Curtius' *Historiae* contain so many references to interpreters, and it is possible Curtius includes so many in conscious imitation.

Alexander and Omphis

Curtius' interest in interpreters is apparent in Alexander's meeting with the Indian king Omphis (8.12.5-11).⁶⁰⁶ Omphis approaches Alexander in warlike array, is mistaken by Alexander for an enemy, and rides up to Alexander alone (*ipse*) in order to correct matters.⁶⁰⁷ Curtius notes that they could not talk *sine interprete* – once an interpreter had been brought up, the two kings could then speak freely (8.12.9). When we compare this account with the parallel passage in Diodorus we have the same warlike array, the misunderstood intention and the intimate meeting with Alexander (Diod. 17.86.5-7). However, Mophis is not alone but accompanied by 'a few horsemen'. The only mention of conversation in Diodorus is that the Indian king, regarding the misunderstanding,

⁶⁰⁶ Omphis is called Mophis in Diodorus and the *Metz Epitome* (49), and Taxiles elsewhere (an honorary name, as noted by Curt. 8.12.14; cf. *ME* 54).

⁶⁰⁷ The *Metz Epitome* (51) also has Mophis on his own (*ipse solus*). Cf. *Ind.* 17.2 (lowly for an Indian to ride on a single horse).

‘corrected the ignorance of the Macedonians’ (17.86.6: τὴν ἄγνοιαν τῶν Μακεδόνων διορθωσάμενος). There is no mention of interpreting; it seems that these are details of particular interest to Curtius. Justin has no mention of the episode, while Plutarch recounts the meeting and even the conversation, but makes no reference to language difference (Plut. *Alex.* 59.1-3). Arrian writes only that the Indian king brought gifts, but omits any conversation (Arr. *Anab.* 4.22.6).⁶⁰⁸ Thus it would seem that Curtius’ awareness of the logistical realities of interpretation comes through strongly in this episode.

So why the inclusion of this detail? One possibility is related to the fact that Omphis is not labeled *barbarus* by Curtius until immediately after the interpreter is called (8.12.9: *sine interprete non poterat conseri sermo; itaque, adhibito eo, barbarus occurrisset se dixit...*); earlier, Curtius had labelled him ‘the Indian’ (8.12.8: *Indus*). Thus, the detail may signal to the reader the very ‘foreign’ nature of this figure. There may, however, be a more complex literary reason. This incident appears remarkably similar in presentation to the famous meeting of Hannibal and Scipio, as depicted by both Polybius and Livy. These authors describe that conversation as taking place with each man accompanied by his own interpreter (Plb. 15.6.3; Liv. 30.30.1).⁶⁰⁹ Wiotte-Franz observes that the meetings between Alexander and Omphis and Hannibal and Scipio are both depicted in the sources as private conversations, with the rest of the armies left behind, until the necessary mention of the interpreters’ presence disproves such a reality.⁶¹⁰ While she does link these two separate episodes, Wiotte-Franz stops short of suggesting that Curtius was influenced in his own presentation by these earlier authors. Given Livy’s influence on Curtius, evident

⁶⁰⁸ Cf. Strab. 15.698.

⁶⁰⁹ Hannibal, however, is recorded as knowing both Greek and Latin (Nep. *Hann.* 13.2; Plut. *Fab.* 6.1; Liv. 22.13), thus in reality he is likely to have been able to communicate with Scipio directly. General practice, however, demanded that Scipio employ an interpreter for such a meeting.

⁶¹⁰ Wiotte-Franz 2001, 55.

throughout the *Historiae*, it is not implausible to posit the same in this instance; indeed, we see Curtius alluding to Livy's account of Scipio Africanus elsewhere.⁶¹¹ Moreover, the practice of 'Alexander-imitatio' can be traced to the legends concerning Scipio Africanus, and so comparison between the two figures here is hardly inappropriate.⁶¹²

The tradition of the use of interpreters in the meeting between Hannibal and Scipio was evidently a strong one; that regarding interpreters between Alexander and Omphis, however, appears weaker, otherwise we might expect Diodorus to mention them, as he does on two other occasions when the use of intermediaries appears to have had a strong foundation in the primary sources.⁶¹³ This is not to say that the detail was *not* found in the common source: I contend that Curtius at least *retained* the relevant detail of an *interpres* – found in Cleitarchus – in order to make a clearer allusion to the meeting of Hannibal and Scipio as recorded by his Roman historiographical predecessor.⁶¹⁴ In Livy, many famous pairs of historical characters are depicted as having 'parallel lives', part of a web of associations and antitheses.⁶¹⁵ This is the case for Aemilius Paullus and Perseus, for example. Livy's references to the use of Latin between Paullus and his men, and Greek for Perseus, are part of the *synkrisis* of the two characters;⁶¹⁶ reference to language difference emphasizes the antithetical nature of the two men.

Hannibal and Scipio, too, are certainly ever linked in the narrative; but the reference to interpreters at their meeting seems to associate the two leaders rather than provide

⁶¹¹ See Atkinson 2009, 30. For Livy's influence on Curtius generally, see Baynham 1998, 20; Atkinson 1980, 39-40.

⁶¹² Cf. Liv. 26.19.1-7; Aul. Gell. 6.1.1-6; Weippert 1972, 37-55.

⁶¹³ See Chapter 2.2.1 above.

⁶¹⁴ Atkinson (2000, 515) believes Curtius "potrebbe aver inventato questo particolare per colorire la narrazione", but does not elaborate.

⁶¹⁵ Rossi 2004. Curtius, in his first pentad, treats Alexander and Darius in a similar fashion (Baynham 1998, 132-164).

⁶¹⁶ Chaplin 2000, 118-119.

antithesis. Livy links the two figures by adding the word *singulis* to Polybius' original ἔχοντες ἑρμηνεῖα μεθ' αὐτῶν. He then describes them as the two greatest leaders of all time and space (*non suae modo aetatis maximi duces, sed omnis ante se memoriae, omnium gentium cuilibet regum imperatorumve pares*); the two *duces* are *pares* also when it comes to interpreters, for they each have their own in accompaniment. In Curtius too, the two leaders, Alexander and Omphis, appear to hold each other in mutual respect. Before an interpreter is brought up for conversation, they meet in amicable fashion (*coiere, quod ex utriusque vultu posset intellegi, amicis animis*); this passage appears to evoke the *admiratio mutua* felt by both Hannibal and Scipio before they too begin talking (Liv. 30.30.2). Alexander soon pledges his *fides* and restores Omphis' kingdom (8.12.10).⁶¹⁷

By alluding to the passage in Livy, Curtius encourages the Roman reader to reflect on Alexander's own greatness and how it compared with that of distinguished Romans like Scipio Africanus. Curtius knew his Livy well, for indeed five books later the Augustan historian has Scipio ask Hannibal which general he ranked as the greatest in history, and the Carthaginian eventually labels Scipio as greater even than Pyrrhus, Hannibal himself, and Alexander, *Macedonum rex* (Liv. 35.14.6).⁶¹⁸ Curtius' inclusion of an interpreter between Alexander and Omphis, far from being 'random', contributed to his overall picture of Alexander by means of well-placed allusion.

⁶¹⁷ Cf. Metz *Epitome* 52. For the motif of pledging *fides* in Curtius, see Baynham 1998, *passim*, esp. 152; cf. Just. *Epit.* 11.15.13.

⁶¹⁸ Cf. Plut. *Pyrrh.* 8.4-5. Juvenal alludes to *topoi* on Hannibal and Alexander in the rhetorical schools (10.147-173); cf. Lucian (*Dial. mort.* 12), where Scipio considers Alexander his superior, and Hannibal is granted third place by Lucian's judge; on the relation of Curtius to *suasoriae*, see Baynham 1998, 25-30. For Curtius' depiction of Alexander as influenced by Livy's Hannibal, see Porta 2008 (*non vidi*); for the role of Alexander in Livy, see Ligeti 2008.

The Loss of Bucephalas

The incident of the loss of Alexander's beloved horse Bucephalas in the land of the Mardians is a rare occasion when there is a strong tradition of intermediaries in the sources. Curtius tells of how Alexander, 'aroused by greater anger (*ira*) and grief (*dolor*) than was seemly, ordered that the horse be traced and a proclamation issued *per interpretem* that failure to return him would result in no Mardian being left alive' (Curt. 6.5.19). Diodorus also includes the detail acknowledging the language difference, stating that Alexander proclaimed to the natives 'through men of the same speech' (διὰ δὲ τῶν ὁμοφώνων) (Diod. 17.76.5-8). The difference in number of intermediaries between Diodorus and Curtius can be explained by Latin historiographical convention and need not detain us: *per interpretes* occurs only once in antiquity in relation to interpreters of language, while *per interpretem* seems to have become a standard expression.⁶¹⁹ This may also explain why a man functioning as a bilingual envoy/herald is labelled *interpretes*; like Pigres the *hermeneus* in Xenophon, the man likely was an official *interpretes* with a wide-ranging role. Both Arrian and Plutarch refer to Alexander's use of 'heralds' to threaten the natives, but not explicitly interpreters.⁶²⁰ We have seen in our discussion of Diodorus that this perhaps suggests a different source for the two versions. We have also suggested that all extant sources retain the detail that Alexander threatened the natives through intermediaries because the story is evidence of the fear Alexander inspired – even when not himself present.

⁶¹⁹ *Per interpretes*: Liv. 30.33.12; cf. Plaut. *Pseud.* 40; Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.54; 2.4.49; Plin. *Pan.* 19.4. Cf. also Caes. *B. Gall.* 1.19.3: *cotidianis interpretibus remotis* (a unique historiographical moment, however). *Per interpretem*: Liv. 7.26.1; 23.43.9; 27.43.5; 39.42.10-11; Val. Max. 2.2.2; 9.5.3; Curt. 6.5.19; 6.11.4; 7.10.4; Petr. 107.15; Plin. *NH* 25.6; Aul. Gell. 17.17; Fronto, *Ep.* 2.1.7. We note that Livy is the first writer to use the phrase in this manner, so Curtius is probably following his stylistic model in this respect. The Greek equivalent of *per interpretes*, on the other hand, appears more often (δι' ἐρμηνέων): Hdt. 4.24; Plb. 1.67.9; 5.83.7; Strab. 15.1.64; Plut. *Sull.* 27.2; Arr. *Anab.* 7.1.5 (see Chapter 2.2.4); Aristid. *Aigyptios* 346. The singular equivalent occurs some twenty times in classical Greek literature.

⁶²⁰ Arr. *Anab.* 5.19.6; Plut. *Alex.* 44.4.

Within Curtius' narrative, however, the reference to the *interpretes* perhaps reflects his depiction of the Mardians as most 'barbarian'. When introducing the Mardians, he describes them as 'a people with a harsh mode of life and accustomed to brigandage' (6.5.11: *Mardorum erat gens...cultu vitae aspera et latrocinii assueta*). Later, he says they were 'accustomed to crawl under the thickets like wild beasts (6.5.17: *ritu ferarum virgulta subire soliti*), and Alexander hunts them like animals to their 'dens' (*latibula*). Diodorus' account, by contrast, only mentions the Mardians' pride in their fighting ability (17.76.3). Curtius, it seems, follows here in the historiographical tradition of mentioning bilingual intermediaries as a marker of vast cultural distance.

Sogdian Prisoners

The case of the Sogdian prisoners also demonstrates a similar use of intermediaries. In Book 7, Curtius tells the story of the Sogdian prisoners who learn of their imminent execution *per interpretem* (7.10.4-9).⁶²¹ The parallel passage in Diodorus is lost in a *lacuna* (though cited in the contents of Book 17), so we cannot be sure whether he too mentioned an interpreter. Curtius notes that, upon being told of their execution through an interpreter, the Sogdians rejoice, much to Alexander's puzzlement (*admiratus*). He then inquires as to their reasons for joy in the face of death (*causam tam effusae laetitiae...requirens*). They reply that they felt fortunate to die by so great a king; Alexander ultimately pardons them. Curtius' focus here is on Alexander's *beneficia* and *fides*.⁶²² In this respect, the Curtian episode is like that of the mutilated Greeks (5.5.5-24), which illustrates well these two

⁶²¹ Atkinson (2000, 475) thinks the account has been "liberamente elaborato", but the details concerning the number of prisoners and the enrolment among the bodyguards suggest that the essential elements were found in his source.

⁶²² *Beneficium*: 7.10.7, 8; *fides*: 7.10.9.

qualities in the king.⁶²³ The reference to the interpreter for the Sogdians appears to signal cultural difference once more: Alexander is surprised at the prisoners' reaction, and by including this detail Curtius perhaps implies that Alexander suspected that something was lost in translation.⁶²⁴

Alexander's Speech at Opis

During the account of the mutiny at Opis, Alexander addresses his Persian troops in *oratio recta*. Curtius includes the relevant detail that the speech was only given once an interpreter had been called (10.3.6: *adhibito interprete*). No other source includes such a detail, and only Justin records a summary of Alexander's speech to the Persian soldiers.⁶²⁵ This is the only direct speech in the *Historiae* in which Alexander addresses non-Greeks, and the historian's inclusion of an interpreter's presence may be a marker of this deviation; a means of highlighting the rarity of his addressing the Persian troops directly. Furthermore, the detail emphasises Curtius' contextual point that Alexander was intent on not speaking with the mutinous Macedonians: they are refused access to him (*prohibiti aditu*), while only Asiatic soldiers were admitted (*Asiaticis modo militibus admissis*), since Alexander was determined to stick to his resolve (*ille pervicacis ad omnia quae agitasset animi*) and keep the Macedonians within their camp (*Macedonibus intra castra cohibitis*) (10.3.5-6). We might contrast the speech of the Scythian ambassador to Alexander in Book 7, also reported in *oratio recta* by Curtius, where there is no reference to an interpreter's presence (7.8.10-9.1). Thus, it seems that again reference to an interpreter is not 'random' nor divorced from Curtius' narrative concerns.

⁶²³ Baynham 1998, 47-48.

⁶²⁴ For this, compare Arr. *Anab.* 7.1.5, where Arrian asks the Indian philosophers, who were stamping the ground with their feet, what this action meant (see Chapter 2.2.4).

⁶²⁵ Diod. 17.109.3; Arr. *Anab.* 7.11.1-4; Plut. *Alex.* 71.4-7; Just. *Epit.* 12.11.9-12.6.

Conclusion

Curtius' inclusion of Melon and Mithrenes seems part of his great interest in bilingual intermediaries (especially interpreters), as well as 'collaborators'. His anonymous interpreters typically symbolise the initial cultural and linguistic distance between interlocutors, though in one case they also appear to function allusively to Livy's work. There are several reasons for Curtius' evident interest in interpreters. First, as he was writing in Latin from Greek sources, Curtius was constantly more aware of the problems of translation than the extant Greek sources for Alexander. Furthermore, the Romans, more so than the Greeks, seem to have been more aware of the power of linguistic domination and the role of the interpreter therein; there may even have been an official interpreting position, *interpres Augusti*, created around the time Curtius was writing.⁶²⁶ Curtius was inevitably influenced by such contemporary context, and the several references to interpreters, including the rhetorical showpiece of Philotas' trial in which matters of language and identity are central (see Chapter 1.2.2), are a natural product of these influences.

3. Plutarch

The Lycian prisoner is the only bilingual intermediary in the *Alexander* and will be discussed at the end of the chapter. However, his inclusion in a work much shorter than the

⁶²⁶ Peretz 2006, 452; more generally, see Adams 2003b; Kaimio 1979, 95-99. The three *interpretes Augusti* from the documentary record are T. Flavius Arzaces, Domitius, and Philetus. All may have been contemporary with Curtius (Domitius and Philetus: *CIL* VI 4871, see Wiotte-Franz 2001, 184, 198; Arzaces: *CIL* VI 8481, see Peretz 2006, 452 n. 7). That we do not hear of this position in literary sources is equally likely due to the typical 'invisibility' of interpreters as it is to imperial self-association on the part of the deceased's families. Other *interpretes* mentioned in inscriptions are Q. Atilius Primus (also of the first century CE; see Kolnik 1978) and M. Aurelius Flavus (third century CE; *CIL* III 10505). See also *CIL* III 14349.5.

monographs of Curtius and Arrian warrants further examination. Minor bilingual intermediaries are generally absent in the more abbreviated genres of universal history and biography.⁶²⁷ Indeed, Plutarch omits many found in other sources. For example, while Diodorus and Curtius mention interpreters in communicating the loss of Bucephalas, Plutarch refers only to a herald (*Alex.* 44.3-5; cf. Arr. *Anab.* 5.19.6).⁶²⁸ Plutarch also omits interpreters with the gymnosophists (*Alex.* 64-5; cf. Arr. *Anab.* 7.1.5; Strab. 15.1.63-5). A good example is his account of Croesus on the pyre: while Herodotus mentions Cyrus' sending of ἑρμηνεῖς, Plutarch writes only 'men' (*Sol.* 28.2: ἔπεμψε τοὺς ἐρησομένους). Elsewhere, he solves problems of linguistic difference by referring to the speaking of a common language, often Greek (e.g. *Pomp.* 78; *Crass.* 31).

The presence of bilingual intermediaries in historical narrative, however, is rarely without significance, as we have seen. Indeed, those that do appear in Plutarch's *Lives* are central to his purposes.⁶²⁹ In the *Themistocles*, the Athenian commander has a Greek bilingual messenger executed for delivering Persian commands in the Greek tongue (*Them.* 6.3-4). Comparison with other accounts shows that Plutarch brought the intermediary to the fore, which appears to be related to Plutarch's depiction of Themistocles as a defender of Greek culture at this point in the *Life*.⁶³⁰ By contrast, in the *Cato Maior* Plutarch is at pains to counter the misconception that Cato was a philhellene, citing his habit of addressing the Athenians through an interpreter despite possessing a good command of Greek (*Cat. Mai.*

⁶²⁷ Nepos and Suetonius, for example, mention no *interpretes* of foreign languages (cf. Suet. *Tib.* 18.2; *Gramm.* 4.2). Justin mentions only one (20.5.12; cf. 11.15.6).

⁶²⁸ Cf. Diod. 17.76.5-8: διὰ...τῶν ὁμοφώνων; Curt. 6.5.18-21: *per interpretem*.

⁶²⁹ Cf. the interpreter Banon in the *Mulierum Virtutes* (*Mor.* 249 A); Strobach (1997, 172) comments that this is the exception for Plutarch, as he names an interpreter (cf., however, Alexander of Antioch at *Ant.* 46.5, although he is not called ἑρμηνεύς), but says little else about him; Strobach suggests that Plutarch simply sticks close to his source here. Indeed, he has different aims in the *Mulierum Virtutes* than the *Lives*; it is still significant, however, that no other source for the story mentions the interpreter at all (cf. Stadter 1965, 22-3); perhaps Banon was killed first because he had been the one actually giving orders to the women in their own tongue, which would suggest the passage forms part of the 'interpreter as traitor' motif.

⁶³⁰ See Chapter 3.2.3 in relation to Themistocles' bilingualism.

12.5).⁶³¹ Cato also said, according to Plutarch, that the Athenians were amazed at the brevity of his Latin compared with the Greek translation of the interpreter (12.7); Plutarch no doubt included this statement because he agreed with the sentiment, expressing admiration elsewhere for the economy of Latin expression (*Dem.* 2.2; *Caes.* 50.4). In the *Sulla*, as we have seen, the protagonist encounters a satyr and questions it through several interpreters (δι' ἑρμηνέων πολλῶν); the detail highlights the extreme 'otherness' of the beast, which is further demonstrated when it utters unintelligible sounds (*Sull.* 27.2).⁶³² Cleopatra in the *Antony* is represented as exceptional in her knowledge of foreign languages. She is able to converse with most peoples without an ἑρμηνεύς (*Ant.* 27.4-5); this is part of Plutarch's characterisation of the queen as an alien figure, a boldly independent woman who is soon depicted as 'making booty of' a Roman male, Antony.⁶³³ In the *Crassus*, a bilingual intermediary is used as part of a ruse central to the plot: Surena sends a δίγλωσσος to call out for Crassus in Latin, in order to ascertain whether the Roman commander had escaped (*Crass.* 28.4). Plutarch in the *Artaxerxes* exploits Ctesias' claim to have acted as an ἑρμηνεύς for the Persians as a means to attack his credibility, arguing against his testimony on the basis of Xenophon's silence (*Art.* 13.5-7). Evidently, then, Plutarch only included such figures in the *Lives* when necessary for characterisation, in harmony with his avowed methods in the preface to *Alexander*.

⁶³¹ Cf. *Cat. Mai.* 22; Kaimio 1979, 98-99. Plutarch does not mention that this was standard Roman procedure (e.g. Val. Max. 2.2.2).

⁶³² For another satyric association, see Nicolaus of Damascus' reference to Sulla's writing satyr plays (*FGrH* 90 F 75).

⁶³³ Swain notes that Plutarch makes Cleopatra Egyptian and not Greek (1990a, 152), something highlighted by his reference to her learning the Egyptian language (τὴν Αἰγυπτίαν...διάλεκτον) and her ancestral Macedonian (as opposed to Greek) language (27.5). Pelling (1988, 191) comments on the 'suspiciously conventional' range of languages, comparing Mithridates' alleged knowledge of 22 tongues (Val. Max. 8.7.16; Quint. *Inst. Orat.* 11.2.50; cf. Gell. 17.17); cf. Harrison 1998, 6.

4. Arrian

The *Anabasis* differs significantly from the other extant Alexander monograph, Curtius' *Historiae*, in number of references to bilingual intermediaries. Anonymous interpreters, for example, occur only once while they are found several times in Curtius' account. Arrian does, however, include several details not found elsewhere in Alexander historiography: his is the only account to record the bilingualism of Peucestas (for which see Chapter 3.2) and Laomedon. Arrian is also the only source to refer to Pharnuches, Alexander's interpreter among the Sogdians. While Curtius seems more interested in issues of multilingualism *per se*, it seems that for Arrian such details are primarily interesting insofar as they are notable elements of important individuals or events.

Named intermediaries

Laomedon

The first apparent bilingual intermediary in the *Anabasis* is Laomedon, and Arrian is the only extant testimony of his linguistic knowledge. In Book 3, Arrian describes the first flight of Harpalus with reference to his very first exile with Alexander and his companions, when Philip was still king.⁶³⁴ Arrian lists these companions and reports that they were appointed to positions in Alexander's retinue upon Philip's death. Erigyius and his brother Laomedon are among those mentioned (3.6.6):

Erigyius was appointed commander of the allied cavalry, and Laomedon, his brother, since he was bilingual with respect to barbarian letters (ὅτι δίγλωσσος ἦν ἐς τὰ βαρβαρικά γράμματα), was placed in charge of the barbarian captives...

Laomedon is put in charge of the barbarian prisoners because he is δίγλωσσος. We might expect this term to refer to spoken language to facilitate communication with the captives.

⁶³⁴ On the 'first flight' of Harpalus, see most recently Blackwell 1999.

Arrian, however, adds the qualifying statement ἐς τὰ βαρβαρικὰ γράμματα. This phrase has troubled commentators, with many considering it a gloss.⁶³⁵ It is possible, however, that Laomedon's bilingualism extended only to literacy and not speech.⁶³⁶ Interestingly, this is the only instance of δίγλωσσος being applied to a *Greek* individual; it is also normally used with reference to spoken language.⁶³⁷ Perhaps, then, the additional phrase is better explained as a parenthetical comment from Arrian, justifying his use of δίγλωσσος in an unusual context.⁶³⁸

Some have seen a contradiction with Arrian's statement elsewhere that Peucestas was the only Macedonian to learn Persian (Arr. *Anab.* 6.30.3; 7.6.3.). As Bosworth suggests, however, Arrian may have distinguished between the spoken Persian φωνή of Peucestas and the written γράμματα of Laomedon, as well as employing a strict definition of 'Macedonian': Laomedon, after all, was a Greek from Mytilene (as Arrian acknowledges in his later work on the Successors) and Macedonian only by naturalisation.⁶³⁹ It is plausible that Arrian's ἐς τὰ βαρβαρικὰ γράμματα even anticipates such a response on the part of his readers, for in Arrian's day the ethnic status of the Macedonians was still

⁶³⁵ Roos 1967, 125; Brunt 1976, 238 n. 2; Heckel 1992, 195 n.13; Rochette 2001, 181; Sisti and Zambrini 2004, 480.

⁶³⁶ Bosworth (1980, 283) sees no reason for deletion. Many have, however, assumed that Laomedon could *speak* Persian on unconvincing grounds: Heckel (1982, 272-4) reaches this conclusion by ignoring Arrian's qualifying statement (despite earlier accepting its authenticity), as well as that author's references to Peucestas' knowledge of Persian; the same stance is maintained in Heckel 2006, 146; 2015, 103 n.21; 136 n.45. Green (1991, 101), in passing, labels Laomedon 'Persian-speaking', with no analysis of Arrian; Lane Fox (1973, 50), too, claims that Laomedon "could speak an Oriental language" without discussion of Arrian. Laomedon may well have been able to *speak* Persian too, of course, but it cannot be extrapolated from the available evidence.

⁶³⁷ Dubuisson 1983; Rochette 2001, 181. This is complicated, however, by the case of the δίγλωσσος whom Themistocles has executed (Plut. *Them.* 6.2), for while Plutarch never confirms that the man was Greek, Aelius Aristides stresses the Hellenicity of the interpreter but does not label him δίγλωσσος (Aristid. *Panath. Or.* 99; *In Defence of the Four*, 229-230; see Mairs 2011, 68-70). Cf. further the use of δίγλωσσος to describe groups rather than individuals (Thuc. 4.109; Polyaeus, *Strat.* 7.14.4, Strab. 7.7.8).

⁶³⁸ The comment certainly appears to suit Arrian's style, both in this section and beyond; see the similar restrictive use of ἐς a few lines earlier (ὅτι αὐτῷ τὸ σῶμα ἐς τὰ πολέμια ἀχρεῖον ἦν; cf. 4.30.4).

⁶³⁹ Arr. *Succ.* F 1b. 2; Diod. 18.3.1; Bosworth 1980b, 12.

problematic.⁶⁴⁰ Even if Arrian were not being strict in terminology, his phrasing with regard to Peucestas does not preclude *some* knowledge of Persian on the part of other Macedonians.⁶⁴¹ In any case, Arrian is evidently conveying that Laomedon knew Aramaic, the Persian language of correspondence.⁶⁴² Others in Alexander's court had apparently only reading knowledge of Asiatic languages: his secretary Eumenes was able to forge a letter in Aramaic (Diod. 19.23.1-4; Polyaeus, *Strat.* 4.8.3).⁶⁴³ It is for this reason, perhaps, that Arrian stresses Laomedon's letters.⁶⁴⁴

The very inclusion of Laomedon by Arrian in this passage should be examined further, for Plutarch, in his own list of those companions of Alexander exiled from Philip's court, names all except Laomedon (Plut. *Alex.* 10.4).⁶⁴⁵ Arrian's reference to Laomedon, moreover, is the only one during Alexander's reign, besides his trierarchy at the Indus (*Ind.* 18.4).⁶⁴⁶ Such reticence may be due to Ptolemy, from whom the report in Arrian must derive⁶⁴⁷ -- he eventually fell out with Laomedon and consequently in his history may have

⁶⁴⁰ See, most recently, Asirvatham 2010. Arrian himself, however, seems consistent in distinguishing between Greeks and Macedonians: he has Alexander call himself a 'Macedonian' (2.7.4), "the single use of the label for Alexander in the Second Sophistic" (Asirvatham 2010, 113); cf. Borza 1996.

⁶⁴¹ See Chapter 3.2.4 on Arrian's account of Peucestas.

⁶⁴² Brunt (1976, 239 n.6) suggests "Persian or Aramaic"; for Aramaic in the Achaemenid empire, see Greenfield 1985, 698-713, esp. 699. It is doubtful that Laomedon could read cuneiform Old Persian which was not in widespread use (Gershevitch 1979, 122; Schmitt 1993, 458; the recent discovery of an administrative tablet in Old Persian from the Persepolis Fortification Archive, the first of its kind, has certainly expanded our understanding of the use of OP [Stolper and Tavernier 2007], but its dating [509-494 BCE] and unique status mean that we cannot assume OP was still used for administrative purposes as late as Alexander's reign, or indeed that it was ever widespread). Thus Aramaic, the language of correspondence, must be meant by γράμματα.

⁶⁴³ It is worth noting that a better reading knowledge of a language than speaking is also attested for Jerome (see Adams 2003a, 268-9).

⁶⁴⁴ Clearly, Aramaic was prized in this role; if it were spoken Persian alone that was required, both Laomedon and his brother Erigyus were potentially candidates if they had learned Persian in their native Mytilene, as Heckel (1992, 191) and Rochette (1997b, 315) suggest, since Lesbos had a pro-Persian government before Alexander. There is, however, no direct evidence of such linguistic knowledge and, in any case, it cannot be inferred from the passage in Arrian discussed here. Laomedon must have had the linguistic advantage of Aramaic over his brother and other candidates.

⁶⁴⁵ Heckel suggests that this is due to Aristobulus' following Ptolemy's lead (1982, 274).

⁶⁴⁶ Bosworth 1980a, 283; cf. Heckel 1981.

⁶⁴⁷ As Heckel notes, the reference to Ptolemy as σωματοφύλαξ in this passage anticipates his appointment as such at 3.27.5, the account of which was based on Ptolemy's account (cited at 3.26.2; Heckel 1978, 225 n.12).

minimised Laomedon's role under Alexander.⁶⁴⁸ Similarly, it is possible that the depiction of Laomedon as δίγλωσσος was something of a slur by Ptolemy: as we have noted, this is the only occasion on which this term is applied to a Greek, and it often carried connotations of treachery, literally meaning 'double-tongued'.⁶⁴⁹ It is interesting, moreover, that most attestations of this sense come from the Septuagint, given the ancient tradition attributing its translation to the reign of our Ptolemy – Ptolemy I Soter.⁶⁵⁰ While the general modern consensus is rather that the translation occurred under Ptolemy II Philadelphus, it is possible that Ptolemy I, the king and historian of Alexander, was affected by the use of this term at this time and place.⁶⁵¹ By labelling Laomedon δίγλωσσος, Ptolemy could have subtly implied a treacherous nature on the part of his rival.⁶⁵² Doubtless such aspersions were facilitated by Laomedon's role in charge of barbarian captives (αἰχμάλωτοι βάρβαροι); Greeks who knew foreign languages were open to suspicion, reflected in the 'interpreter as traitor' motif.

Arrian's narrative structure also emphasises the suggestion of failure on the part of Laomedon. He records the bilingualism of Laomedon in an *analepsis*, triggered by reference to Harpalus' exile. Laomedon's role as guardian of 'barbarian captives' becomes more significant when, during the battle of Gaugamela, Arrian reports that αἰχμάλωτοι βάρβαροι in the Macedonian camp – the only other reference to this phrase in the *Anabasis* – are freed by some of the Persian and Indian cavalry and even take up arms against the Macedonians (3.14.5). While the parallel accounts of Diodorus and Curtius also refer to

⁶⁴⁸ Laomedon was taken prisoner by Ptolemy (Diod. 18.43.2), escaped and fled to Alcetas (App. Syr. 52.264; cf. App. Mith. 9.27); Heckel 1981; Wheatley 1995; Anson 2004, 153 n.22. In general, see Errington 1969.

⁶⁴⁹ LSJ s.v. II; Dubuisson 1983; Rochette 2001.

⁶⁵⁰ Clem. Al. *Strom.* 1.22.148; Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 5.8.11-15.

⁶⁵¹ According to the pseudepigraphic *Letter of Aristeas*, the Books of Moses (Pentateuch) were translated in the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus and with royal support; see Marcos 2000 on the issues.

⁶⁵² It is also possible that representing Laomedon as bilingual with regard to γράμματα cast him as a secretary akin to Eumenes, who was often mocked for following Alexander with pen and paper, not sword and shield (see Anson 2004).

‘captives’ and ‘prisoners’ behaving in a similar fashion, they do not qualify the prisoners as ‘barbarian’ (Diod. 17.59.6: αἰχμάλωτοι; Curt. 4.15.9: *captivi*). Bosworth notes that Arrian’s version of this part of the battle is ‘unique’, since the other sources state that the attack on the camp was a deliberate move by the Persians, and suggests that Ptolemy elaborated the story for ‘propagandist reasons’.⁶⁵³ By removing any premeditation on the Persian side, Ptolemy could imply bumbling on the part of Simmias, who let the Persians and Indians through, and Laomedon, who had been put in charge of the captives.⁶⁵⁴ Through careful word choice, perhaps preserved – I would suggest – by Arrian, Ptolemy attempted to place the blame for the prisoners’ uprising on the very person put in charge of them: his former colleague and latter rival, Laomedon.

Pharnuches the Lycian interpreter

In Book 4 we encounter Pharnuches, a Lycian interpreter in Alexander’s retinue (4.3.7). Arrian is the only extant source to refer to this man, and this is the only time that Arrian names an ἐρμηνεύς. That Arrian mentions him is perhaps surprising; while Curtius refers several times to the presence of interpreters (including two named ones), the only other reference Arrian makes to these figures in the *Anabasis* is to those through whom Alexander communicates with the Gymnosophists.⁶⁵⁵ Let us examine the presentation of this individual.

In Book 4, Alexander deals with the revolt of Spitamenes in Sogdiana by sending the Macedonian officers Andromachus, Menedemus and Caranus (4.3.7). Arrian, however,

⁶⁵³ Bosworth 1980a, 309.

⁶⁵⁴ Whether Laomedon would have been in the camp or not, we cannot know; certainly, it is possible, since he is never recorded as fighting (besides his trierarchy), and given his bilingual capabilities, perhaps he was considered more valuable in a non-military capacity (cf. Pharnuches, and Harpalus, appointed treasurer since he was unfit for fighting [3.6.6]).

⁶⁵⁵ Cf. also the interpreter with Nearchus at *Ind.* 28.3-5; both instances are discussed below.

tells us that the king placed Pharnuches, the Lycian interpreter, in command of the whole expedition (ἐπιτάσσει δὲ αὐτοῖς Φαρνούχην τὸν ἑρμηνέα). This introduced the ‘quite exceptional’ situation of a Greek force with three Macedonian officers being commanded by a non-Greek.⁶⁵⁶ Indeed, as mentioned above, no other extant source makes any reference to Pharnuches: Curtius (7.6.24) and the *Metz Epitome* (13) have only Menedemus in command. Arrian makes it clear when he introduces him that Pharnuches’ skills lay chiefly in diplomacy (4.3.7):

ἐπιτάσσει δὲ αὐτοῖς Φαρνούχην τὸν ἑρμηνέα, τὸ μὲν γένος Λύκιον τὸν Φαρνούχην, ἐμπείρως δὲ τῆς τε φωνῆς τῶν ταύτη βαρβάρων ἔχοντα καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ὁμιλῆσαι αὐτοῖς δεξιὸν φαινόμενον

Alexander placed these forces under command of Pharnuches the interpreter. Pharnuches was a Lycian by birth and experienced in the language of the barbarians of these parts and appeared to be skilful in dealings with them.

As Bosworth notes, “Arrian places some emphasis upon Pharnuches’ linguistic expertise”.⁶⁵⁷ Evidently he was a valuable member of the expedition, though clearly not as a military leader: after an unsuccessful showing (4.5.3-9), Pharnuches resigned his command on the grounds of insufficient military experience (ὥς οὐκ ἐμπείρως ἔχοντα ἔργων πολεμικῶν), a formulation that mirrors the language of his experience in language (ἐμπείρως δὲ τῆς τε φωνῆς τῶν ταύτη βαρβάρων ἔχοντα). Rather, he stated that he had been sent to win the favour of the barbarians and not command armies (ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ τῷ καθομιλῆσαι τοὺς βαρβάρους μᾶλλον τι πρὸς Ἀλεξάνδρου ἢ ἐπὶ τῷ ἐν ταῖς μάχαις ἐξηγεῖσθαι ἐσταλμένον) (4.6.1).⁶⁵⁸ Pharnuches tried to pass the command to the other officers, since they were ‘Macedonians and the king’s Companions’, but they would not accept; partly so it would not seem that they were undermining Alexander’s orders, and

⁶⁵⁶ Bosworth 1995, 24.

⁶⁵⁷ Bosworth 1995, 25. Note also Bosworth’s comment that “there is no way of deciding whether Arrian understood the local Sogdian to be a language in its own right or merely a dialect of Persian...The precise distinction, as with Greek and Macedonian, is probably irrelevant” (1995, 25). Cf. Strab. 15.28., suggesting there was a *lingua franca* shared by Sogdians and Persians.

⁶⁵⁸ καθομιλῆσαι here also recalls ὁμιλῆσαι from 4.3.7.

partly because they did not wish to be blamed for a disastrous expedition by virtue of having been in command (4.6.2). The Macedonians were then defeated at the Polytimetus river.

It is puzzling that a man allegedly so inexperienced in warfare should be placed in command of such an expedition. Bosworth convincingly argues that the story of Pharnuches' command derives from Aristobulus (whom Arrian cites at 4.6.1); he notes that the failure at Polytimetus became a contentious issue at court, and recommends rejecting the tradition and assuming that Pharnuches had been attached to the expedition merely as an interpreter with no command over troops.⁶⁵⁹ By depicting Pharnuches as in command, Aristobulus could, for posterity, place the blame for the defeat on a non-Macedonian.⁶⁶⁰ The description of Pharnuches' multilingual expertise, moreover, may have formed part of this negative portrait; rarely do we hear such detail about an interpreter. Thus, Pharnuches' presentation seems related to the 'interpreter as traitor' motif; multilinguals were liminal figures, caught between two worlds, often attracting suspicion. Arrian's account even specifically mentions that Pharnuches tried to pass command to the others because they were Macedonians, as we have seen; this may have reflected the ethnic tension on the ground. As with Laomedon's bilingualism, then, it seems that Arrian only included such details when his chief sources, Ptolemy and Aristobulus, displayed particular interest in them. Within Arrian's text as it stands, however, it was necessary for his narrative purposes to include the details of Pharnuches' linguistic knowledge and status as interpreter, since his abdication of command resulted in disaster and is explicitly said to be due to his lack of qualifications in generalship.

⁶⁵⁹ Bosworth 1995, 24-25; for the contentiousness of the matter, see Plut. *Alex.* 50.8. Sisti and Zambrini (2004, 380) adduce 4.5.7 as support for this argument: there, in a passage probably from Ptolemy, it seems Andromachus is in charge of the military action when Caranus attempts to cross the river 'without notifying Andromachus' (οὐκ ἀνακοινώσας Ἀνδρομάχῳ).

⁶⁶⁰ As suggested in passing by Bosworth 1995, 25.

Anonymous Interpreters

In stark contrast to Curtius, Arrian rarely mentions anonymous interpreters. He consistently either plays down the practical aspect of multilingual situations or omits intermediaries completely. At certain points where other sources explicitly mention interpreters, Arrian often makes reference to ‘heralds’ or ‘prisoners’.⁶⁶¹ At other times, he mentions figures who plainly acted in an interpreting capacity, but shows no awareness concerning the multilingual element.⁶⁶² Evidently, in the main such details were of little significance to him.

Gymnosophists

The sole episode in the *Anabasis* that evidently did warrant reference to anonymous interpreters is the tale of Alexander’s meeting with the Gymnosophists in Book 7. The story occurs during the digression with which the book opens, discussing the ‘last plans’ of Alexander and his meetings with various philosophers, both Indian and Greek. This was a popular topic in antiquity.⁶⁶³ Arrian recounts the king’s encounter with unidentified Indian ascetics, who remind Alexander of his mortality (7.1.5-2.1). This is a unique presentation; the subject-matter is not attested elsewhere and there is little overlap with other extant

⁶⁶¹ See Chapter 2.2.1. See also below on the Lycian at the Persian Gates: Arrian refers only to ‘prisoners’. Similarly, where in Curtius Alexander learns information about the Bessus saga from Darius’ interpreter, Melon (5.13.7), Arrian’s account reports only that Alexander ‘learned’ of this information (ἐπύθετο; 3.21.4; Bosworth 1980a, 340). When Curtius reports an interpreter between Alexander and Taxiles (Omphis: Curt. 8.12.9), Arrian omits even any conversation (4.22.6).

⁶⁶² Alexander sends Taxiles and Meroes to Porus in clearly an interpreting role (5.18.6-7; cf. Curt 8.14.35, where Taxiles’ brother is sent); see Bosworth 1995, 307. Cf. 5.24.6, when Eumenes is sent in a diplomatic capacity: “The primary task was to communicate with the Indians... Eumenes must have had significant experience with interpreters since Alexander’s first contact in Sogdiana with the Indian rulers” (Bosworth 1995, 335).

⁶⁶³ See Bosman 2010; Powers 1998; Stoneman 1995a.

fragments of the Alexander tradition.⁶⁶⁴ Arrian notes that Alexander spoke to the sophists through interpreters (7.1.5):

I commend the Indian sophists, some of whom, the story goes, were found by Alexander in the open air in a meadow, where they used to have their disputations; when they saw Alexander and his army, they did nothing more than beat with their feet on the ground they stood on. When Alexander enquired through interpreters (δι' ἑρμηνέων) what their action meant, they replied...

While Arrian's source for this particular episode cannot be isolated, Strabo provides an account in which Onesicritus is sent by Alexander to speak with the Gymnosophists, as we have seen: Dandamis asks Onesicritus whether 'he might be pardoned if, conversing through three interpreters (δι' ἑρμηνέων τριῶν διαλεγόμενος), who, with the exception of language, knew no more than the masses, he should be unable to set forth anything in his philosophy that would be useful; for that, he added, would be like expecting water to flow pure through mud!' (Strab. 15.1.64). The detail of the interpreters' presence is clearly significant for the point of the tale; the language barrier is problematic for conveying philosophical principles.⁶⁶⁵ Arrian knew of Onesicritus' work and may have been influenced by his account in his representation of Alexander's own encounter.⁶⁶⁶ The two accounts are the only extant ones concerned with the Indian sages to mention the use of interpreters, so it is unlikely to be a coincidence; Arrian knew his Alexander traditions.

Moreover, he employs interpreters here in a similar fashion to Strabo, for whom the interpreters, and especially their plurality, draws attention to the foreign nature of Onesicritus' interlocutor. Three interpreters, for the intermediary languages, are needed simply to access the other's thoughts. We have already seen – in the context of Herodotus'

⁶⁶⁴ See Bosworth 1988b, 73.

⁶⁶⁵ Many, however, have understood this as an excuse for Onesicritus to then set forth his own Cynic philosophy (e.g. Brown 1949, 39-52; cf. Stoneman 1995a, 104; Powers 1998, 77-8).

⁶⁶⁶ Onesicritus is cited at 6.2.3.

Scythians and the seven interpreters – the *topos* of multiple interpreters for particularly ‘barbarian’ peoples. Arrian's reference to more than one interpreter (δι’ ἐρμηνέων) perhaps places his account in this same tradition. The narrative has already highlighted the alien nature of the philosophers' behaviour, for when Alexander first sees these men, they do nothing more than beat their feet on the ground. Arrian makes clear that this was behaviour unfamiliar to Alexander, as the king enquires what this action meant. The inclusion of the detail that he asked through interpreters further emphasises this foreign element. This perhaps also speaks to a wider tradition in the Greek sources of a multitude of interpreters for communicating with Indian sages. The same practice, as we have seen, is found elsewhere in the extant Alexander tradition: the interpreter in Curtius' account of the Sogdian prisoners draws attention to the strangeness of their rejoicing at news of their impending execution, something which puzzles Alexander (see above).

There may also be a further narrative purpose to these interpreters in Book 7, in which there are four episodes concerning philosophers – earth-beaters, Diogenes, Dandamis, Calanus. The reference to interpreters occurs in the first, and Arrian may have also seen it functioning ‘proleptically’. That is, we expect that similar figures were present also in the subsequent episodes, without the historian needing to be explicit. Thus, when we see the Indians ‘singing in the Indian tongue’ (ᾄδοντα τῇ Ἰνδῶν γλώσσῃ) at Calanus' funeral, we are not surprised to see Arrian's subsequent comment that ‘the Indians say that these chants were hymns of praise to the gods’ (οἱ δὲ Ἴνδοι λέγουσιν ὅτι ὕμνοι θεῶν ἦσαν καὶ αὐτῶν ἔπαινοι) (7.3.3).⁶⁶⁷ The reader assumes that this knowledge is derived from interpreters similar to those mentioned in the first Indian episode.

⁶⁶⁷ Sisti and Zambrini (2004, 587) compare *Ind.* 10.1. Arrian has also noted the Indians' love of song and dance at 6.3.5.

Interpreter in *Indica*

There is one other reference to interpreters on Alexander's expedition recorded by Arrian that may be an instructive comparison. In his account of Nearchus' voyage in the *Indica*, we hear of the admiral's employment of an interpreter in the seizure of a town near Cyiza (*Ind.* 28.1-9 = *FGrH* F 1 III). In this episode, the interpreter is not a mere shadow presence, like those in the scene with the Indian philosophers; while Nearchus' interpreter is still anonymous, he nevertheless plays an active part as a character in the narrative.⁶⁶⁸ Nearchus describes his own deceptively friendly approach to the townspeople, who greet him with gifts. Once allowed inside the town, Nearchus, his archers and interpreter (ἑρμηνεύς) occupy the wall and signal the fleet. The Macedonians attack in full force, while the interpreter proclaims to the scrambling natives to give up their corn to the Macedonian army, in order to save their city. Eventually, Nearchus and his men seize the meagre provisions and put to sea. The reference to the interpreter is not incidental, since the figure is instrumental in the capture of the town. Arrian keeps close to Nearchus' account in the *Indica*, so evidently the admiral's inclusion of the interpreter was a significant factor for his own inclusion of the figure. Arrian, however, should get the credit for the vivid narration that allows the interpreter to come to the fore.⁶⁶⁹

5. The bilingual Lycian in extant Alexander historiography

We turn now to the anonymous bilingual Lycian who guided Alexander to an unknown path around the Persian (or Susian) Gates in late autumn 331 BCE, laying open for the

⁶⁶⁸ Bosworth suggests identification with Hydraces, the Gadrosian pilot referred to at *Ind.* 27.1 (1996a, 72 n.24); he has just argued, however, that Hydrakes would be speaking Persian or Aramaic, whereas the interpreter at 28 was speaking to the Fish-eaters of Cyiza.

⁶⁶⁹ Stadter 1980, 126-7.

Macedonians the road to Persepolis.⁶⁷⁰ There was evidently a strong tradition regarding this figure, for he is mentioned in some form by all four chief sources, in addition to Polyaeus. The original source for these accounts is probably Cleitarchus, the common source for much of Curtius and Diodorus, and the episode seems to have been treated as a kind of ‘Thermopylae’ with the Lycian in the role of Ephialtes.⁶⁷¹ There are also similarities to Xenophon’s Macronian peltast. Curtius, Plutarch and Polyaeus all mention that the Lycian was considered by Alexander to fulfil a Pythian pronouncement about a wolf (*lykos*) who would be his guide in Persian territory. Diodorus, Curtius, and Plutarch refer to this man as bilingual in the role of a guide, while Polyaeus omits the linguistic aspect.⁶⁷² Arrian only speaks of ‘prisoners’ used as guides. We shall explore reasons for the varied treatments below.

Diodorus

Diodorus recounts Alexander’s retreat from the pass after Persian attacks, and notes that he endeavours to ‘learn from the locals’ (παρὰ τῶν ἐγχωρίων ἐπυνθάνετο) whether there was an alternative route (17.68.4); no mention of interpreting here, however, as is Diodorus’ standard practice (see above).⁶⁷³ When the natives insisted there was no other route, he called up the ‘prisoners’ (αἰχμάλωτοι), among whom was a ‘bilingual man’ who knew the Persian tongue and said he was Lycian (17.68.5: ἀνὴρ δίγλωττος, εἰδὼς τὴν Περσικὴν διάλεκτον· οὗτος δὲ ἑαυτὸν ἀπεφαίνετο Λύκιον μὲν εἶναι τὸ γένος); he had been brought there as a captive (evidently by the Persians: cf. Curt. 5.4.10) and knew the area well as a shepherd. It is evident from Diodorus’ explicit reference to the man’s knowledge

⁶⁷⁰ Arrian refers to the ‘Persian Gates’, while other sources call them ‘Susian’ (Curt. 5.3.17; Polyaeus. 4.3.27; cf. ‘Susian Rocks’: Diod. 17.68.1). Speck (2002, 48-9) argues that the two names refer to “separate defiles situated at opposite ends of an extended area”.

⁶⁷¹ Heckel 1980; Zahrnt 1999. On Cleitarchus, see Hamilton 1977; Bosworth 1997; Parker 2009.

⁶⁷² He focuses on the associated oracle (Polyaeus. *Strat.* 4.3.27).

⁶⁷³ Cf. similar information learned ‘from the locals’ elsewhere in Diodorus (15.82.5; 17.90.7; 19.39.2).

of Persian that his other language – implied by δίγλωττος – was Greek. The term occurs two other times in the *Bibliothēke* in reference to bilingualism in which one language is Greek; this is the only instance, however, in which δίγλωττος refers to an individual.⁶⁷⁴ Diodorus offers perhaps the most Hellenocentric presentation of the common material: the man is bilingual, for he knows the Persian language. It is assumed, to an extent not found in the other accounts, that the other side of the bilingual coin is Greek.⁶⁷⁵ Given Diodorus' emphasis on the primacy of the Greek tongue which we have seen in Chapter 1.2, this is perhaps not surprising.

Curtius

Curtius' account starts much like Diodorus': Alexander has been forced to retreat in the battle against Ariobarzanes, and considers his options. He first calls forth 'those who knew the country' (*peritos locorum*); followed by the most recently taken prisoners (*captivos...quos nuper exceperat*), among whom was a man 'well versed in the Greek and Persian tongues' (*Graecae Persicaeque linguae peritus*) who shows Alexander an unknown way around (5.4.4-12). The prisoner says that he is a shepherd, had once been captured in Lycia by the Persians and again by Alexander. While Curtius does not explicitly label the prisoner *Lycius civis*, this is clearly implied by Alexander considering him to be the Lycian citizen foretold in the oracle. Plutarch (*Alex.* 37.1-2) and Polyaeus (*Strat.* 4.3.27) say that the oracle mentioned a λύκος (wolf) not a Lycian; "the *lykos*-Lycian pun defied translation into Latin and thus Curtius had to lose the irony of the 'wolf' appearing as a shepherd" (Atkinson 1994, 91).

⁶⁷⁴ 11.60.4 (inhabitants of cities on the Carian coast who were *diglottoi*); 12.68.5 (barbarian *diglottoi* in the Chalcidice); cf. the account at Thuc. 4.109.4 (βαρβάρων διγλώσσων); Rochette 2001, 179-180.

⁶⁷⁵ Cf. Gomme et al. on Thucydides: "δίγλωσσος no doubt meant for Thucydides simply Greek and non-Greek" (1981, 281); cf. Thuc. 8.85.2.

In addition to Greek and Persian, the prisoner probably also had a third language, Lycian.⁶⁷⁶ The former, however, were the languages that the prisoner required in this instance: as Atkinson put it, “his knowledge of Greek facilitated communication with Alexander, and his Persian added credibility to the information which he offered.”⁶⁷⁷ Curtius alone says explicitly that the prisoner also knew Greek. This is probably due to the difference in intended audience: Curtius had to make clear to his primarily Roman, Latin-speaking audience that the prisoner knew Greek to explain his ability to converse with Alexander. For the same reasons that Diodorus does not mention explicitly the prisoner’s knowledge of Greek, it seems likely that the original Greek source, Cleitarchus, did not include the reference to such knowledge. Curtius appears to have taken the original reference to a δίγλωσσος and considered which two languages were the most relevant in this scenario. His noted disdain for Greeks may also be a factor in his explicit mention of the Greek tongue; he goes on, as we shall see, to describe the Lycian as suspicious.

Other details included by Curtius further betray his interest in this prisoner and his linguistic abilities. When the prisoner leads Alexander’s men along the path, Curtius refers to the soldiers’ fear (*metus*), ‘for it was uncertain whether the guide was sufficiently trustworthy’ (*incertum an satis fidus*) (5.4.19).⁶⁷⁸ Again, we see the *topos* of ‘interpreter as traitor’ rearing its head. The fear of this multilingual guide does not appear in Diodorus or the other sources; it seems to be an elaboration of Curtius’ own.⁶⁷⁹ His presentation here seems to reflect a particular sentiment found in Livy: seeking an appropriate metaphor to describe Roman concerns about the size of the Carthaginian army, Livy employed the

⁶⁷⁶ Welles 1963, 313 n.2.

⁶⁷⁷ Atkinson 1994, 89.

⁶⁷⁸ On *fidi interpretes*, see introduction to Chapter 2.1; cf. Rochette 1996.

⁶⁷⁹ Speck emphasises the uniqueness of this fear in Curtius’ account (Speck 2002, 61).

sententia that ‘fear is an interpreter always inclined to the worse side’ (Liv. 27.44.10: *metu interprete semper in deteriora inclinato*).⁶⁸⁰ Throughout the work, Curtius seems in constant engagement with this idea. He may be elaborating on this sentiment in dramatic form.⁶⁸¹

Another detail which appears only in Curtius is the gift of thirty talents which Alexander gives to the Lycian the day after (*postero die*) the firing of the palace at Persepolis (5.7.12). The historicity of the precise time reference and the size of the reward have been doubted, since neither detail is corroborated by other sources.⁶⁸² Curtius' inclusion of the detail, however, reflects his level of interest in this figure. The reward comes much later in the narrative, and Atkinson suggests that Curtius' choice of structure makes a complete unit of chapters 4 to 7, based around his interest in the Lycian: “The melodrama of Alexander’s confrontation with the mutilated Greeks and the tragi-comedy of Thais’ incitement of Alexander [to burn the palace at Persepolis] were to be seen as less significant than the decision of the Lycian prisoner-of-war to volunteer practical assistance to Alexander.”⁶⁸³ Thus, even Curtius’ narrative structure is affected by his interest in the bilingual Lycian. The significance attributed to him by Curtius seems best explained by the author’s interest in ‘collaborators’, as we saw in the case of Mithrenes. Curtius’ interest in multilingualism

⁶⁸⁰ Curtius (7.7.24) seems to allude to Livy’s statement in a different context when he has Alexander describe Erigyus as being guided in reading entrails ‘with his own fear as an interpreter’ (*quem certum, mehercule, habeo extorum interprete uti metu suo*). It is possible that this is a deliberate echo on Curtius’ part; Livy was a major influence (see Baynham 1998, 20-25). Moreover, these are the only two passages in extant Latin literature in which *metus* and *interpretes* occur together, and it is striking that in both they are ablative absolutes. Curtius adopts the Livian concept of ‘fear is an interpreter’ merely in phraseology in this passage, however, since *interpretes* is employed in the sense of an interpreter of entrails, not language.

⁶⁸¹ Curtius does this elsewhere: in Arrian’s sixth book, as we have seen, an elderly Boeotian man tells Alexander that suffering is the price of action, while Curtius’ parallel passage illustrates the same sentiment in rhetorical form (Bosworth 1996a, 59-62; see Chapter 1.2).

⁶⁸² Atkinson 1994, 132-3; cf. Atkinson 1998, 433.

⁶⁸³ Atkinson 1994, 125.

and the fear of the interpreter is a crucial part of such ‘collaboration’ and these themes emerge in his unique presentation of this episode.

Plutarch

In Plutarch’s *Life*, the bilingual Lycian is the only intermediary mentioned. Plutarch calls him ‘a bilingual man, born of a Lycian father and a Persian mother’ (*Alex.* 37.1: δίγλωσσος ἄνθρωπος, ἐκ πατρὸς Λυκίου, μητρὸς δὲ Περσίδος γεγονώς). The term δίγλωσσος is here not accompanied by further information on the relevant languages, unlike Diodorus’ comment on his knowledge of Persian – it is to be extrapolated from the man’s parentage, not found in our other sources.⁶⁸⁴ Evidently we are to understand his ‘bilingualism’ to be Greek-Persian, since Lycia was greatly Hellenised by Plutarch’s time.⁶⁸⁵ Plutarch seems to have regarded the reference to δίγλωσσος alone as sufficient to explain the communication between the Lycian and Alexander, which further suggests that Greek-Persian bilingualism is meant.

Plutarch’s presentation of this δίγλωσσος differs somewhat from elsewhere in the *Lives*: the two other references to δίγλωσσοι both mention one of the languages employed by these figures.⁶⁸⁶ The divergence in this case may be due to the need to focus on the man’s Lycian background in order to make the subsequent pun on λύκος – for Plutarch soon refers to the oracle that a ‘wolf’ would be Alexander’s guide on a march against the Persians (*Alex.* 37.1).⁶⁸⁷ The Lycian bilingual is perhaps included as a means of illustrating the divine assistance afforded Alexander: at the start of the chapter, Plutarch refers to the

⁶⁸⁴ Elite Lycians often adopted Persian names and intermarried with Persians (Schmitt 1982). Dubuisson notes that the geographical location of Lycians facilitated bilingualism (1983, 206).

⁶⁸⁵ Strobach 1997, 172; Raimond (2007, 151) notes that Lycian, however, remained “the language of administrative authority”.

⁶⁸⁶ *Crass.* 28.4 (Latin); *Them.* 6.3–4 (Greek).

⁶⁸⁷ Cf. Polyaeus, *Strat.* 4.3.27. On wordplay in Plutarch, see Chapter 1.2.3.

difficulty of accessing Persis (δυσσεμβόλου), before the Lycian appears and shows him a way around (*Alex.* 37.1); Plutarch then refers to the oracle about the wolf, saying that the λύκος in the prophecy would be a καθηγεμών for Alexander. Earlier, the Lycian was labelled ἡγεμών; the change of terminology may be significant, for Plutarch tends to associate the term καθηγεμών with deities (e.g. *Thes.* 18.2; *Sull.* 17.5);⁶⁸⁸ perhaps this adds to Alexander's divinity, or simply reflects the divine language of the oracle.

Moreover, while other sources label the man a prisoner, Plutarch never mentions details of his origin besides parentage; he may have considered it unbecoming for Alexander to have captured a figure of divine significance.⁶⁸⁹ Furthermore, Plutarch introduces the prophecy by expressly referring to the Pythian priestess (τὴν Πυθίαν προειπεῖν). Polyaeus, too, refers to a Delphic prediction (λόγιον Ἀπόλλωνος), while Curtius speaks only generally of an *oraculum*.⁶⁹⁰ Although Plutarch's more specific reference to the Pythia is certainly not uncommon in ancient literature, in this instance it may reveal his personal interest in Delphi where he served as priest.⁶⁹¹ Signs, portents and oracles, moreover, are an important part of the *Alexander* narrative, and Plutarch seems to include this bilingual figure as part of his interest in Alexander's associations with the gods.⁶⁹²

Arrian

The sources thus far agree that this man was of Lycian origin, and knew both Greek and Persian. Significantly, however, none name the man. Arrian does not mention him, besides referring at the same point to 'prisoners' (αἰχμάλωτοι) as guides (3.18.4), which

⁶⁸⁸ Cf. LSJ s.v.; Swain 1991.

⁶⁸⁹ Diod. 17.68.5; Curt. 5.4.4; Polyaeus (4.3.27) calls the man a cowherd (βουκόλος).

⁶⁹⁰ Polyaeus, *Strat.* 4.3.27; Curt. 5.4.11.

⁶⁹¹ See *Mor.* 384-439; cf. *Alex.* 14.6-7; Stadter 2005; Jones 1971, 26; on the Delphic oracle in the *Lives*, see Brenk 1977, 236-255, who notes that, for Plutarch, "the oracle of oracles was that at Delphi" (236).

⁶⁹² On portents in the *Alexander*, see Bosman 2011; cf. Brenk 1977, 184-213.

nevertheless suggests some awareness of the tradition.⁶⁹³ As we have already seen, Arrian tends to omit references to bilingual intermediaries. We might note again, however, that no other source besides Arrian refers to another multilingual Lycian, Pharnuches: it is possible that the two individuals were in fact the same man.⁶⁹⁴

Pharnuches is also described as Lycian (τὸ μὲν γένος Λύκιον), despite his clearly Persian name (4.3.7).⁶⁹⁵ By providing his name, Arrian allows us to assume his knowledge of the Persian tongue. Since Pharnuches is presented as an ἑρμηνεύς in Alexander's command, evidently it is assumed that he knew Greek too, so Pharnuches appears in Arrian's text as a Lycian with knowledge of Greek and Persian (in addition to a Sogdian language, as the context makes clear).⁶⁹⁶ Evidently, at the point where the bilingual Lycian appears in other sources, Ptolemy and Aristobulus did not mention the individual, since the account differs substantially; so Arrian will not have learned of the bilingual prisoner there. It is unlikely that he would have missed the opportunity to allude to similar episodes in Herodotus and Xenophon.⁶⁹⁷ He was, however, demonstrably familiar with more traditions about Alexander's campaigns than he includes, so it is likely he knew the tale of the bilingual prisoner given its prevalence elsewhere.⁶⁹⁸

⁶⁹³ Cf. Bosworth 1980a, 326.

⁶⁹⁴ Engels assumes they are the same person (1980, 332); Heckel dismisses the prisoner as 'fictitious' (1980, 172; 2006, 330 n.554), writing him off as part of the quasi-Herodotean build-up to the burning of Persepolis as found in the 'vulgate'.

⁶⁹⁵ See Bosworth 1995, 24.

⁶⁹⁶ Strabo (15.2.8) asserts that Sogdian and Persian were mutually intelligible; Bosworth (1995, 25) thinks it likely that the local linguistic variations were more complex than Strabo's statement suggests. Arrian, however, is unlikely to have been aware of the specifics.

⁶⁹⁷ Herodotus: Ephialtes at Thermopylae (Hdt. 7.213–218; Heckel 1980, 171–174); cf. the Macronian peltast in Xenophon's *Anabasis* (4.8.4).

⁶⁹⁸ Arrian may even have read about the prisoner in Plutarch's *Life* (for Arrian's familiarity with Plutarch, see Jones 1971, 34–36; Bosworth 1980a, 12, 14; Buszard 2010). In a similar manner, Arrian passes over the role of Thais in the burning of the palace at Persepolis, although he must have been aware of it (3.18.11–12; Leon 2012, 93).

Indeed, Arrian arguably uses his audience's knowledge of the prisoner in his presentation of Pharnuches. As we have noted, Arrian includes Pharnuches' Lycian origins, a detail not essential to his introduction. This is plausibly an allusion to the tradition regarding the Lycian prisoner: in the other sources, much emphasis is placed on the prisoner's origin, because of the λύκος-Λύκιος oracle. Diodorus even introduces the Lycian prisoner in a similar fashion to Arrian's Pharnuches, with reference to the man's *genos* (Diod. 17.68.5).⁶⁹⁹ If Diodorus here stuck close to Cleitarchus, Arrian's use of the term may be more significant than first appears; when he introduces a people or individual with reference to *genos*, it often has allusive significance.⁷⁰⁰ Furthermore, Arrian hints that Pharnuches had already shown himself skilful in dealings with natives (τὰ ἄλλα ὁμιλῆσαι αὐτοῖς δεξιὸν φαινόμενον); to an audience familiar with the Lycian prisoner, it might be assumed that Arrian was alluding to the prisoner's previous assistance at the Persian Gates. Moreover, knowledge that the Lycian prisoner had been a mere shepherd before his capture, as other sources suggest, increases the plausibility of Pharnuches' protestations that he lacked military experience (4.6.1).⁷⁰¹ Arrian's presentation of Pharnuches is perhaps an attempt to reconcile these two characters, or deal with confusion in Ptolemy or Aristobulus. He perhaps plays on his audience's knowledge of the traditions about the prisoner in order to add significance to his presentation of Pharnuches. Arrian himself may not have known whether the two were the same man, but perhaps believed so. This may have been one way of showing the superiority of his history, that he could name this character who remained anonymous in other accounts.⁷⁰²

⁶⁹⁹ Note the use of αἰχμάλωτος here, the word used by Arrian at the point where the Lycian turns up in the other sources.

⁷⁰⁰ E.g. 2.27.6 (Neoptolemus of the *genos* of Aeacidae; this provides a heroic flavour, and Alexander himself often stressed his own Aeacid lineage; Bosworth 1980a, 259-60); 3.8.3 (Scae, Scythian *genos*, belonging to Scyths who inhabit Asia; alludes to Hdt. 7.64.2; see Bosworth 1980a, 288-9); 6.11.1 (Critodemus, physician, of *genos* of Asclepiads, alludes to his profession).

⁷⁰¹ The man is described as a shepherd by Curtius (5.4.10) and Diodorus (17.68.5), and a cowherd by Polyaeus (4.3.27).

⁷⁰² Marincola 2016 shows the 'heroic' historiographical importance of digging up hitherto unknown names.

Overall conclusion – Chapter 2.2

In the extant historiography of Alexander, bilingual intermediaries serve many purposes: they can symbolise vast cultural distance; the power of their leader; and they can be viewed as figures of suspicion. These are arguably all motifs found in the classical historians; overall, however, it seems that interpreters in Alexander historiography are ‘scrutinised’ to a greater extent, particularly in terms of the ‘interpreter as traitor’ motif. This is possibly linked to contemporary linguistic debates and the multilingual *agon* that was the Roman world, but we must be careful to remember that the reality of Alexander’s invasion was aggressive confrontation with foreign peoples, many of whom Greeks had never encountered, who may have seemed particularly barbarian and potentially untrustworthy. The accounts of Alexander thus more closely reflect Xenophon’s *Anabasis* than the more formalised diplomacy in Herodotus or Thucydides.

Diodorus shows how generally unimportant bilingual intermediaries were for his universal history: the only two such instances occur in Book 17, reflecting strong traditions of intermediaries in first generation Alexander historiography. Arrian, too, generally omits intermediaries unless his sources displayed evident interest. When mentioned, Arrian seems to employ them to represent cultural distance and the ‘interpreter as traitor’. Like Diodorus, Plutarch’s biographical *Lives* include intermediaries only when necessary to illuminate character: the bilingual Lycian is included to symbolise Alexander’s associations with the gods. Curtius is clearly the most interested in *interpretes*; we had already seen their presence in the trial of Philotas to symbolise cultural distance, and now we have illustrated the extent to which Curtius employed them as literary device. His particular attention to these figures seems linked to his interest in collaborators, and he betrays Livian influence at several points. We will now move from discussing minor

bilingual intermediaries to major bilingual figures, and explore how their linguistic knowledge contributes to their characterisation.

Chapter 3.1: Major Bilingual Figures

Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon

Introduction

In the last chapter, we discussed the presentation of minor bilingual intermediaries, interpreters or envoys who are often anonymous and facilitate communication between speakers of different tongues. In this chapter, however, I will discuss a different kind of bilingual: major historical figures who are depicted as knowing or learning a foreign language, but who do not operate in an interpreting or messenger capacity; their bilingualism is a function of their own interests, rather than those of others. They are normally higher status figures, like kings, tyrants, or famous commanders. In Herodotus, for example, we find several: Scyles the Scythian, who learns Greek; Histiaeus, tyrant of Miletus, who speaks Persian; and the Persian noble who speaks Greek before Plataea. Thucydides mentions Themistocles' Persian knowledge, while Xenophon's *Anabasis* recounts the Thracian dynast Seuthes' Greek ability. The later historians mention several such figures: Darius III in Curtius knows Greek; Arrian's Peucestas was the only Macedonian to learn Persian; and though Diodorus mentions no major bilingual individuals in Book 17, and Plutarch's one example has been discussed in a different section (see Alexander's 'bilingual' break into Macedonian in Chapter 1.2.3), both refer elsewhere in their writings to Themistocles' Greek-Persian bilingualism; their depictions of Themistocles will be discussed in the next section (3.2). In both halves of Chapter 3, I will examine the ways in which the inclusion of a figure's bilingualism adds to their characterisation.

Plutarch's famous introduction to his biography of *Alexander* – in which he delineates a distinction between 'histories' and 'lives' – highlights the role of 'intimate' moments in

creating character (*Alex.* 1.2). Such a strict generic distinction, however, is more Plutarchan marketing pitch than literary criticism, for such minor ‘biographical’ details like jokes or sayings are equally evident in historians: Herodotus, for example, delights in Spartan aphorisms and Solonian wit. The history of biography’s development in the ancient world, as with *historia*, is a complex and overlapping one; Plutarch’s statement, however, raises the question of the significance of references to biographical details like bilingualism. He explicitly mentions the value of ‘a little thing like a saying or some joke’ (πρᾶγμα βραχὺ... καὶ ῥῆμα καὶ παιδιά τις) for ‘revealing character’ (ἐμφασιν ἤθους ἐποίησε) (*Alex.* 1.2). Both refer to spoken expression; what, then, is signified by reference to the speaking of a different tongue?

Characterisation in ancient historiography comes in many forms.⁷⁰³ Perhaps most obvious is overt character assessment from the narrator or other figures within the narrative. More subtle, but no less important, is the depiction of what an individual says and does (and how these might be in conflict); also, *how* these things are said and done.⁷⁰⁴ Incorporating many aspects of characterisation, the approach I take in this chapter is designed for the examination of cultural liminality: I will look at how *nomoi* and other aspects of identity come into play alongside language (see Introduction).⁷⁰⁵ This allows me to pick up on small details which contribute to a broader cultural portrait of these figures, beyond the singular references to their linguistic knowledge. This chapter will consist of case studies in the characterisation of certain bilingual figures. These are Histiaeus of Miletus (Herodotus), Themistocles (Thucydides), and Seuthes (Xenophon’s *Anabasis*). I choose these three for

⁷⁰³ See e.g. Pitcher 2007; Baragwanath 2015; cf. the contributions in de Temmerman and van Emde Boas 2018a (which I have not, unfortunately, been able to incorporate fully in my thesis).

⁷⁰⁴ Pitcher 2007, 110-112; de Bakker 2018, 142-152. Cf. Aristotle (*Poet.* 1449b35-1450a7; 1454a17-19) on the revelation of character (ἦθος) and disposition (διάνοια) in tragedy through action.

⁷⁰⁵ My use of ‘culturally liminal’ throughout this chapter refers to figures who belong to one culture but evince cultural traits (language, *nomoi*, religious practices) from another culture.

several reasons: all are presented as key figures and receive relatively thorough character treatments; they are each somewhat politically shifty and culturally liminal figures, exhibiting traits from their own and another culture; and in each case, the detail of their full linguistic knowledge is held back until the end of their portrayal.

1. Herodotus: Histiaeus of Miletus

Introduction

Histiaeus, tyrant of Miletus, is the only Greek in Herodotus' *Histories* explicitly said to speak Persian. This section aims to look more broadly at Herodotus' characterisation of Histiaeus in order to understand why. Many have seen the 'trickster' folk-hero type in Herodotus' portrayal of Histiaeus, "whose presence in Greek culture is guaranteed by the prototype of Odysseus".⁷⁰⁶ It may be relevant that this character type often displays clever use of language, whether Odysseus' 'Nobody', or Themistocles' inscriptions to the Ionians. I shall argue that Histiaeus is presented as a liminal figure throughout the text, and the speaking of Persian language at the end of his life forms a key part of this picture. As a Greek tyrant – and a pro-Persian one at that – the reader perhaps already expects Histiaeus to be somewhat transgressive and not as typically 'Greek'; however, I think Histiaeus' liminality goes further and can be seen through several lenses: spatial, as Histiaeus is associated with culturally liminal spaces throughout; on the level of political allegiance, as he switches sides; cultural, as he practises certain non-Greek *nomoi*; and linguistic, as he adapts his speech with 'Persianisms' and, ultimately, speaks Persian.⁷⁰⁷ In the subsequent

⁷⁰⁶ Murray 1988, 486.

⁷⁰⁷ On the 'characterising function' of space or 'setting', see de Jong 2012, esp. 16.

sections, discussion of Themistocles and Seuthes will throw Histiaeus into greater relief as a culturally liminal figure.

Histiaeus possesses the largest biography of any figure in the *Histories*.⁷⁰⁸ This is due to Herodotus' detailed account of the Ionian Revolt of which Histiaeus was allegedly a co-instigator (along with Aristagoras of Miletus), one of the events which triggered the invasions we call the Persian Wars.⁷⁰⁹ He is shown shifting allegiances and moving about the known world, from Ionia to Thrace to Persia, fighting both Greeks and Persians. He has been considered an Ionian patriot;⁷¹⁰ consistently pro-Persian;⁷¹¹ and everything in between. Murray suggests the 'aim' of Herodotus' portrait "is merely to demonstrate that Histiaeus was responsible for every important event of the period; he plays a succession of roles with astonishing virtuosity, tyrant, founder of cities, courtier, King's Adviser, instigator of revolt, potential leader, privateer".⁷¹² Herodotus' verdict on Histiaeus, however, is unclear.⁷¹³ Many have doubted the importance of his actions to the outcome of events, and indeed, Aristagoras seems to have been the main instigator of the revolt itself.⁷¹⁴ The historian's view, however, is complicated by general Greek views of 'trickster' figures: Odysseus' deceptive ways, for example, tended to be viewed positively in historiography.⁷¹⁵ Certainly, Herodotus' views on deceit are complex, and he often seems to have appreciated a deceptive means to a noble end.⁷¹⁶

⁷⁰⁸ Murray even considered its source "in origin a separate biographical *logos*, the earliest surviving Greek attempt at biography" (Murray 1988, 486).

⁷⁰⁹ Immerwahr 1956, 265: "The central importance of the Ionian Revolt lies in the fact that it is the immediate *aitie* of the Persian Wars".

⁷¹⁰ Lang 1968, 35.

⁷¹¹ Evans 1963, 126.

⁷¹² Murray 1988, 486.

⁷¹³ Chapman (1972, 550), comparing Aristagoras who gets clear censure from Herodotus (5.124.1).

⁷¹⁴ Murray 1988, 472; Forsdyke 2002, 530.

⁷¹⁵ Marincola 2007; more ambiguous in tragedy, however (Hesk 2000, 189-199). In general, see Detienne and Vernant 1978.

⁷¹⁶ See e.g. below on the Herodotean background to Thucydides' portrait of Themistocles (Chapter 3.1.2). More generally on deceit in Herodotus, see Lateiner 1990.

Few have taken into consideration the significance of Histiaeus' being the only Greek in the *Histories* explicitly said to speak Persian. This revelation occurs right at the end of his life, upon being captured, and just as the revolt ends: *prima facie*, these factors – along with the importance given to language in the *Histories* – suggest greater significance.⁷¹⁷ However, let us first return to Histiaeus' earlier appearances in the *Histories*.

Thrace and liminal space

Histiaeus' introduction in the *Histories* places him in a liminal space immediately. In Book 4, the tyrant of Miletus exhorts his fellow Ionian tyrants to support Darius' expedition into Scythia, since they owe their tyrannies to him (4.137). This speech happens at the river Ister, the boundary with the Scythians – as is well known in Herodotus, rivers mark boundaries, both physical and cultural, and the Ister is no exception.⁷¹⁸ Histiaeus, then, appears in a liminal space in his first appearance. Moreover, his persuasiveness at the Ister is cited years after his death as a defining moment for Persian fortunes: in Artabanus' advice to Xerxes at the outset of his own invasion in 480 BCE, he highlights the significance and good fortune of Histiaeus' act: 'If Histiaeus, tyrant of Miletus, had consented to the opinion of the other tyrants instead of opposing it, the power of Persia would have perished' (7.10γ.2; cf. 7.52). Indeed, Darius considers Histiaeus' actions at the Ister to be 'benefaction' (5.11.1: εὐεργεσίη), and upon his death labels him a 'benefactor to Persia' (6.30.2: Πέρσῃσι εὐεργέτῳ).⁷¹⁹ We are thus introduced to Histiaeus, the Greek

⁷¹⁷ Scholars are divided on the depth of Histiaeus' linguistic knowledge: for Milette (2008, 51 n.36), he was a "master of the Persian language" (*padrone della lingua persiana*), while Miller (1997, 131) notes that simply identifying oneself "requires no great knowledge of a language". My interest here is rather Herodotus' decision to record this detail as part of his narrative.

⁷¹⁸ On the liminality of the Ister, see Hartog 1988, 57-61; Immerwahr 1966.

⁷¹⁹ On benefaction in Herodotus, see Chapter 2.1.1 on Syloson; see also below on Histiaeus' capture scene.

tyrant of the Greek city of Miletus, acting as a pro-Persian benefactor of the Persian king, at the river marking the boundary of Scythian territory.

Histiaeus' next location is no less culturally liminal. In reward for the act at the Ister, Darius offered Histiaeus whatever he wanted: he asked for Myrcinus, in the Thracian territory of the Edonians on the river Strymon, 'wishing to found a city there' (5.11.2: βουλόμενος ἐν αὐτῇ πόλιν κτίσαι).⁷²⁰ It is unclear whether this was "an independent venture, albeit initiated with Persian approval", or whether such a gift was given after Megabazus' conquests of the region, which would necessitate the reversal of Herodotus' order of events.⁷²¹ In any case, Histiaeus' choice of location was pragmatic, for it was a resource-rich area (as Herodotus makes clear at 5.23.2).⁷²² Thrace, moreover, was a mix of Greek and non-Greek, and there had been a long history of interaction between Thracians and Greeks.⁷²³ It is presented as a liminal space throughout the *Histories*; consider the case of Scyles, who also ends up in Thrace: another culturally ambiguous figure, the Scythian king had a Greek mother who taught him the language. He was more inclined to Greek customs, wearing Greek clothes and becoming initiated into the rites of Dionysus. When the Scythians found out, however, he fled to Thrace (4.80.2).⁷²⁴ Thrace represents a space between the 'barbarian' sphere of the Scythians and the Hellenic sphere further south. The opening episode of Book 5 makes this Thracian cultural mixture clear (5.1.1-3): the (Greek) Perinthians had sung a *paean*, and the (barbarian) Paeonians had misinterpreted it as fulfilment of an oracle to attack the Perinthians if they called the Paeonians by name (i.e.

⁷²⁰ Thucydides also says Myrcinus is an Edonian city (4.107.3).

⁷²¹ For the former view, see Archibald 1998, 85; for the latter, see Delev 2007, 111 n.1. Hornblower claims it was "ruled by members of a non-Greek royal family" (2013, 103), but maybe not when Histiaeus took it over; Myres 1953 suggests it was Peisistratid-ruled (cf. Hdt. 1.64) until Histiaeus' arrival.

⁷²² See below.

⁷²³ See, most recently, Sears 2013.

⁷²⁴ Eventually, he is beheaded by his own people (4.80.5), just as Histiaeus is ultimately beheaded by the Persians (6.30). Hornblower (2013, 298) suggests that Herodotus considered beheading to be "excessive or barbarian"; cf. 7.35.3; 7.238.1.

paian/Paion wordplay). That is, a linguistic misunderstanding between Greeks and non-Greeks in Thrace had resulted in devastating defeat for the Perinthians, and has the effect of drawing attention to Greek-barbarian interaction in Thrace.

Thrace is introduced in Book 5 because of Persian encroachment beginning at the Hellespont (5.1.1). Herodotus provides a Thracian ‘ethnography’ (5.3-10). In this, we learn that the Thracians lack political unity: they would be the strongest nation in the world, Herodotus says, if only they could unite under one ruler (5.3.1).⁷²⁵ Immediately after the ethnography, we hear of Histiaeus’ choice of Myrcinus (5.11), and soon Megabazus complains to Darius of the threat he poses (5.23.2):

“O King, what is this that you have done? You have permitted a clever and cunning Greek (ἀνδρὶ Ἑλληνι δεινῷ τε καὶ σοφῷ) to build a city in Thrace, where there is abundant timber for ship-building, much wood for oars, mines of silver, and many people both Greek and non-Greek dwelling around (ὁμιλὸς τε πολλὸς μὲν Ἑλλήνων περιουκίει πολλὸς δὲ βάρβαρος), who, when they have a champion to lead them, will carry out all his orders by day and by night (καὶ ἡμέρης καὶ νυκτός). Stop this man, then, from doing these things so that you will not be entangled in a war with your own subjects, but use gentle means to do so. When you have him in your grasp, see to it that he never returns to the Greeks (ποιέειν ὅπως μηκέτι κεῖνος ἐς Ἑλλήνας ἀπίξεται).”

Megabazus raises the prospect that Histiaeus could do what Herodotus did not think possible: he could unite the Thracians, both Greeks and *barbaroi*.⁷²⁶ The actual threat was probably limited: as How and Wells observe, “the idea of a great Graeco-barbarian power in Thrace strong enough to be a danger to the Persian empire is strange”.⁷²⁷ Megabazus may have been playing up the threat posed by Histiaeus because he was a rival for the favour of the King.⁷²⁸

⁷²⁵ Thucydides ascribes a similar status to the Scythians (2.97.6), as Hornblower (2013, 97) points out.

⁷²⁶ Rood (2012, 137) also links the two passages.

⁷²⁷ How and Wells 1912, *ad loc.* (5.23).

⁷²⁸ Georges 2000, 12-15; Forrest 1979, 318. On such rivalry, see Megabazus’ favour with Darius (4.143.2) and Histiaeus’ death at hands of Persian nobles (6.30.1).

Nevertheless, Histiaeus had displayed leadership qualities at the Ister, and Megabazus (and Darius) may have been right to be cautious about any potential threat to royal interests in Thrace: we might compare the case of Thasos after the Ionian Revolt, a city described – like Myrcinus – as deriving wealth from mines and building ships, and which Darius ordered to disarm (6.46). The focus on such resources might perhaps also suggest to the external audience of Herodotus’ text the later Athenian empire and its navy.⁷²⁹ This ‘anachronism’ would frame Histiaeus as a surprisingly ‘Greek’ leader, and perhaps point to his ‘Themistoclean’ character and the upcoming Persian Wars proper; for Themistocles would be credited as building up Athens’ navy.⁷³⁰ Indeed, Megabazus labels Histiaeus ‘Greek’ here, something he is not explicitly called elsewhere; there may be a hint of intrinsic distrust in a Greek with no loyalty to his own *ethnos*. It is noteworthy that Megabazus urges that Histiaeus ‘never return to the Greeks’; he must be kept from his own people.⁷³¹ Histiaeus will, of course, manage to convince Darius to send him to Ionia a little later (5.106-107). In any case, Megabazus’ comments draw attention to Histiaeus’ Greekness.

Megabazus’ words also bring out the cultural liminality of Thrace: there are ‘many people both Greek and non-Greek dwelling around’. This is perhaps a fitting setting for Histiaeus, a Greek allied with non-Greeks. Histiaeus, however, is suddenly considered a potential enemy of the King, yet on Herodotus’ presentation he has shown nothing but loyalty to Darius. Some have suggested that Histiaeus is figured here as a potential quasi-Persian King: the expression ‘by day and night’ may draw on a genuinely Persian royal cliché, as

⁷²⁹ On the ‘anachronistic’ colouring of Herodotus’ attention to the area’s resources, see Macan 1895, I.168 *ad loc*; Irwin 2007, 82-3. It may also recall Peisistratus’ use of mineral resources in the Strymon area at 1.64 (Hornblower 2013, 102).

⁷³⁰ On connections between Histiaeus and Themistocles in Herodotus, see Lateiner 1990, 231; Greenwood 2007, 135-138.

⁷³¹ Cf. Democedes’ fear that he could never return to Hellas and the Hellenes (3.130.1; 132.1).

this phrase is also found on Darius' Bisitun inscription (section 7), and in a Thucydidean letter of Xerxes (1.129.3; cf. 1.137.2).⁷³² Tuplin sees Megabazus as “virtually suggesting that the Greco-Thracian population is going to turn Histiaeus into an *ersatz* Great King”.⁷³³ This would mean that, at the same time Megabazus is labelling Histiaeus a ‘dangerously clever Greek’, he also implies there is something of the Persian King about him.⁷³⁴ This perhaps places too much strain on Megabazus' words; what seems clear, however, is that Histiaeus is seen as a threat. If Megabazus felt threatened by Histiaeus' favour in Darius' eyes, it would certainly make sense to appeal to the King with terms appropriate to royal ideology.⁷³⁵ Herodotus, of course, could simply be inserting a ‘Persianism’ into a conversation between two Persians; however, given the proximity of the comments in the ethnography and from Megabazus about the potential to rule in Thrace, the expression may well hold significance; such ‘Persianisms’ do not come up very often, after all. This would add, then, to the portrait of Histiaeus' cultural and political liminality which Herodotus appears to be building up.

Other parts of Megabazus' speech also express ambiguity with respect to Histiaeus. He thinks Darius should be wary of this ‘dangerously clever Greek man’ controlling such a wealthy region, and he advises Darius to keep Histiaeus close (5.23). These adjectives, δεινός and σοφός, I would suggest, are carefully chosen by Herodotus, as they are notoriously ambiguous words, potentially positive or negative: δεινός can be ‘clever,

⁷³² Hornblower (2013, 120) suggests that the phrase “[seems] to have struck Greeks as specially appropriate in a Persian context”. It is used by Nicias, however, at Thuc. 7.77.6 and on several occasions in Xenophon's *Anabasis* by Greeks (including the narrator): Xen. *Anab.* 2.6.7; 3.1.40; 6.1.18; 7.6.9.

⁷³³ Tuplin 2005, 236 n.47.

⁷³⁴ We might compare Aristagoras at 5.35.1, when he fears losing the ‘kingship of Miletus’ (τὴν βασιλείην τῆς Μιλήτου). Hornblower suggests this terminology is due to focalisation, with Aristagoras “liking to think of himself as a royal personage” (2013, 137). This is complicated, however, by his role at Miletus being called a tyranny (τὴν τυραννίδα) at 5.37.2, and the words for king and tyrant being closer in meaning at this time (cf. 5.44; Hornblower 2013, 137; 156).

⁷³⁵ Cf. Syloson's expressions to Darius (3.140; above, section 2.1.1); and see Themistocles/Seuthes below.

skilful’, or ‘terrible, dangerous’; while σοφός can mean ‘wise’ or ‘cunning’.⁷³⁶ Histiaeus, that is, has the potential to be either; he is in a liminal space in this respect. While Megabazus’ words are clearly intended negatively for their internal audience (Darius), the external audience of Herodotus’ text would undoubtedly pick up on the significant combination of two markedly ambiguous adjectives.

Interestingly, throughout Book 5, it is chiefly Persians who evaluate what is δεινός and σοφός. Regarding the former term, Megabates considers the lack of guards on board his ship to be a terrible thing (5.33.2: δεινόν τι), and Aristagoras’ release of the punished captain to be the same (5.33.3: κάρτα δεινόν). As for σοφός, only chapters before Megabazus’ speech there is another example of Persians pronouncing on the σοφία of a liminally Greek figure: when the Persian ambassadors visit Macedonia, Amyntas brings out the women but does not allow the Persians to touch them, an action which they label ‘not wise’ (5.18.4: φάμενοι τὸ ποιθὲν τοῦτο οὐδὲν εἶναι σοφόν).⁷³⁷ After this episode, the Herodotean narrator labels Alexander’s cover-up of the murder of the Persians as σοφία (5.21.2). Aristagoras is also labelled σοφός in his attempts to convince the Spartans to join the revolt against Persia; that is, up till his honest account of the length of travel time into Asia (5.50.2). On the basis of these interactions, which involve the “interface between Ionia and Persia”, Fearn argues that “such *sophie* is as much a characteristic of the Persians in this Book as it is of the Greeks, or quasi-Greeks, who make deals with them; but such *sophie* is not unambiguously positive.”⁷³⁸ While σοφία in this book could be construed as being linked to the Persians, given that the word is applied to Macedonians or Ionians when

⁷³⁶ On the complexity of δεινός, see Hollmann 2011, 239. On σοφός cf. e.g. Eur. *Med.* 285. Note also the somewhat less ambiguous, analeptic reference to the δεινός nature of Histiaeus’ moment at the river Ister (7.10c).

⁷³⁷ Herodotus weighs in on the contested Greekness of the Macedonians at 5.22; 8.137-139.

⁷³⁸ Fearn 2007, 108.

they are conducting dealings with Persia, it is worth noting that the word is not applied to any Persian in Book 5.

When Herodotus has Megabazus refer to Histiaeus' qualities, he seems to mean them negatively; nevertheless, it could be argued that their very ambiguous nature reflects Histiaeus' character for the external audience.⁷³⁹ Histiaeus occupies a liminal space in Thrace, not just culturally, but potentially politically: Megabazus' words arguably foreshadow Histiaeus' switching of sides. The terminology seems especially well chosen when we compare Darius' comments to Histiaeus soon after, when he calls him a 'wise and well-disposed friend' (5.24.3: ἀνὴρ φίλος συνετός τε καὶ εὖνοος).⁷⁴⁰ This is similar yet unambiguous vocabulary: instead of the ambiguous σοφός, Histiaeus is συνετός.⁷⁴¹

Susa and cultural liminality

After Megabazus' warning, Darius sends for Histiaeus. The King orders him to 'leave Miletus and your newly founded Thracian city and follow me to Susa, where you will have all that is mine, as my table-companion and adviser' (5.24.4: ἐμός τε σύσσιτος ἐὼν καὶ σύμβουλος). The vocabulary again suggests the culturally ambiguous nature of Histiaeus: Darius wants him to be his σύσσιτος. Such a concept has many Achaemenid connotations, though a different Greek term is typically used in the *Histories*: Democedes becomes a ὁμοτράπεζος of Darius after healing the King (3.132.1), and the Persians and Greeks who

⁷³⁹ Themistocles, for whom Histiaeus is in many ways a precursor in Herodotus' text, is also later described as σοφός (8.110.1). Both characters are clever with words, and politically fluid in loyalty; we will come back to this comparison in the next section on Themistocles.

⁷⁴⁰ Greenwood 2007, 134.

⁷⁴¹ Cf. 1.185.1; 2.5.1; 7.49.1. This is the key word with which Thucydides will later describe Themistocles (Thuc. 1.138.3), generally used positively in Thucydides' character judgments (e.g. Thuc. 1.79.2; 2.15.2; 4.81.2; 6.54.5; 6.72.2; 8.27.5).

dine together before Plataea are described as ὁμοτράπεζοι (9.16.2).⁷⁴² Xenophon also uses ὁμοτράπεζοι to describe some of the King's closest companions (Xen. *Anab.* 1.8.25; *Cyr.* 7.1.30).

The word σύσσιτος, however, is only found in the *Histories* in relation to the Spartans: as part of Lycurgus' reforms, he institutes 'common meals' (1.65.5: συσσίτια).⁷⁴³ Greenwood points to a previous example in Book 5 of the difficulty of different cultures dining together while preserving their different *nomoi* – the episode of the Macedonians and Persians (5.17-22).⁷⁴⁴ She suggests that the Spartan connotations of this word may raise the spectre of another Greek benefactor to a Persian king: the Spartan regent Pausanias, described by Thucydides (1.130.1) as adopting Persian dining habits, among others. She argues that Herodotus associates Histiaeus' dealings with Darius here with future Greek-Persian relations within the text and beyond it. This may be a stretch, however: there is only one other instance of the word in the *Histories* with which to compare, and the term is used elsewhere in fifth and fourth century literature without Spartan connotations.⁷⁴⁵ Nevertheless, Herodotus did choose σύσσιτος when his typical choice was ὁμοτράπεζος; also, Pausanias appears at 5.32 in the context of Aristagoras' cooperation with the Persian royal house, something Greenwood calls a "pointed insertion".⁷⁴⁶ The choice of vocabulary here perhaps contributes to the unfixed, or even floating, cultural status of Histiaeus. He is parts Spartan, 'Greek', Persian, and Thracian.

⁷⁴² Cf. also ὁμόσιτοι at 7.119.3 (otherwise unattested until the second century CE); on the terms and discussion of possible hierarchies, see Briant 2002, 308-309.

⁷⁴³ Indeed, συσσίτια is the standard term for Spartan messes; see, e.g., Fornis and Casillas 1997.

⁷⁴⁴ Greenwood 2007, 135.

⁷⁴⁵ E.g. Eur. *Ion* 1165; Ar. *Vesp.* 557; *Ran.* 1075; Eccl. 715; Xen. *Cyr.* 5.2.17; 8.7.14; *Oec.* 8.12. Cf., however, the Spartan usage at Xen. *Hell.* 5.3.17.

⁷⁴⁶ Greenwood 2007, 135.

This cultural and political liminality is further revealed when Histiaeus takes up Darius' offer and goes to Susa. There, his loyalties to the King are challenged when he realises that he is being detained;⁷⁴⁷ it is the reason, Herodotus tells us, that he sent the tattooed slave to tell Aristagoras to revolt: 'Histiaeus did this because he greatly disliked his detention at Susa' (5.35.4: ταῦτα δὲ ὁ Ἰστιαῖος ἐποίηε συμφορὴν ποιούμενος μεγάλην τὴν ἐωυτοῦ κατοχὴν τὴν ἐν Σούσοισι). Histiaeus, then, only chooses to revolt from the King because of his own unexpected position; certainly not from any kind of concern for his own Ionian people (as Megabazus had attempted to persuade Darius). In this regard, it is somewhat ironic that he employs a slave to incite a revolt for Ionian freedom. Not in that Herodotus is questioning the institution of slavery here – certainly not – but rather that the passage is another example of the use of the dichotomous language of freedom and slavery so visible throughout the *Histories*, but particularly in the Ionian Revolt and Persian Wars narratives.⁷⁴⁸ Moreover, Histiaeus' chosen medium for sending a hidden message to Aristagoras is a notoriously barbarian – and despotic – *nomos*: he tattoos the slave's skull, beneath his hair (5.35.3). Tattooing is a punishment employed by Xerxes (7.35.1; 7.233.2); additionally, a sign of nobility among the Thracians (5.6.2).⁷⁴⁹ As we have just seen Histiaeus represented as potential unifier of the Greeks and barbarians in Thrace (and “*ersatz* Great King”), such a medium of communication seems highly appropriate; rather than coming across very Greek in inciting Greek revolt, Histiaeus shows signs of ‘barbarisation’.⁷⁵⁰

⁷⁴⁷ Referred to in passing earlier at 5.30.2; cf. 5.106.1.

⁷⁴⁸ E.g. 1.170.2; 5.49.2; 5.109.3; 6.9.3; 6.11-12; 8.22.1-2; 9.90.2; some of this notion is discussed by Seager-Tuplin 1980.

⁷⁴⁹ For the paradox that tattooing is κόσμος for the Thracians, and τιμωρία τὰ στίγματα to others, see *Dissoi Logoi* 2.13. On branding as tyrannical behaviour, see Steiner 1994, 154-159; Hall 1989, 158-159; Hartog 1988, 142-143; 332-334; Lateiner 1987, 92-93.

⁷⁵⁰ Cf. Steiner (1994, 150) on Eastern kings and Ionian tyrants as the “principal letter writers of Herodotus's tales”; cf. 157-158 on Histiaeus' branding as akin to γράμματα.

This idea of acculturation is again present when we next see Histiaeus, defending himself against Darius' accusations of instigating the revolt. Now, Histiaeus' liminality moves in a linguistic direction. To Darius, he claims that he 'would never do anything, great or small, to harm you' (5.106: ἐμὲ βουλευῶσαι πρῆγμα ἐκ τοῦ σοί τι ἢ μέγα ἢ σμικρὸν ἔμελλε λυπηρὸν ἀνασχῆσθαι). Such an expression may have been seen by Herodotus as appropriate when speaking to a Persian king: Prexaspes uses the same phrasing ('great or small') to Cambyses (3.62.3: ἢ μέγα ἢ σμικρόν).⁷⁵¹ Indeed, we have seen in the previous chapter how Syloson acted similarly with Darius, adapting his speech to royal ideology.⁷⁵² Hornblower seems correct when he states "we are not meant to ask what language they really spoke in, or if they used interpreters" – at least, not until we learn of Histiaeus' Persian language ability at 6.29. Of course, such details are rarely cited in historiography, which is why Histiaeus' ultimate speaking of Persian is so worthy of examination. Rather, Hornblower's suggestion that Herodotus is here "attempting a Greco-Persian idiolect" is more attractive.⁷⁵³ But to what end? Regarding Histiaeus' phrasing, Hornblower argues for "ethnic characterisation or stereotyping: the clever Greek adopts elaborate and stylised 'orientalising' courtesies".⁷⁵⁴ That is, Herodotus is depicting Histiaeus as employing such linguistic tactics to 'trick' Darius, for the historian has already told us Histiaeus' true plans and motivations (5.35); moreover, after this speech Histiaeus is described as 'deceiving' (διέβαλλε) Darius and was let go (5.107).⁷⁵⁵ Hornblower's interpretation must be right, although we might expect more than just a singular 'orientalising courtesy'.

⁷⁵¹ Cf. Hdt. 1.5.4.

⁷⁵² See Chapter 2.1.1. The suggestion that such 'Persianisms' might be remnants of translation from Persian is without evidence.

⁷⁵³ Hornblower 2013, 118; 292. We might compare historians' inclusion of Laconic colour in the form of "by the twin gods!" (e.g. Xen. *Anab.* 6.6.34; 7.6.39; *Hell.* 4.4.10; *Ages.* 5.5; see Colvin 1999, 70-73); cf. also Hall 1989, 76-79 on Aeschylus' 'Persianisms'.

⁷⁵⁴ Hornblower 2013, 292.

⁷⁵⁵ Cf. also 6.2.1 (βασιλέα Δαρεῖον ἐξηπατηκώς).

Indeed, there is a moment when Histiaeus appears to employ a Persian religious expression for Darius' benefit (5.106.5-6):

“Now send me off to Ionia right away... Then, when I have done this to your satisfaction, I swear by the gods of your royal house (θεοὺς ἐπόμνυμι τοὺς βασιλείους) that I will not take off the tunic I am wearing on my arrival in Ionia until I have made Sardo, the largest of the islands, tributary to you.”

Histiaeus promises to swear by Darius' own 'royal gods', a detail missed by many commentators.⁷⁵⁶ Mikalson, however, in a discussion on “Greek-style oaths” being a “common feature of international dealings” in Herodotus, cites these examples: “Cyrus has a sworn treaty with the Milesians (1.141.4, 143.1, and 169.2), Otanes with some Samians (3.144), and Darius with the Milesian Histiaeus (5.106.6), the last being by Persian, not Greek gods.”⁷⁵⁷ Of course, it is not Darius but Histiaeus who makes this oath, and Darius' assent to this specific detail is not clear, in contrast to the other examples Mikalson cites: we only get a non-specific comment that ‘Darius was persuaded and let him go’ after the speech (5.107).⁷⁵⁸ Mikalson does not elaborate on Histiaeus specifically, but his subsequent comment, that “the Persians in all these cases, as Greeks were expected to do, remained true to their oaths even in the face of disaster”, jars somewhat with respect to Histiaeus' oath; Mikalson's lumping of Histiaeus with Persians, however, perhaps speaks to the very ‘Persian-ness’ of the Ionian tyrant in this scene. Indeed, the only other figure to swear by the ‘royal gods’ in the *Histories* is the barbarian despot *par excellence*, Cambyses (3.65.6), and the expression appears to be of Persian origin.⁷⁵⁹ Histiaeus, then, presents himself to

⁷⁵⁶ Hornblower's commentary (2013, 292) neglects this expression, as does Harrison's 2000 book on religion in Herodotus (but note Harrison 2015, 27). Both Burkert (1985, 446 n.28) and Lateiner (2012, 161-162) briefly note this detail in broader discussions of oaths.

⁷⁵⁷ Mikalson 2003, 159.

⁷⁵⁸ That consent could even refer only to his request to be sent to the coast.

⁷⁵⁹ Cf. Plut. *Mor.* 338F; D. Chrys. *Or.* 74.14; Just. 11.15.10; see further Asheri's comments (Asheri et al. 2007, 463).

Darius as rather ‘Persian’ linguistically and ritually.⁷⁶⁰ The linguistic affectation perhaps looks forward to Histiaeus’ use of the Persian tongue upon his capture.

We might remember, however, that even before the affectations in Histiaeus’ speech to Darius, the Ionian tyrant had branded a slave, a distinctly barbarian activity which was not done to appear deferential, as with the other ‘Persianisms’ which were performed for Darius’ benefit; the tattooing, also done to serve Histiaeus’ own purposes, was a practical measure for slipping past Persian guards (5.35).⁷⁶¹ This raises the possibility of a certain ‘Persianisation’ creeping into Herodotus’ picture of Histiaeus’ behaviour, beyond mere affectations designed to deceive; perhaps hinting at his language skills, and foreshadowing his eventual speaking of the Persian tongue at a climactic moment. This, in turn, raises the question of how much the reader is meant to see these other ‘Persianisms’ as entirely for deceptive purposes. Could Histiaeus be undergoing a kind of ‘unconscious’ Persian acculturation? When we later learn that he is capable of uttering something in ‘the Persian tongue’, is this to be considered an affectation to stir his Persian captors to save his life, or evidence of the ‘Persianisation’ which he underwent at Susa? We will discuss this soon. In either case, Histiaeus is treading the line between cultural expressions and loyalties.

Between the Persians and Ionians

Once Histiaeus is released to the coast, he finds himself caught in the middle politically: as an Ionian tyrant fleeing Darius, he is neither on the Persian side nor the Ionian. In Sardis,

⁷⁶⁰ Burkert suggests that “Histiaios, about to become a traitor, swears by the Gods of the Great King in order to break the oath at once” (1985, 446 n. 28). Lateiner suggests that, “had he sworn by *his* Hellenic gods, those deities would have punished the forsworn oath” (2012, 162 n. 22; emphasis original).

⁷⁶¹ Scott considers the “shaven head story” (5.35) and Histiaeus’ “conversation with Darius as represented”, (5.106) to be “factually doubtful” (2005, 80). Whether or not this is the case, they contribute to Herodotus’ characterisation of Histiaeus.

Histiaeus met Artaphrenes, the satrap; possibly, he wished to secure his help to get back to Miletus.⁷⁶² However, Artaphrenes saw through his pleas of ignorance and realised that he was ‘dissembling’ (6.1.1-2: ὁρέων αὐτὸν τεχνάζοντα εἶπε). We noted earlier that Democedes of Croton had also become a dining companion of Darius (3.132.1), and here there is another parallel between Histiaeus and Democedes: both try (and fail) to ‘deceive’ Persians with the rarely used verb τεχνάζω (cf. 3.130.2).⁷⁶³ However, while Democedes had failed to deceive Darius, who saw through him and forced him to confess his medical knowledge under threat of torture, Histiaeus had successfully deceived the same king, but failed with the satrap. This perhaps speaks to the picture of Histiaeus’ closeness to Darius himself – rather than Persians in general – which Herodotus is painting: Darius is the only Persian of note who trusts him. Other Persians, like Megabazus and Artaphrenes, are presented as more attentive to his deceptive qualities.⁷⁶⁴ After Histiaeus’ death, we will remember, Darius will call him a ‘benefactor’ (6.30.2).

On Herodotus’ presentation, however, at this point Histiaeus is no longer Darius’ ally. Histiaeus now escapes to the coast, where Herodotus claims that he was ‘secretly intending to make himself leader of the Ionians in their war against Darius’ (6.2.1: κατεργάσασθαι ὑπέδυνε τῶν Ἰόνων τὴν ἡγεμονίην τοῦ πρὸς Δαρεῖον πολέμου). Apart from sending the tattooed slave to Aristagoras, this is the only hint of Histiaeus’ leading the revolt; otherwise, Aristagoras is presented as leading.⁷⁶⁵ Subsequent events point to Histiaeus’ clear intent to fight on the Ionian side: he next goes to Chios, where locals lock him up, thinking he had

⁷⁶² Scott 2005, 80.

⁷⁶³ Cf. 2.121a.2; Ar. *Ach.* 385; *Ran.* 957; *Thesm.* 94; Xen. *Anab.* 7.6.16.

⁷⁶⁴ Indeed, in the final summation Herodotus believes that Darius would have forgiven Histiaeus, while it is fearing this that Artaphrenes and Harpagus kill Histiaeus rather than take him to the King (6.30.1); this, of course, shows how Darius’ belief – that Histiaeus was “a man who had been a great benefactor to [Darius] himself and to the Persians” (6.30.2: ἀνδρὸς μεγάλως ἐωυτῷ τε καὶ Πέρσῃσι εὐεργέτῳ) – was thought of by Histiaeus’ Persian rivals for the King’s favour; on this rivalry, see n.23 above.

⁷⁶⁵ Scott 2005, 81.

been sent by Darius, but release him when hearing of his hostility to the King (6.2.2). This results in Histiaeus' sudden conversation with 'the Ionians' (6.3); there is no narrative change of location, and the sudden switch from Chians to Ionians has led some to interpret 'Ionians' as synonymous with the Chians here.⁷⁶⁶ Presumably 'Ionians' refers to an assembly of representatives from various cities; Histiaeus does, after all, tell them a different story than what he says to the Chians.⁷⁶⁷ In response to their questions about his reasons for instigating the revolt, Histiaeus 'did not at all reveal the true reason to them' (6.3: τὴν μὲν γενομένην αὐτοῖσι αἰτίην οὐ μάλα ἐξέφαινε). This is in response to accusations from the Ionians of the revolt causing them 'harm' (κακὸν τοσοῦτον εἶη Ἴωνας ἐξεργασμένος). This is somewhat puzzling at this stage of the revolt; it is likely, however, a later retrojection into the tradition, or even Herodotus' own comment, if we are to take 5.97.3 (Athenians sending 20 ships as 'beginning of evils for Greeks and *barbaroi*') as constituting a negative opinion of the Ionian Revolt. Herodotus, then, could be inserting this detail to present Histiaeus as lying to the Ionians. In this way, he is depicted as not entirely on either the Ionian nor Persian side.

In the next chapter, Histiaeus is shown becoming increasingly isolated from the Persian side too. He sends messages to Persians in Sardis to whom he had spoken about revolt, but his messenger, a man from Atarneus, betrays him to Artaphrenes, who puts those Persians to death (6.4).⁷⁶⁸ It is unclear what Histiaeus' intentions were in communicating with these Persians: we only hear that he had spoken with them 'about revolt' (6.4.1: ὥς προλελεσχηνευμένων αὐτῷ ἀποστάσιος πέρι). What was he seeking: help in obtaining leadership of the revolt? Persian support in crushing the revolt for Darius? Aid in returning

⁷⁶⁶ E.g. de Sélincourt's translation (2003).

⁷⁶⁷ Scott 2005, 82.

⁷⁶⁸ See below on the significance of Atarneus.

to Miletus? Herodotus does not make it clear. What is clear, however, is that Histiaeus is not going to get any help from Persians (at least other than Darius). His only hope is the Ionians, though we would do well to remember that Herodotus has presented him as lying to them. He has lied to Darius too. His loyalties are in flux.

Histiaeus is then depicted attempting and failing to restore himself to the tyranny of Miletus, which will result in his being cast into the political wilderness. The Milesians, having experienced the democracy given to them by Aristagoras, will not abide Histiaeus' attack (6.5.1-2):

Χῖοι κατῆγον ἐς Μίλητον, αὐτοῦ Ἰστιαίου δεηθέντος. οἱ δὲ Μιλήσιοι, ἄσμενοι ἀπαλλαχθέντες καὶ Ἀρισταγόρῳ, οὐδαμῶς πρόθυμοι ἦσαν ἄλλον τύραννον δέκεσθαι ἐς τὴν χώραν, οἷα ἐλευθερίας γευσάμενοι. [2] καὶ δὴ νυκτὸς γὰρ ἐούσης βίη ἐπειρᾶτο κατιῶν ὁ Ἰστιαῖος ἐς τὴν Μίλητον, τιτρώσκεται τὸν μηρὸν ὑπὸ τευ τῶν Μιλησίων.

The Chians were bringing Histiaeus back to Miletus at his own request. But the Milesians were glad enough to be rid of Aristagoras himself, and they had no wish to receive another tyrant into their country now that they had tasted freedom. [2] When Histiaeus tried to force his way into Miletus by night, he was wounded in the thigh by a Milesian.

This is a symbolically important scene, for several reasons. First, attacking one's own city is typical behaviour for a Greek tyrant (cf. Peisistratus); Histiaeus, then, appears in a more traditional Greek tyrannical vein than his previous pro-Persian actions.⁷⁶⁹ However, his actions also anticipate the Persian battle for, and siege of, Miletus immediately after (6.6-18), which tinges Histiaeus' behaviour with an additional Persian flavour. Histiaeus, then, manages to reflect both Persian and Greek activity.

In Histiaeus' being deprived of returning to rule his homeland, the thigh wound has some significance: Felton has linked it to the "traditional folkloric motif referred to as the

⁷⁶⁹ Scott 2005, 86: "[Herodotus] usually offers the τύρανν-/ἐλευθερ- antithesis in connection with Athens: 1.62.1 (Peisistratos seizes power); 5.55, 62, 64-5, §123.2 (Hippias removed)".

‘mutilated hero’’, showing how thighs were associated with male genitalia, and such a wound can represent castration or impotence; not just physical, but “political or spiritual” too.⁷⁷⁰ She notes that “thigh wounds mark the moments when these characters, who initially have high status, suffer reversals of fortune, falling from their former greatness because of the pursuit of their own self-interest. These men not only lose their community standing and die shortly thereafter, but also leave their people in chaotic situations.”⁷⁷¹ The four notable men who receive thigh wounds in the *Histories* (Histiaeus, Cambyses, Cleomenes, and Miltiades) all follow the pattern outlined by Felton. It is significant that this happens to Histiaeus when trying to retake his own city; he is now politically impotent, falling from his previously high status of tyrant since the Milesians have adopted democracy. As Felton notes, “Herodotus almost never specifies the types of wounds men receive in fighting (or in other actions), so the fact that he intentionally describes Histiaeus as being wounded in the thigh helps to confirm the importance of the motif, and, as with Cambyses’ death, suggests that a wound in the thigh also signals a crisis for the people represented by the wounded individual”.⁷⁷² Herodotus has in fact only ever depicted Histiaeus outside of Miletus, whether at the Ister, in Thrace, or in Persia; but here he signals that Histiaeus can never return to Miletus. His own ‘self-interest’ has led to his isolation and will result in the brutal subjugation of Miletus (6.18-22). The displacement of Greeks can be a cause, as well as consequence, of Persian imperialism in the *Histories* (as with Democedes, 3.133-135);⁷⁷³ here, the Persian capture of Histiaeus’ own city is essentially his own fault, for it was his desire to leave Susa that inspired his ‘instigation’ of the revolt (5.35.4). In failing to return to Miletus, Histiaeus has arguably himself fulfilled Megabazus’ request to Darius that he never return ‘to the Greeks’. He is then turned away by the Chians; he convinces the

⁷⁷⁰ Felton 2014, 47-48.

⁷⁷¹ Felton 2014, 59.

⁷⁷² Felton 2014, 54.

⁷⁷³ A key argument of Friedman 1997; 2006; cf. Immerwahr 1956.

Lesbians to give him some ships, and starts a new adventure as a pirate in Byzantium (6.5.2-3; cf. 6.26.1). Politically shut out by Greeks and Persians, he is now operating in between, at the very spatial point that bridges the two spheres – the Bosphorus.⁷⁷⁴

When we next see Histiaeus after the fall of Miletus, his position is less clear. Earlier, his role in Byzantium had been described thus: ‘They seized ships that were sailing out of the Pontus, except when their crews said they would serve Histiaeus’ (6.5.3: τὰς ἐκ τοῦ Πόντου ἐκπλεούσας τῶν νεῶν ἐλάμβανον, πλὴν ἢ ὅσοι αὐτῶν Ἰστιαίῳ ἔφασσαν ἔτοιμοι εἶναι πείθεσθαι).⁷⁷⁵ Presumably this included ships from many places, including Ionia and Persia.⁷⁷⁶ In his next appearance, however, the ships are said to be specifically ‘Ionian’ (6.26.1). What are we to make of this? Most argue that Herodotus just omitted the identity of the ships in the earlier passage.⁷⁷⁷ This is possible; however, Herodotus is generally careful with his terminology in the Ionian Revolt narrative.⁷⁷⁸ It is also possible that after his failure to return to Miletus, Herodotus wished to present Histiaeus as conducting indiscriminate piracy in Byzantium, targeting neither Greeks nor Persians; and then, before showing Histiaeus’ waging war against the Persians, he wished to show Histiaeus as targeting Ionian ships. In this way, Histiaeus’ utter lack of loyalty to either side would be magnified.

Having heard about ‘the events in Miletus’ (6.26.1: τὰ περὶ τὴν Μίλητον γεγόμενα), Histiaeus heads south and ends up attacking both Greeks and Persians. His motivations for

⁷⁷⁴ Scott 2005, 87: “There is no hint here or at [6.26] that he is helping the Ionians”.

⁷⁷⁵ Scott thinks this a “euphemism for exacting tolls” (2005, 87), suggesting the *pragmata* mentioned at 6.26.1 hints at a kind of “business”.

⁷⁷⁶ As assumed by Lateiner 1982, 150 n.65.

⁷⁷⁷ Miletus herself had many established trading posts in the Byzantium region, and Scott suggests Histiaeus might have been targeting Milesian ships particularly (Scott 2005, 87).

⁷⁷⁸ See below on the use of ‘Greeks’ in the capture scene.

heading south are unclear.⁷⁷⁹ Sailing with the Lesbians to Chios, when he was denied entry to their ports, he attacked and conquered the city, already weakened from the battle of Lade (6.26-27). Herodotus mentions the disastrous omens presaging the suffering of the Chians wrought by Lade and Histiaeus (6.27).⁷⁸⁰ Histiaeus brings a group of ‘Ionians and Aeolians’ to attack Thasos; then, hearing that the Phoenicians intended to attack Ionia, he leaves Thasos for Lesbos (6.28.1). Again, his motivations are not made clear by Herodotus; one assumes we are to impute general pillaging.⁷⁸¹ His army hungry, he crossed over to Atarneus on the mainland for corn, where he was captured alive and most of his army slaughtered by Harpagus the Persian (6.28.2). It is in the moment of his capture that he speaks Persian. The capture scene itself is well constructed, and we will now discuss its connotations.

Capture scene and speaking Persian

Histiaeus has been presented as a liminal figure throughout the text, never quite fully Greek or non-Greek. This has been true on a spatial level (Ister; Thrace; Byzantium; lack of return to Miletus); a cultural level (barbarian *nomos* of branding); a political level (pro-Darius advocate; involvement in Ionian revolt; denied access to home *polis*); and a linguistic level (imitating Persian linguistic and ritual expressions). We now come to Histiaeus’ capture scene, which, I will argue, is a finely constructed set piece designed to tie various threads of his characterisation together (on spatial, cultural, political, and linguistic levels). It also arguably looks forward to the Persian Wars proper.

Given this significance, let us first quote it in full (6.28.2-29.2):

⁷⁷⁹ It is unclear whether these “events” refer to the city’s subjugation, or, say, the beginning of the siege. The latter would perhaps provide the strongest motivation for Histiaeus to head south, perhaps to do a deal with the Persians and take back rule of Miletus (Scott 2005, 141).

⁷⁸⁰ On which, see Scott 2005, 144; Nagy 1990, 37.

⁷⁸¹ Scott suggests that Histiaeus feared the Phoenician (i.e. Persian) fleet would end up at Thasos (2005, 148).

ὅς οἱ ἀποβάντι συμβαλὼν αὐτόν τε Ἰστιαῖον ζωγρήν ἔλαβε καὶ τὸν στρατὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν πλέω διέφθειρε. [6.29.1] ἐζωγρήθη δὲ ὁ Ἰστιαῖος ὧδε. ὡς ἐμάχοντο οἱ Ἕλληνες τοῖσι Πέρσῃσι ἐν τῇ Μαλήνῃ τῆς Ἀταρνεΐτιδος χώρας, οἱ μὲν συνέστασαν χρόνον ἐπὶ πολλόν, ἡ δὲ ἵππος ὕστερον ὀρμηθεῖσα ἐπιπίπτει τοῖσι Ἕλλησι. τό τε δὴ ἔργον τῆς ἵππου τοῦτο ἐγένετο, καὶ τετραμμένων τῶν Ἑλλήνων ὁ Ἰστιαῖος ἐλπίζων οὐκ ἀπολέεσθαι ὑπὸ βασιλέος διὰ τὴν παρεοῦσαν ἁμαρτάδα φιλοψυχίην τοιήνδε τινὰ ἀναιρέεται. [2] ὡς φεύγων τε κατελαμβάνετο ὑπὸ ἀνδρὸς Πέρσεω καὶ ὡς καταιρεόμενος ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἔμελλε συγκεντηθῆσεσθαι, Περσίδα γλῶσσαν μετεῖς καταμηνύει ἑαυτὸν ὡς εἶη Ἰστιαῖος ὁ Μιλήσιος.

When Histiaeus landed, Harpagus met him in battle and took Histiaeus himself alive and killed most of his army. [6.29.1] Histiaeus was taken prisoner in this way: the Greeks fought with the Persians at Malene in the country of Atarneus; the armies fought for a long time, until the Persian cavalry charged and fell upon the Greeks. So this was the accomplishment of the cavalry; when the Greeks were routed, Histiaeus, supposing that the king would not put him to death for his present transgression, did what showed that he loved his life too well. [2] He was overtaken in his flight by a Persian, and when he was caught and about to be stabbed, he cried out in the Persian language and revealed himself to be Histiaeus the Milesian.

I will discuss several aspects of this passage: the use of the term ‘Greeks’ for the first time in the Ionian Revolt narrative (political); the location of his capture in Atarneus, the Greek/barbarian liminal space *par excellence* in the *Histories* (spatial); Histiaeus’ anticipation of the King’s forgiveness based on *nomos* (cultural); and Histiaeus’ speaking Persian (linguistic). I will explore whether Herodotus’ reference to Histiaeus’ speaking Persian, along with his overall narration, constitutes a negative assessment of Histiaeus.

Terminology

First, we will explore the ‘political’ strand of Histiaeus’ characterisation. Significantly, it is only when Histiaeus is captured that those fighting the Persians in the revolt are labelled ‘Greeks’; previously, they are described as Ionians, Lesbians, Aeolians, Athenians, etc. In this capture scene, ‘Hellenes’ appears three times. By contrast, in 6.26 Histiaeus is fighting alongside ‘Lesbians’ (cf. 6.27.3); in 6.28, he campaigns against Thasos with a crew of ‘Ionians’ and ‘Aeolians’. But in the next chapter – the capture scene (6.29) – the latter groups have become ‘Hellenes’. Moreover, after Histiaeus’ capture till the end of the revolt

narrative (6.32, or 6.43 as some would have it), there are no more references to ‘Hellenes’, only ‘Ionians’ (6.32 *bis*; 41.3; 42.1 *ter*; 43.3). Herodotus’ use of the term ‘Hellenes’ to refer to Greeks fighting in the Ionian Revolt, then, appears clustered around Histiaeus’ capture. Not even during the battle of Lade are the combined forces called such: Herodotus’ conclusion to the catalogue of Greek ships refers to ‘Ionians’ and ‘barbarians’ (6.9.1).⁷⁸² This probably reflects the fact that the Athenians had withdrawn from the revolt (5.103), but this fact does not explain the sudden use of ‘Greeks’ in 6.29 to describe Histiaeus’ force of Ionians and Aeolians.

I have examined all uses of ‘Hellenes’ terminology during the Ionian Revolt narrative, and lay out the results below. Most instances occur in ‘digressions’ referring to historical episodes prior to the Ionian Revolt.⁷⁸³ Three occur in the context of contemporary events:

5.49.3: Aristagoras entreats Cleomenes ‘by the gods of the Hellenes to save your Ionian kinsmen from slavery’ (νῦν ὧν πρὸς θεῶν τῶν Ἑλληνίων ρύσασθε Ἴωνας ἐκ δουλοσύνης ἄνδρας ὁμαίμονας)

5.97.3: the ships which the Athenians send are the beginning of evils for ‘Hellenes and barbarians’ (Αὗται δὲ αἱ νέες ἀρχὴ κακῶν ἐγένοντο Ἑλλησὶ τε καὶ βαρβάροισι).

5.102.1: In the fire at Sardis, a temple of Cybebe, the goddess of that country, was burnt, and the Persians afterwards made this their pretext for burning ‘the temples among the Hellenes’ (τὰ ἐν Ἑλληνισι ἱρά).

Aristagoras’ appeal to Cleomenes ‘by the gods of the Hellenes’ (5.49.3) exploits common religion in an (unsuccessful) attempt to obtain Spartan aid, much as Hegesistratus appeals to Leotychidas by their common Greek gods before Mycale (9.90.2);⁷⁸⁴ this suggests another point of connection between the Ionian Revolt and Persian Wars proper. In any

⁷⁸² Scott highlights the use of *barbaroi* here, which is starting to refer to Persians (2005, 94).

⁷⁸³ 5.47.1; 54.2; 58; 88.1; 92η.5; 94.2; 6.17.

⁷⁸⁴ Cf. Chapter 1.1.1. Since Aristagoras, on Herodotus’ presentation, is motivated (along with Histiaeus) by chiefly selfish reasons, his appeal to Greekness and freedom comes across ironic (Baragwanath 2008, 167). We have already seen Histiaeus’ appeal to ‘the royal gods’ of Darius (5.106.6), a similarly phony appeal.

case, this usage does not refer specifically to those fighting the Persians in the Ionian Revolt. The third example (5.102.1) proleptically looks ahead to the Persian Wars proper, and the use of ‘Hellenes’ refers to participants in those later events and not the Ionian Revolt. The second example, however, is less clear: the expression ‘beginning of evils for Hellenes and barbarians’, as has been well discussed, ties the Ionian Revolt narrative to the later Persian Wars and the atrocities that occurred within that context.⁷⁸⁵ As such, this Homeric, generalising sentiment seems to link those Greeks fighting in the Persian Wars and the Ionian Revolt (particularly now the Athenians are involved).⁷⁸⁶ If this is so, and it does not only point ahead to the Persian Wars proper, then this is the only other instance in the Ionian Revolt narrative when its participants are labelled ‘Greeks’. This raises the question, then, whether the use of ‘Greeks’ in Histiaeus’ capture scene is more loaded and endowed with broader significance than first appears.

I would suggest that the sudden labelling of Histiaeus’ forces as ‘Greek’ is part of Herodotus’ construction of this capture scene as a set piece with broader political and cultural significance for the greater Greek-barbarian conflict central to the *Histories*. He marks it off as a special moment through careful narrative structuring: first, the narrator briefly summarises how Harpagus attacked Histiaeus, took him prisoner, and killed most of his men (6.28.2); he then ‘zooms in’ and offers a fuller picture of that capture (the whole of chapter 29), beginning with these words: ‘Histiaeus was taken prisoner in the following way’ (6.29.1: ἐζωγράφθη δὲ ὁ Ἱστιαῖος ὥδε). The capture scene, then, demands greater attention than the initial narration in 6.28 alone would do. Indeed, the action of 6.29 is not

⁷⁸⁵ E.g. Immerwahr 1956, 265. It is inspired by the *Iliad* (*Il.* 5.62; 11.604); cf. *Hdt.* 6.67.3; *Thuc.* 2.12.3; *Ar. Pax* 435.

⁷⁸⁶ That ‘Hellenes’ is only used here because of Athenian involvement is perhaps supported by the use of a similar expression earlier at 5.28.1, before Athenian involvement: ‘After only a short period of time without evils, evils began once more to come on the Ionians, from Naxos and Miletus’.

required for the overall narrative (6.30 picks up from 6.28), but it does signal Herodotus' special interest in the scene.

This interest may in part be explained by the function of this scene as the last gasp of not only Histiaeus, one of the 'instigators' of the revolt, but the Ionian Revolt itself. Just as the 'beginning of evils' passage uses 'Hellenes' to look ahead to the Persian Wars proper, so too this passage anticipates the wider conflict to come, involving Greeks beyond Ionia. The death of Histiaeus (6.30) marks the end of the revolt in Herodotus' narrative, for we then hear that the Persian fleet wintered near Miletus before starting the re-subjugation of Ionia and its neighbouring islands (6.31). Herodotus ends the Ionian Revolt *logos* with a dramatic flourish: 'Thus the Ionians were enslaved for a third time: first by the Lydians and now twice in a row by the Persians' (6.32). The death of Histiaeus is almost equated with the death of the revolt. This alone justifies Herodotus' special interest in the capture scene and his pointed use of 'Greeks'; it speaks to the greater Greek-barbarian clash that is Herodotus' overall subject.

The specific terminology may also have greater significance for Histiaeus' characterisation. Earlier in the *logos*, Megabazus had referred to Histiaeus as a δεινός and σοφός Greek; warned that he could unite both Greeks and barbarians; and finally asked Darius to 'see to it that he never returns to the Greeks' (5.23.3). This might seem an insignificant comment *prima facie*, but given how Herodotus deploys the terminology of the 'Hellenes' in the Ionian Revolt narrative, it suggests greater significance: that Histiaeus did return to the Greeks in his final moments, but not in any successful form. He did not return to his tyranny in Miletus; he played no significant role in the revolt; and, whilst fighting alongside some 'Greeks', his life came to an end. Moreover, the use of 'Greeks'

encourages the reader to consider Histiaeus' own 'Greekness', when he soon blurts out his name desperately in the Persian tongue, hopeful for the forgiveness of the Persian King. He appears, once again, caught between these two worlds.

Atarneus as liminal space

Histiaeus' cultural liminality during his capture is also evident on a spatial level. The location is Atarneus (in Aeolis in Asia Minor) on the border of Lydia and Mysia. It was also 'Chian territory', whilst not being on Chios: in Book 1, the Chians had received Atarneus from Persia in exchange for giving up the Lydian suppliant Pactyes; as a result, for a long time no Chian would use barley from Atarneus for any religious activity (1.160.4-5).⁷⁸⁷ It is this grain which Histiaeus seeks when he moves his soldiers to Atarneus (6.28.2), a detail which reminds us of the tainted nature of this region.⁷⁸⁸ Moreover, Histiaeus had earlier been betrayed by Hermippus, 'a man from Atarneus' (6.4: ἀνδρὸς Ἀταρνίτεω). Atarneus is clearly a 'bad place' in Herodotus, as Hornblower puts it,⁷⁸⁹ but it is also a liminal place: Chian but not Chian; barbarian but not barbarian; on the border between Lydia and Mysia.

Atarneus will reappear in the Hermotimos–Panionios episode in Book 8 (8.104-106) as the setting for another 'cultural confrontation' between Greek and Persian. If Hornblower is right that Hermotimos the Carian has "made the transition to Persian status" in Atarneus,⁷⁹⁰ then Histiaeus' actions and involvement with Atarneus in Book 6 may anticipate to some

⁷⁸⁷ In Parker's words, the Chians "treated as defiled the land they received as reward" (Parker 1983, 185).

⁷⁸⁸ Hornblower 2003, 45. It also has the effect of linking Histiaeus and Pactyes, both figures involved in revolts and associated with Atarneus in their final days. Hornblower also suggests that Atarneus' status as Chian *peraia* makes it "doubly polluted" (2003, 54), though this is not sufficiently demonstrated. However, there seems little doubt about the generally 'polluted' atmosphere of Atarneus in Herodotus.

⁷⁸⁹ Hornblower 2003, 44-45.

⁷⁹⁰ Hornblower 2003, 48.

extent the tale of Hermotimos and Panionios in Book 8. While the ‘cultural confrontation’ between the latter is resolved by Hermotimos’ τίσις, the tension between the Greekness of Histiaeus’ allies and the Persianness of Histiaeus himself is left unresolved: Histiaeus is never so strongly associated with the Persians as Hermotimos is, although as I argue below, his speaking of Persian is a kind of attempt to become so. In this respect, these cultural issues appear to reflect the adjacent military developments between Greeks and Persians: just as the battle of Salamis ‘resolves’ the Persian invasion, resulting in Xerxes’ withdrawal (during which the Hermotimos-Panionios story appears, 8.104-106), the earlier Ionian revolt, which ends immediately following Histiaeus’ capture, is unsuccessful and by no means the final confrontation between Greeks and Persians in the *Histories*. Histiaeus, like the Ionian revolt, is a transitional stage on the way to the Persian Wars.

Histiaeus’ transgression and Darius’ Persian *nomos*

The capture scene also expresses Histiaeus’ cultural liminality through his hopes for Darius’ forgiveness. As we have seen, the adoption of Persian *nomoi* is a feature of Histiaeus’ characterisation. As the Greeks are routed, Histiaeus’ awareness of another Persian *nomos* makes him speak out his name in Persian: he ‘supposed that the king would not put him to death for his present transgression’. What would make him think this? His personal relationship with Darius, of course, though this may have been enhanced by his knowledge of the Persian *nomos* in which the king cannot execute for a single offence, and overall offences are weighed against services; Herodotus praises this custom in the ‘Persian ethnography’ (1.137.1). Herodotus explicitly suggests that Darius would have forgiven Histiaeus (6.30.1), perhaps based on this *nomos* and the fact that Darius decried his death, ascribing him as benefactor (6.30.2). Thus, in his last moments, not only did Histiaeus speak Persian, but he may have done so on the basis of a Persian *nomos*. Moreover, this is

perhaps a kind of ring composition, joining the end of the Ionian Revolt here with the beginning: it started with a Persian *nomos* too, that of Histiaeus' despotic branding of a slave. Similarly, Histiaeus' first act at the Ister was labelled by Darius 'benefaction' (5.11.1), and after his death the same King calls him a benefactor (6.30.2). Persian *nomoi* are a key aspect of Histiaeus' cultural liminality from start to finish.

Histiaeus' Persian speaking and Herodotus' assessment

As we have seen, Persian linguistic affectations have been a feature of Histiaeus' characterisation, and this is taken to the next level when Histiaeus speaks Persian. Arguably, it is not until this scene that Herodotus makes an explicit, negative comment about Histiaeus, and it seems linked with the speaking of Persian. Identifying himself in Persian is presented as a cowardly strategy to save his own life.⁷⁹¹ It is evidence, Herodotus says, of Histiaeus' φιλοψυχία. Though a *hapax* in Herodotus and relatively rare elsewhere, other uses of this word and its cognates suggest derogatory connotations, and is perhaps best translated as 'craven love of life'.⁷⁹² Scott claims that, "if it is pejorative here, it is the only place where Herodotus or the biography criticises Histiaeus".⁷⁹³ This is correct in terms of overt criticism, for we have seen plenty of implicit comment from Herodotus. It is a similar assessment to that of Aristagoras, whom Herodotus labels 'a man of little courage' (5.124.1: ψυχὴν οὐκ ἄκρος). If we consider Herodotus' comments elsewhere that the Persians believe bravery in battle the most important thing for a man (1.136; 7.238.2),

⁷⁹¹ Cf. the Phrygian who begs for his life in broken Greek in Timotheus' *Persians* (Page fr. 791, 147-161); see Janssen 1984, e.g. 105ff; Hordern 2002, 203ff. Hartog (1988, 239) labels Histiaeus' use of Persian "exceptional" as it was an "emergency". Cf. Scott 2005, 151: "Herodotus would particularly mention the detail because he was interested in languages". Munson (2006, 71) notes that "speaking the same national language is not a cure-all", for Histiaeus "ends up impaled by his Persian captors anyway".

⁷⁹² So How and Wells, *ad loc.* Other examples: Tyrt. fr. 10; Eur. *Heraclid.* 518; 533; *Hec.* 315; 348; *Phoen.* 597; *IA* 1385; Isoc. 6.90; Plat. *Apol.* 37c; *Leg.* 944e; Arist. *Virt. Vit.* 1251a15.

⁷⁹³ Scott 2005, 150. Cf. Xen. *Anab.* 3.1.43 on 'life-seeking' people meeting shameful deaths (and cf. Xen. *Anab.* 3.2.39, that 'life-lovers' (ὄστις...ζῆν ἐπιθυμεῖ) should strive for victory).

it may appear ironic that Histiaeus would choose to speak Persian, the language of the brave, at this point. Of course, the Greeks valued bravery too: to both Greeks and Persians in this moment, then, he is a failure. Not only is his ultimate cowardice confirmed, but as a Greek speaking Persian so, too, is his ultimate liminality.

Indeed, in this desperate moment, it seems that Histiaeus almost attempts to *become* Persian with this speech act (in addition to the practical attempt to save his life through their recognising him). Hornblower argued that Hermotimos (a Carian) attains ‘Persian status’ in the same location of Atarneus in Book 8, through becoming an esteemed figure in the Persian court.⁷⁹⁴ Histiaeus attempts to do so through adoption of *nomoi* and, finally, speaking Persian. If language is something more profound than *nomoi*, then Histiaeus has saved his biggest weapon until last. If one does not accept this, then the speaking of Persian is still portrayed as the culmination of his linguistic ‘affectations’, which have always served his own interests. Moreover, as noted, it is his speaking of Persian which is associated with Herodotus’ only explicitly negative comment. As Histiaeus is the only Greek to speak Persian in the *Histories*, and hardly a paradigm of Greek virtue, it is difficult to assess Herodotus’ thoughts, more generally, on Greeks speaking Persian. One gets the feeling that Herodotus chooses to mention Histiaeus’ speaking Persian as the ultimate evidence of the worst kind of betrayal of Greekness. The use of ‘Hellenes’ in the capture scene may even serve to enhance the contrast between the ‘Greekness’ of his companions and his own ‘Persianness’.

⁷⁹⁴ Hornblower 2003, 48.

Conclusion

We have seen how Histiaeus' capture scene ties up many of the threads of Herodotus' portrait of the man. He is a consistently liminal figure, on the levels of space, politics, culture, and language; his ultimate speaking of Persian is the culmination of all this. The narrative delay of this significant revelation may indicate Herodotus' approach to characterisation here as closer to 'character revelation'; not 'character change', as such, but a slower reveal of what was already there.⁷⁹⁵

Histiaeus' portrait intersects with many themes and motifs in the *Histories*. He is a Greek in exile, like Democedes or Demaratus; he is a conniving, self-interested being, like many others; he is a tyrant; and he evinces behaviour typical of both Greeks and barbarians. In many ways, he exemplifies the changing world order: he is a liminal figure, straddling the Greek and barbarian spheres. The Persian Wars are, in part, about the crossings between Asia and Europe, as Herodotus' preface makes out (1.4). Histiaeus supported Darius' crossing into Europe (River Ister); crossed into a barbarian and Greek area of Europe (Thrace); and attacked a Greek city in Asia (Miletus). He is a liminal figure in more ways than one. Moreover, Histiaeus' increasing Persianisation and liminality anticipates the breaking down of East/West stereotypes which is much clearer by the latter books of the *Histories*.⁷⁹⁶ The boundaries between Greek and Persian are becoming ever blurry. Histiaeus perhaps represents a transitional stage, between the earlier ethnographic books and the Persian Wars narrative, when Herodotus begins to elide these definitions.

⁷⁹⁵ On which, see de Temmerman and van Emde Boas 2018b, 9-11.

⁷⁹⁶ See e.g. Pelling 1997.

How much is the ultimately negative presentation of Histiaeus due to his cultural ambiguity *per se*? Herodotus is generally at pains to dismiss notions of cultural or ethnic purism throughout the *Histories* and stresses that most cultures adopted traits from others. The ultimately negative portrait is rather due to his political shiftiness, his role as Ionian tyrant and his advocacy for Persian-instilled tyranny. Histiaeus' particular brand of cultural ambiguity, however, forms a key part of this political manoeuvring. Furthermore, he may serve as a kind of warning about medism: how such behaviour sells out Greekness, may provide temporary safety, but will not save you in the end.

2. Thucydides: Themistocles

Introduction

Few Greeks are documented as learning foreign languages. Histiaeus is one, but Themistocles is the most famous example.⁷⁹⁷ While Herodotus provides a wide-ranging portrait of Themistocles, he does not delve into his exile and time in the Persian court beyond a single, forward-looking reference (8.109.5; see below). Thucydides is the first to describe the circumstances of Themistocles' ultimate defection to Persia and his choice to learn Persian language and customs before addressing the King (1.138.1). The Athenian general's linguistic knowledge was a source of great interest to generations of ancient writers, but only recently have scholars paid this aspect of the tradition much attention.⁷⁹⁸ In what follows, I will discuss how this reference tallies with Thucydides' broader characterisation of Themistocles, and will compare the portrait in Herodotus to which

⁷⁹⁷ Cf. also Histiaeus of Miletus (Hdt. 6.29.2); Peucestas the Macedonian (Arr. *Anab.* 6.30.3). Athenaeus (12.535E) records that Alcibiades learned Persian 'just like Themistocles' (τὴν Περσικὴν ἔμαθε φωνὴν καθὰ καὶ Θεμιστοκλής); this tale, however, is probably "a later fiction resulting from a perceived parallel with the life of Themistocles" (Miller 1997, 131). Additionally, Pythagoras is said to have learned Egyptian after being introduced to Amasis by Polycrates (D.L. 8.3).

⁷⁹⁸ Mayer 1997; Blösel 2004; Gera 2007.

Thucydides is in many ways responding. Given Herodotus' interest in non-Greeks and indeed language, it is somewhat surprising that he includes no digression on Themistocles' time in Persia. Moreover, Thucydides' depiction of Themistocles must be discussed alongside Pausanias, as originally intended. The two portraits inform each other and share structural similarities. It will be suggested that Thucydides justifies Themistocles' medism through comparison with Pausanias; that the particular way he describes Themistocles' adoption of Persian language highlights the man's positive qualities, and plays down any notion of cultural betrayal.

Context

Thucydides' narration of Themistocles' acquisition of Persian occurs in a digression concerning Pausanias and Themistocles (1.128-138). In the overall narrative, the Peloponnesians have just voted for war, on Thucydides' presentation (1.125.1).⁷⁹⁹ The months before war broke out were filled with embassies back and forth, starting with the Spartan demand to drive out "the curse of the goddess" which inspires Thucydides' digression on Cylon (1.126). The Athenians responded with demands for the Spartans to drive out the "curse of Taenarus" and the "curse of the brazen house" (1.128), the latter associated with Pausanias. Thus begins the paired stories of Pausanias and Themistocles, the latter implicated in the medism of the former (1.135). Commentators have observed the unique style of this excursus, and the structural and thematic similarities between the two portraits.⁸⁰⁰ They have been seen to exemplify their respective states.⁸⁰¹ Momigliano suggested that here Thucydides displays an interest in biography, which he is only prepared

⁷⁹⁹ Or voted again that the peace had been broken (cf. 1.88); on this issue, see Badian 1993, 149-152; Hornblower 1991, 201-202.

⁸⁰⁰ See references at Munson 2012, n.40; Hornblower 1991, 211-212.

⁸⁰¹ E.g. Finley 1942, 139; Wickersham 1994, 49-50.

to indulge when there is a non-Greek angle to discuss.⁸⁰² Indeed, the excursus is often described as having a “Herodotean character”, with respect to its Persian content and lively style.⁸⁰³ The reference to Themistocles’ adoption of Persian language and customs (and indeed Pausanias’ adoption of Persian customs) is certainly uncharacteristic of Thucydides and more in line with Herodotus; it may form part of Thucydides’ ‘response’ to Herodotus.

Thucydides’ account of Themistocles’ exile

After finding refuge with the Molossians, Themistocles makes his way to Ephesus. He sends forth a letter to Artaxerxes containing language which displays awareness of Persian royal customs: he describes the Persian empire as ‘your house’ (τὸν ὑμέτερον οἶκον; cf. ‘our house’ in Xerxes’ letter to Pausanias, 1.129.3) and highlights his own role as benefactor to the King (1.137.4).⁸⁰⁴ As we have seen in the cases of Syloson and Histiaeus in Herodotus, and will soon see for Seuthes in Xenophon, this ‘awareness’ of customs creates an impression that Themistocles is adapting his expression to his audience. Unlike those others, however, Themistocles goes on to dedicate a year to learning the language and customs of the Persians before addressing the King (1.137.4-138.2):

πάρειμι διωκόμενος ὑπὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων διὰ τὴν σὴν φιλίαν. βούλομαι δ’ ἐνιαυτὸν ἐπισχὼν αὐτός σοι περὶ ὧν ἤκω δηλῶσαι.” βασιλεὺς δέ, ὡς λέγεται, ἐθαύμασέ τε αὐτοῦ τὴν διάνοιαν καὶ ἐκέλευε ποιεῖν οὕτως. ὁ δ’ ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ ὃν ἐπέσχε τῆς τε Περσίδος γλώσσης ὅσα ἐδύνατο κατενόησε καὶ τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων τῆς χώρας.

“I am here, pursued by the Hellenes for my friendship for you. However, I desire a year's grace, when I shall be able to declare in person the objects of my coming.” It is said that the king approved his intention, and told him to do as he said. He employed the interval

⁸⁰² Momigliano 1971, 34-38.

⁸⁰³ Munson 2012, 250-256; Hornblower 1991, 221. This has led to much debate about the sources for these episodes, a matter we will not be resolving here; see e.g. Blösel 2012; Carawan 1989; Westlake 1977b; Rhodes 1970; Lang 1967. Suffice to say, no matter the source/s (written or oral), it seems clear that Thucydides has shaped the excursus for his own ends (e.g. Ellis 1994; Konishi 1970).

⁸⁰⁴ See Chapter 2.1.1 on the importance of benefaction in Persian society. For the concept of ‘the King’s house’, see Lewis 1977, 146; Cawkwell 1981, 72 n.10. On the authenticity of the letters, see Blösel 2012, 225.

in making what progress he could in the study of the Persian language, and of the customs of the country.

This results in Themistocles' becoming the most highly esteemed Greek ever to turn up in Persia, primarily because of the constant proof he gave of his intelligence (1.138.2). Thucydides goes on to praise the Athenian as exceptional in his natural talents (1.138.3).

Herodotean Themistocles

How is it possible for Thucydides to present a generally positive portrait of a medising Athenian? When we read it alongside Herodotus, it can seem surprising. Scholars generally agree that Thucydides' account is, at least in part, a response to the Herodotean account of a somewhat ambiguous figure. Many since Plutarch, seeing Themistocles as a noble Greek hero, have criticised Herodotus for his portrait, often imputing hostile sources.⁸⁰⁵ But as Fornara, Blösel, and Baragwanath have shown, Herodotus' portrait is likely less negative than first appears.⁸⁰⁶ There is no need to rehearse the arguments here in detail, but perhaps one example will be illustrative. After Salamis, Themistocles had advocated breaking the Hellespontine bridges, but seeing his allies' opposition to that idea, claimed credit for it to the Athenians and also Xerxes (in a second message: 8.108-110; cf. 8.75).⁸⁰⁷ Herodotus' explicit comment on Themistocles' motivation is that he took credit as a kind of insurance policy, anticipating later events which he will not himself narrate: 'This he said with intent to have something to his credit with the Persian, so that he might have a place of refuge if ever (as might chance) he should suffer anything at the hands of the Athenians—and just that did in fact happen' (8.109.5: ταῦτα ἔλεγε ἀποθήκην μέλλων ποιήσασθαι ἐς τὸν Πέρσῃν, ἵνα ἢν ἄρα τί μιν καταλαμβάνῃ πρὸς Ἀθηναίων πάθος ἔχῃ ἀποστροφῇ· τά περ

⁸⁰⁵ E.g. Podlecki 1975, 67–72; Ostwald 1991, 140; Patterson 1993, 146–8; Montana 2002, 289.

⁸⁰⁶ Fornara 1971, 66–73; Blösel 2001; 2004; Baragwanath 2008, 289–322.

⁸⁰⁷ On this second message, see Marr 1995; Baragwanath 2008, 289ff. On the first, generally accepted as historical, see Aeschylus' *Persians* (353–373); see Parker 2007; Hart 1982, 98.

ὧν καὶ ἐγένετο). Most have seen this as a criticism; Baragwanath, however, argues that in the wider context of Herodotus' depiction of Themistocles, it is only one possible interpretation; it could even be evidence of his (positive) *metis*.⁸⁰⁸

Evident in Herodotus (as much as Thucydides) is the complexity of the tradition around Themistocles. There were clearly competing strands, emphasising the glories of his successes against the Persians, or his exile and medism with Artaxerxes (Xerxes in some traditions). Indeed, Blösel argues that Herodotus “constructed his ‘Themistocles’ as a mirror of fifth-century Athens: both preserved Hellenic freedom in the time of Xerxes’ invasion, but in the decades thereafter they indulged their avarice and exploited many other Greeks through the Delian League”.⁸⁰⁹ Baragwanath, on the other hand, argues for a more complex rhetorical treatment in the *Histories*: “This traditional moral focus, upon the degree to which Themistocles’ portrayal is positive or otherwise, neglects the rhetorical texture of the account and the questions it raises about discourse and persuasion. The rhetorical aspect qualifies any such clear-cut judgement of Themistocles’ character and motivation”.⁸¹⁰ Moreover, as Blösel observes, “there is a decisive distinction between the patriotism of the Herodotean Themistocles and that of the Thucydidean one. For, in the Persian Wars the former was the champion not only of Athens, but of all Greece as well, whereas in Thucydides Themistocles works for Athens alone, and lays the foundations of her future hegemony”.⁸¹¹ While Herodotus, then, offers a more ambiguous and ‘Panhellenic’ picture of Themistocles, Thucydides focuses on positive character traits and

⁸⁰⁸ Baragwanath, 289-298; 309-322. At 315: “The effect of delaying authorial judgement until after Themistocles’ address... is to leave readers to work out for themselves, and make their own assumptions about, the speech’s *raison d’être*.... [T]he preceding account has pointed readers to a variety of alternative explanations for Themistocles’ motivation in delivering the speech at Andros beyond that offered by the authorial conjecture at its conclusion. Herodotus himself models this interpretative method for his readers through his frequent suggestions of possible alternative motivations for the behaviour of actors in his text”.

⁸⁰⁹ Blösel 2012, 232, summarising his 2001 article.

⁸¹⁰ Baragwanath 2008, 319-322.

⁸¹¹ Blösel 2012, 233. See Chapter 1 above, for my take on Themistocles’ use of Greek language.

raises Themistocles to the position of exemplifying Athenian leadership, anticipating the proper introduction of Pericles soon after (1.139ff).⁸¹²

In the realm of language, the Herodotean Themistocles' linguistic brilliance perhaps anticipates the Thucydidean Themistocles' clever use of 'Persianisms' and learning of Persian itself. Not only is Themistocles sensitive to the subtleties of oracular language (Hdt. 7.141-143), he can also, like Histiaeus, adapt his speech to the ideological considerations of his audience, such as his words at Andros (8.109).⁸¹³ Moreover, he exploits the common Greek language to try to get the Ionians on side before Salamis (8.22; see Chapter 1.1.1). The Herodotean Themistocles is skilful with language. Whether Thucydides and his audience would later believe that Themistocles learned Persian, Herodotus' earlier portrait of a linguistically capable man at least made it plausible.⁸¹⁴

Themistocles' reputation

Having briefly surveyed the Herodotean Themistocles, then, we can acknowledge that the portrait is complicated. Although Themistocles had fallen out of favour in the 470s, been ostracised, and then condemned in exile for medism, Aristophanes' *Knights* suggests that he had undergone something of a rehabilitation by the Peloponnesian War.⁸¹⁵ In Blösel's words: "After Themistocles had taken refuge with the Persian king, several slanders circulated which defamed him as a traitor even when he led the Greek resistance against the Persians. But by the 420s, such widely disseminated calumnies had to be compensated for by tales glorifying him as a champion at least of Athens".⁸¹⁶ This 'rehabilitation' is also

⁸¹² E.g. Konishi 1970, 68; Hornblower 1991, 223; Munson 2012, 255.

⁸¹³ See Baragwanath 2008, 298-304; 309-310.

⁸¹⁴ Harrison (1998, 5) argues that Thucydides depicts Themistocles' learning Persian "as yet another reflection of his special intelligence, the object rather of awe than imitation".

⁸¹⁵ Ar. *Eq.* 814-16, 884-6, 1039f. Cf. Montana 2002; Braun 2000; Anderson 1989, 14-16. Cf. also Paus. 1.1.2: "For it is said that the Athenians repented of their treatment of Themistocles" (and buried him in Attica; cf. Thuc. 1.138.6).

⁸¹⁶ Blösel 2012, 220.

evident earlier in Thucydides' work. At 1.74.1, the Athenians label him in a speech 'the most capable commander' (ἄνδρα στρατηγὸν ξυνετώτατον), and Themistocles' ruse allowing the building of the Athenian walls in the Pentacontaetia is another example (1.90-91). A speech from Lysias from 399 BCE, *Against Nichomachus*, places Themistocles in between Solon and Pericles as one of the 'lawgivers our ancestors chose, in the belief that the laws would accord with the character of their makers' (Lys. 30.28: οἱ μὲν πρόγονοι νομοθέτας ἤροῦντο Σόλωνα καὶ Θεμιστοκλέα καὶ Περικλέα, ἡγούμενοι τοιούτους ἔσεσθαι τοὺς νόμους οἷοίπερ ἂν ᾧσιν οἱ τιθέντες).⁸¹⁷ This glorious image of the hero – of Athens, at least – was certain by this point.

This rehabilitation seems reflected also in Thucydides' narrative structuring of the Pausanias-Themistocles excursus. Konishi has demonstrated the formal similarities between the episodes of Pausanias and Themistocles; in studying the descriptions of their respective travels and medism, he argues that the comparison suggests an apologetic view of Thucydides:

“The basic difference [between the two accounts] is that Pausanias' travel was a voluntary one caused by his own ambition while Themistocles' travel was one forced by his circumstance. In other words, according to Thucydides, Pausanias' Medism was a planned scheme from the outset, while Themistocles' Medism was not a premeditated scheme. By describing Themistocles' long wandering flight, Thucydides seems to have intended to describe Themistocles' unwillingness to go over to Persia, and by writing a short straight travel of Pausanias to Byzantium, Thucydides seems to have wanted to suggest Pausanias' willingness to medize”.⁸¹⁸

By pairing the tale of Themistocles with Pausanias, and indeed placing Pausanias' first, Thucydides creates the impression that Themistocles was essentially 'boxed into' going to Persia after initial attempts to take refuge in Corcyra and Molossia, while Pausanias'

⁸¹⁷ Podlecki notes the strangeness of calling Themistocles a 'lawgiver' (1975, 82). Cf. also Lys. 2.42, where Themistocles' role as commander contributed to Hellenic freedom.

⁸¹⁸ Konishi 1970, 62-63.

medism was his own choice.⁸¹⁹ Indeed, as Konishi puts it, “in these two episodes nothing good about Pausanias is told, and nothing bad about Themistocles is written”.⁸²⁰ This is a fair point: Thucydides skips over the reasons for his ostracism, for example, i.e. his growing unpopularity in the 470s (recounted by Plut. *Them.* 22). A negative only appears so that Thucydides can shut it down: when faced with the rumour that Themistocles killed himself because he was unable to fulfil his promises to the King, Thucydides ‘shows his working’ – in Herodotean fashion – and labels disease as the actual cause of death (1.138.4). It follows from this positive encomium, then, that Themistocles’ adoption of the Persian tongue can only be read as yet another sign of his excellence.

The circumstances of his adoption of Persian ways, as described by Thucydides, are important for our assessment. While his move to Persia was, as it were, forced upon him, once in Persia Themistocles is presented as calculating and rational, in direct contrast with Pausanias. After receiving Xerxes’ positive response to his letter, Pausanias becomes emboldened and goes ‘full Persian’ to the extent that he cannot control it: Thucydides says Pausanias adopted Median dress, foreign guards, a Persian table, and “was quite unable to contain his intentions (διάνοιαν), but betrayed by his conduct in trifles what his ambition looked one day to enact on a grander scale” (1.130.1: κατέχειν τὴν διάνοιαν οὐκ ἐδύνατο, ἀλλ’ ἔργοις βραχέσι προυδήλου ἃ τῇ γνώμῃ μειζόνως ἐς ἔπειτα ἔμελλε πράξειν). Themistocles, on the other hand, does control his διάνοια in the manner of adopting foreign ways: he writes to Artaxerxes requesting a year’s interval, after which he would declare in person his reasons for coming to the King (1.137.4: βούλομαι δ’ ἐνιαυτὸν ἐπισχὼν αὐτός σοι περὶ ὧν ἤκω δηλῶσαι); upon receiving this letter, the King ‘ marvelled at his intention

⁸¹⁹ Quoted phrase from McKechnie 2015, 137.

⁸²⁰ Konishi 1970, 66. Rhodes calls it “an encomium of Themistocles” (1970, 399).

(διάνοιαν)’ (1.138.1). The use of the same word, διάνοια, makes clear the contrast between the two figures.⁸²¹

Themistocles is then depicted in control of his study of Persian language and customs: he ‘learned the Persian tongue – as best he could – and the habits of the country’ (1.138.1: ὁ δ’ ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ ὃν ἐπέσχε τῆς τε Περσίδος γλώσσης ὅσα ἐδύνατο κατενόησε καὶ τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων τῆς χώρας). The qualifier ‘as best he could/as much as he was able’ (ὅσα ἐδύνατο) is perhaps a contrast to Pausanias’ inability to control his adoption of Persian customs;⁸²² Thucydides uses the same verb twice to describe the Spartan’s lack of control in this regard (1.130.1):

After the receipt of this letter, Pausanias became prouder than ever, and could no longer (οὐκέτι ἐδύνατο) live in the usual style, but went out of Byzantium in Median dress, was attended on his march through Thrace by a bodyguard of Medes and Egyptians, kept a Persian table, and was quite unable to contain his intentions (κατέχειν τὴν διάνοιαν οὐκ ἐδύνατο)...

Thus, while Pausanias’ medism was initially premeditated, his adoption of Persian ways is presented as somewhat irrational and beyond his own control (in tyrannical fashion). By contrast, Themistocles’ initial medism is forced upon him, but then he is in charge of the manner in which it happens; learning language and customs appears as a chiefly practical decision.⁸²³ In this respect, then, Themistocles matches up to Thucydides’ high praise for his intelligence and reason.⁸²⁴ His calculated delay – which perhaps recalls his delaying

⁸²¹ Ellis (1994, 175) also suggests a contrast of behaviour based on adoption of Persian ways, but in terms less strong and without mention of specific vocabulary as I do here.

⁸²² The qualifier may also help avoid conflict with Themistocles’ reputation for native intelligence over dedicated study (1.138.3; cf. Plut. *Them.* 2.2-3); cf. Schmitt Pantel 2014, 98.

⁸²³ Dubuisson sees Themistocles’ learning of Persian in similar terms: “L’apprentissage du perse par Thémistocle est présenté comme d’ordre purement pratique; il lui sert à communiquer avec le roi et ses collaborateurs et ne reflète nullement, à en croire les textes, un intérêt quelconque pour la culture perse en tant que telle” (1982, 16).

⁸²⁴ Similarly, on Thucydides’ presentation, Themistocles is smarter than Pausanias in how he makes a deal with the King. He does not immediately offer the subjugation of Hellas, as Pausanias does (1.128.7); he strings the Persians along with the hope of it: “He attained to very high consideration [at Persian court], such as no Hellene has ever possessed before or since; partly from his splendid antecedents, partly from the hopes which he held out of effecting for him the subjugation of Hellas (τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἐλπίδα, ἣν ὑπετίθει αὐτῷ δουλώσειν)”.

tactics in Sparta while the Athenians built walls (Thuc. 1.90-91) – and study of Persian language and customs is simply more evidence of this. This deliberate quality to his “medism” may well have contributed to the lack of any sense of cultural betrayal here, unlike with other figures in later historiography, for instance.⁸²⁵

Indeed, I would suggest that it is significant that Themistocles is portrayed as studying not only Persian language, but ἐπιτηδεύματα too. As Schmitt Pantel puts it: “A shrewd Athenian statesman, Themistocles knew that when joining a new community the way one behaved was just as important as one’s legal status”.⁸²⁶ The term itself, however, defies easy translation: ἐπιτηδεύματα are “practices which are deliberately pursued rather than passively continued... On the whole *epitēdeumata* are vaguer, more individualized and less ethnographically charged than terms for ‘custom’ such as *nomos*... Individuals have *epitēdeumata*, not *nomoi*”.⁸²⁷ Now, Thucydides knows well the proximity of language and customs: in his narrative, they regularly go together (cf. 3.94.5; 6.5.1; 7.57.2; 7.63.3). Themistocles, then, is like Thucydides in his understanding of the significance of both these aspects. The definition given above of ἐπιτηδεύματα specifically, moreover, points to the significance of Thucydides’ word choice: ἐπιτηδεύματα are “deliberately pursued”. This particular term, then, seems to support well Thucydides’ presentation of Themistocles as calculating and rational in his “medism”. These habits are “more individualized and less ethnographically charged” than terms like *nomos*. While Pausanias, on the other hand, was unable to live ‘in traditional style (τρόπος)’ (1.130.1), Themistocles avoids more ‘ethnographically charged’ terms; his adoption of foreign ways is about him specifically, not his entire Greek (or Athenian) culture. The specific term Thucydides uses to describe

⁸²⁵ Plutarch on Themistocles is enlightening; to be discussed in next section, 3.2.3.

⁸²⁶ Schmitt Pantel 2014, 93.

⁸²⁷ Moreno and Thomas 2014, 1-2.

the habits studied by Themistocles seems to contribute to the calculated sense of his medism.

Conclusion

Thucydides presents a generally positive portrait of Themistocles. It is the case of a brilliant man, rejected by an ungrateful *demos*; in this sense, Themistocles anticipates Pericles, for example. Just as Histiaeus in Herodotus, Themistocles in Thucydides adopts ‘Persianisms’ and expresses awareness of Persian *nomoi* in order to ingratiate himself with the King. In contrast to Histiaeus, however, Themistocles’ learning of Persian is calculated, rational, and for a clear purpose. The revelation of Histiaeus’ Persian knowledge, on the other hand, comes at a moment of desperation and demonstrates, Herodotus argues, a ‘craven love of life’. Moreover, on Herodotus’ presentation Histiaeus’ Persianisation is a choice, and in this respect is closer to Thucydides’ portrait of Pausanias’ than Themistocles’.⁸²⁸

The presentation of Themistocles outlined above also highlights the lack of evidence for discerning Greek attitudes to those who might learn Persian in the fifth century. Only Histiaeus and Themistocles are attested, and while they are similar in many ways (deception, exile), their involvement with the King was wholly different: Histiaeus was a pro-Persian tyrant, while Themistocles was an Athenian champion of Greek freedom forced into exile by his own people; like those states who medized against their will (e.g. Hdt. 7.172), Themistocles thus garners more sympathy. Herodotus’ ultimately negative assessment of Histiaeus sees us viewing the adoption of Persian as negative, part of his broader betrayal of the man; on the other hand, Thucydides’ positive portrait of

⁸²⁸ Wickersham (1994, 50) suggests Pausanias is presented as attempting to become “another Ionian tyrant”.

Themistocles makes us view his adoption of Persian as positive, part of his unique genius and manipulation of the King.

3. Xenophon's *Anabasis*: Seuthes

Introduction

As we have seen in Chapter 2, most references to multilingualism in the *Anabasis* occur before the Greeks reach the Black Sea coast, after which Greek-speakers become much more plentiful. However, once Xenophon begins interactions with Seuthes the Thracian, we see communication between languages once more. There are four instances when linguistic matters arise during the Seuthes affair. First, after Xenophon's sacrifices suggest he should take Seuthes' offer and send the army across to Thrace (7.2.15-18), he sends forth an interpreter to the Thracian king (7.2.19). Then, during a dinner party, Seuthes asks his cupbearer to translate a Greek's comment for him, since the cupbearer 'knew Greek' (7.3.25). Later, when an Arcadian is attacking Xenophon in a speech, Seuthes has an interpreter with him, 'even though he could understand most of the Greek' (7.6.8-9). Finally, in order to convey his last offer to retain Xenophon and his men, Seuthes sends his (named) interpreter, Abrozelmes (7.6.43). Before discussing these passages and what they add to the image of the relationship between Seuthes and Xenophon, we must first place the Seuthes section of the *Anabasis* in context.

Many have compared Seuthes and Cyrus in the *Anabasis*, arguing for a kind of bookending of the work with two different types of leader. In some ways they are similar: they are both leaders who cannot (or will not) pay what they owe the Greek soldiers, and they both

employ deceit.⁸²⁹ There are differences too: Cyrus is held up as a model of *pistis*.⁸³⁰ Seuthes, like Tissaphernes, is shiftily and Xenophon never presents himself as fully committed to the shady Thracian. Most of Book 7 seems to be Xenophon's *apologia* against charges of being corrupted by Seuthes; Azoulay clearly lays out how Xenophon, even before meeting Seuthes, depicts himself as incorruptible, and continues to highlight his blamelessness in the matter of soldiers' delayed pay.⁸³¹ Xenophon's portrait of Seuthes is carefully constructed to cast himself in the best light possible. Seuthes' characterisation is thorough and complex, and it is clear that his portrayal changes as the narrative progresses. Flower, in discussing Xenophon's methods of depicting character, argues that while the narrator can sometimes sum up a person's character "by a single attribution of motive or emotion", sometimes "the text can also cumulatively build up a portrait of someone in more subtle ways".⁸³² He deploys Seuthes as an example of this more complex method of characterisation:

"Seuthes is an interesting case. Our first impression is that he is going to be a generous employer, but little by little a picture emerges of a ruthless and unscrupulous person. He never hesitates to burn the villages of his would-be subjects (7.4.1; 7.4.5). He uses terror to achieve his aims, even if this entails killing an entire population of men, women, and children: 'Seuthes told them that if they would not come down from the mountains to live and obey him, he would burn both their villages and their food, and they would perish from hunger' (7.4.5). His cruelty comes out when he slays all of his prisoners 'unsparingly' (7.4.6). Finally, Seuthes obviously has no intention of ever giving the Greeks their payment, he repeatedly attempts to bribe the Greek commanders, and he keeps none of his promises to Xenophon. His character is revealed indirectly through his actions."⁸³³

As will become apparent, I am in general agreement with this idea of Seuthes' character progression as "revealed indirectly through his actions". My contention shall be that

⁸²⁹ Hirsch 1985, 18: "Xenophon's use of trust, deceit, and related terms and concepts in the *Anabasis* goes far beyond what would be required in a mere chronicle. Through his recurrent treatment of these concepts in the work Xenophon explores a problem in human relations."

⁸³⁰ E.g. encomium at 1.9; see Hirsch 1985, 22-24.

⁸³¹ Azoulay 2004.

⁸³² Flower 2012, 103-104.

⁸³³ Flower 2012, 104.

Xenophon, along with many other techniques, also artfully deploys aspects of Seuthes' linguistic (non-)ability as a method of revealing character. As the narrative reveals more about Seuthes' intentions, so too does Xenophon concerning Seuthes' knowledge of Greek.

First meeting

The first use of an interpreter in the Seuthes affair is unique in the *Anabasis*, since it does not involve direct communication with the intended recipient. That is, the intermediary interpreter speaks with intermediaries of the recipient. When Xenophon and his companions arrive at Seuthes' camp, he sends an interpreter to speak to the 'night-guards' of Seuthes, who then convey the information to the Thracian prince (7.2.19-20):

ἐπεὶ δὲ ἦσθετο, προπέμπει τὸν ἑρμηνέα ὃν ἐτύγγανεν ἔχων, καὶ εἰπεῖν κελεύει Σεύθῃ ὅτι Ξενοφῶν πάρεστι βουλόμενος συγγενέσθαι αὐτῷ. οἱ δὲ ἤροντο εἰ ὁ Ἀθηναῖος ὁ ἀπὸ τοῦ στρατεύματος. [20] ἐπειδὴ δὲ ἔφη οὗτος εἶναι, ἀναπηδήσαντες ἐδίωκον· καὶ ὀλίγον ὕστερον παρήσαν πελτασταὶ ὅσον διακόσιοι, καὶ παραλαβόντες Ξενοφῶντα καὶ τοὺς σὺν αὐτῷ ἦγον πρὸς Σεύθην.

When he did see [the night-guards], he sent forward the interpreter he chanced to have and ordered them to tell Seuthes that Xenophon had come and desired to meet with him. They asked whether he was an Athenian from the army. [20] And when Xenophon made reply that he was the man, they leaped up and hastened off; and a little afterwards about two hundred peltasts appeared, took Xenophon and his party, and proceeded to conduct them to Seuthes.

As Xenophon and his companions proceed, we learn Seuthes is well guarded and in a tower surrounded by horses ready to flee at any moment (7.2.21-22). It is clear that the dynast has built up many layers of protection between himself and outsiders.⁸³⁴ This is a trope well known from Herodotus (e.g. Deioces). We have also seen the use of interpreters in this respect before, as with Darius and Syloson (Hdt. 3.140) or Cyrus and Croesus (1.86); although even in those instances, the interpreter did not speak with intermediaries but dealt with the recipient directly. When Xenophon's interpreter speaks indirectly to Seuthes via

⁸³⁴ Gera (1999, 3) emphasises the danger involved in this first meeting.

his guards, this may contribute towards establishing that Seuthes is of this barbarian despotic type, and arguably forewarns us of trouble in dealings with him. It may even help justify Xenophon's keeping Seuthes at arm's length thus far, something which he is keen to emphasise in his first discussion with the Thracian (7.2.24-30).

However, once together, Seuthes and Xenophon establish a firm mutual trust (or so it seems). The men drink to each other's health, according to the Thracian *nomos*, from horns (7.2.23). Xenophon has Medosades go over each attempt at persuading Xenophon thus far, in order to explain his reasons for refusing Seuthes until now (7.2.24-30). Seuthes says he trusts Xenophon, since he knows Thracians and Athenians are *syngeneis* and believes they are firm friends (7.2.31).⁸³⁵ After the Thracian explains what he wants from the Greeks and what they will be paid in return, Xenophon asks for guarantees of asylum lest they fail due to Spartan intimidation. Seuthes promises to make them his 'brothers, table-companions, and sharers in everything we acquire', and suggests that he and Xenophon should marry each other's daughters (7.2.38).⁸³⁶ They then exchange pledges (7.3.1). Thus Xenophon makes his narrative very clear: Seuthes gave Xenophon reasonable guarantees of loyalty and payment. When ultimately this does not turn out as planned, this early scene expresses that it will not be due to any fault of Xenophon's, but a betrayal from Seuthes.

Dinnertime

Once the Greeks have voted to work for Seuthes, the Thracian invites the Greek *strategoi* and *lochagoi* to dinner, where our next episode is found. The narrative of this scene is one

⁸³⁵ This must refer to the Athenian construction of a link between the Odrysian king Teres I with Tereus, the mythological Thracian king who married Procne (son of Athenian king, Pandion); see Stronk 1995, 190; cf. 7.2.22; Thuc. 2.29.1-3; Str. 7.7.1; 9.3.13. On such 'kinship diplomacy', cf. Chapter 1.1.; Parker 2004, 139 (and references there).

⁸³⁶ Cf. Hdt 5.6; Thuc. 2.101; Lys. *In Ergoclem* 28.5; cf. also Homeric practice, e.g. *Od.* 15.367; also perhaps similar to Pausanias' letter to Xerxes (Thuc. 1.129).

“crafted with considerable artistry”, in Flower’s words.⁸³⁷ The dinner is a set-piece of clashing *nomoi*: it starts with Heracleides of Maroneia, a Greek in the service of Seuthes, explaining to Xenophon and others the Thracian *nomos* of guests bringing gifts for the host (7.3.16-20).⁸³⁸ Xenophon is unprepared for this; he had with him only a slave and a little money. He did not expect such a *nomos*.⁸³⁹ At the dinner itself, Xenophon goes into detail about the dining habits: three-legged tables, skewers of meat, the food being placed opposite the *xenoi* as was the *nomos*, and the custom of throwing bits of food to each other (7.3.21-22). However, Arystas the Arcadian, a voracious eater (φαγεῖν δεινός),⁸⁴⁰ started tucking in – contravening custom. When the horns of wine came round (also custom, as we saw earlier in Xenophon’s first meeting with Seuthes), Arystas was the only one to refuse: seeing that Xenophon had already finished his meal, he said to the cupbearer: ‘Give it to him; for he is already at leisure, but I am not yet’ (7.3.24). Seuthes has the cupbearer translate for him (7.3.25):

ἀκούσας Σεύθης τὴν φωνὴν ἡρώτα τὸν οἰνοχόον τί λέγει. ὁ δὲ οἰνοχόος εἶπεν· ἑλληνίζειν γὰρ ἠπίστατο. ἐνταῦθα μὲν δὴ γέλως ἐγένετο.

When Seuthes heard the sound of his voice, he asked the cupbearer what he was saying. And the cupbearer, who understood Greek, told him. And then there arose laughter.

Some have minimised the importance of Xenophon’s explicit statement here that the cupbearer knew Greek, arguing that Seuthes could not understand what was said in the noise of the banquet.⁸⁴¹ While this is possible, any ‘noise’ is not emphasised. Nevertheless, it is not made clear whether Seuthes could not hear exactly what Arystas was saying, or

⁸³⁷ Flower 2012, 105.

⁸³⁸ Gera (1999, 5) notes how little of such “cultural interpretation” there is in the *Anabasis*, comparing Herodotus’ “many encounters between representatives of two cultures, with the member of one culture explaining and contrasting his ways - moral values in addition to physical practices - with that of the other” (e.g. the exchanges between Tomyris and Cyrus, the Scythian king Idanthyrsus and Darius, Demaratus and Xerxes, the Ethiopian king and Cambyses’ representatives). On this in Herodotus, see Flory 1987, ch. 3.

⁸³⁹ Other references to Thracian *nomoi* occur at 7.3.28; 32-33.

⁸⁴⁰ For the expression, cf. Ar. *Nub.* 243; Theophr. 4.9; Philostr. VA 6.15.

⁸⁴¹ E.g. Lendle 1995, 439-440; Stronk 1995, 211. This is one of the first attestations of the verb *hellenizein* in a ‘strictly linguistic sense’ (Hall 2002, 116).

that he could not understand it because it was in Greek. The stronger case, I would suggest, is that we are meant to understand that Seuthes heard him speaking, but could not understand it since it was in Greek; thus he asked his bilingual cupbearer. Xenophon's detail that the cupbearer 'knew Greek' suggests that translation is understood to have taken place. It is implied, I would suggest, that Seuthes either did not understand Greek, or at least did not understand it as well as his cupbearer. At this stage of the narrative, we are clueless as to Seuthes' knowledge of Greek.

Athenaeus' reception of this passage in the *Deipnosophistae* may help illuminate Xenophon's goals here. Athenaeus (4.151B-C) quotes the passage but omits the detail of the cupbearer's translation:

ὁ δὲ Ἀρύστας ἐπεὶ παρ' αὐτὸν φέρων τὸ κέρας ὁ οἰνοχόος ἦν, εἶπεν ἰδὼν τὸν Ξενοφῶντα οὐκ ἔτι δειπνοῦντα· ἐκεῖνω, ἔφη, δός· σχολάζει γὰρ ἤδη, ἐγὼ δ' οὐπω. ἐνταῦθα μὲν δὴ γέλως ἐγένετο.

Arystas, when the cup-bearer came to him with the wine, said, as he saw that Xenophon was no longer eating, 'Give it to him; for he is already at leisure, but I am not yet.' And then there arose laughter.

Compare Xenophon (7.3.24-25); differences are underlined (excepting some minor points of vocabulary):

ὁ δ' Ἀρύστας, ἐπεὶ παρ' αὐτὸν φέρων τὸ κέρας ὁ οἰνοχόος ἦκεν, εἶπεν ἰδὼν τὸν Ξενοφῶντα οὐκέτι δειπνοῦντα, ἐκεῖνω, ἔφη, δός· σχολάζει γὰρ ἤδη, ἐγὼ δὲ οὐδέπω. ἀκούσας Σεύθης τὴν φωνὴν ἡρώτα τὸν οἰνοχόον τί λέγει. ὁ δὲ οἰνοχόος εἶπεν· ἐλληνίζειν γὰρ ἠπίστατο. ἐνταῦθα μὲν δὴ γέλως ἐγένετο.

Athenaeus' purpose is very different from Xenophon's: he is striving to describe barbarian dining customs, and he cites Xenophon as simply 'calling to mind Thracian dinners in the seventh book of the *Anabasis*' (4.150F: Θρακίων δὲ δειπνῶν μνημονεύει Ξενοφῶν ἐν ζ' Ἀναβάσεως), as if the two authors had similar goals. Moreover, the later writer often omits lines when quoting, if certain phrases are unnecessary for his point, so this is not an

atypical instance in the *Deipnosophistae*.⁸⁴² With specific reference to Athenaeus' quotation of Xenophon's Thracian banquet, Gorman and Gorman suggest that "strictly speaking, the material left out was irrelevant to his purpose of describing the customs of the Thracian at table", and they argue that Athenaeus consequently plays down the "politico-military character" of the dinner.⁸⁴³ We might perhaps expect the presence of a bilingual cupbearer translating between Greeks and barbarians at dinner to be worthy of mention in a work describing different dining customs; however, in this instance, the detail of the interpreting cupbearer is extraneous to the anecdote of Arystas' witticism. Athenaeus' account functions clearly without it.

We are left, then, to surmise Xenophon's reasons for including such a detail. Overall in his account of this banquet, Athenaeus' omissions remove most of the political and military context of the dinner, making it seem as if Xenophon and Seuthes were simple dining-companions participating in the whims of Thracian feasts.⁸⁴⁴ Xenophon, on the other hand, is crafting a narrative, building towards a change in the relationship between himself and the Thracian prince. We have seen the possible ambiguity of the meaning of the cupbearer's knowing Greek; I would suggest that the cupbearer episode can only be understood fully in light of our next passage, when Seuthes' loyalties appear somewhat differently. We will soon be told that, despite the cupbearer passage, Seuthes can actually understand "most Greek" (7.6.8). I will suggest that Xenophon's delay in revealing this information is tied to the revelation of Seuthes' disloyal behaviour.

⁸⁴² See esp. Gorman & Gorman 2014, 155ff.

⁸⁴³ Gorman & Gorman 2014, 178-180; cf. Carrière 2007, esp. 226-227.

⁸⁴⁴ Maisonneuve 2007, 94. Cf. also 1.15E.

Seuthes and Greek nomoi

Between the dinner and our next relevant passage, tension will grow between Xenophon and Seuthes which will result in their falling out. Initially, however, the two work well together, and Seuthes even appears open to certain Greek practices. In contrast to the abundance of Thracian *nomoi* in the dinner scene and Xenophon's resultant uneasiness with respect to gift-giving, during the ensuing night-time expedition it is Greek *nomoi* which predominate. Xenophon suggests employing the Greek *nomos* of marching by night, to avoid separating the army's parts (7.3.37), and Seuthes expresses approval of this *nomos* twice (7.3.39; 41).

Moreover, Seuthes at one point appears to mirror a particular religious expression of Xenophon's. At Seuthes' banquet, the Athenian had said 'god/s willing' in his toast (7.3.31):

“With the Greeks, if the gods so will (ἄν οἱ θεοὶ θέλωσι), you will acquire great territory...and these things you will not need to take as plunder, but my comrades of their own accord shall bring them before you as gifts”.

Then, during the night expedition soon after, and immediately following Seuthes' praise of the Greek marching *nomos*, the Thracian addresses the Greeks: “All will be well, gentlemen, if god will it (ἦν θεὸς θέλῃ); for we shall fall upon these people before they know it... Once we have crossed over the mountains, we shall come to many prosperous villages” (7.3.43). Such an expression occurs only in these two passages in the *Anabasis*.⁸⁴⁵ Moreover, the prospect of “prosperous villages” appears to recall the context of Xenophon's initial reference, which was the plunder of territory. That Xenophon can be artful in his depiction of such expressions is demonstrated by his characterisation of certain

⁸⁴⁵ In the *Hellenica*, only Greeks employ this expression: the Athenian Thrasybulus and the Spartan Teleutias (*Hell.* 2.4.17; 5.1.14; 19). In the *Cyropaedia*, however, Cyrus uses it (2.4.19; 4.2.13; 5.4.21 (x2); 7.1.9).

Spartans who are represented as employing their native dialect expression ‘by the twin gods’ (6.6.34; 7.6.39).⁸⁴⁶ We cannot infer much about the historical reality of Seuthes’ religion from such a comment, of course;⁸⁴⁷ this is Xenophon’s literary construction, and the rarity of the expression in the *Anabasis*, as well as the proximity of the two instances, suggests that Seuthes’ comment is intended to recall Xenophon’s. It is possible that Xenophon is arguing for the apparent loyalty of Seuthes in this early stage of their relationship by presenting him as somewhat open to Greek *nomoi*, and perhaps even adapting his own expression to mimic Xenophon’s religiosity of speech.⁸⁴⁸

We might recall that Seuthes appealed to the *syngeneia* between Athenians and Thracians when first meeting Xenophon (7.2.31); this connection is now recalled on the night expedition by the choice of watchword: ‘Then they gave out ‘Athena’ as the watchword, on account of their kinship’ (7.3.39: σύνθημα δ’ εἶπον Ἀθηναίαν κατὰ τὴν συγγένειαν). During the expedition, then, while Xenophon and Seuthes are working together successfully, Seuthes exhibits openness to certain key traits of Greek identity: *nomoi* (the Greek marching practice); religion (‘god willing’); and *syngeneia*.⁸⁴⁹ If we consider the chief aspects of Greek identity (common blood, language, religious practices, and *nomoi*, best exemplified by Hdt. 8.144.2) then Seuthes only lacks language (at least at this stage, according to Xenophon’s account of the banquet) in his outward expressions of openness to Greek practices. In other words, Seuthes is suddenly seeming quite ‘Greek’. Furthermore, Seuthes appears willing at this point to learn from Xenophon’s leadership

⁸⁴⁶ On which, see Stronk 1995, 132.

⁸⁴⁷ Stronk speculates whether Seuthes’ use of the singular ‘god’ confirms the view that the Thracians worshipped a single god (1995, 219).

⁸⁴⁸ On the religiosity of Xenophon in the *Anabasis*, see Parker 2004. We might perhaps compare Aristagoras’ appeal to Cleomenes (Hdt. 5.49) which invokes their common ‘gods of the Hellenes’; strategic use of religious expression. On this, see Chapter 1.1.1.

⁸⁴⁹ Regarding this supposed *syngeneia*, Stronk notes “Seuthes seems to believe in the relation (or at least, because of political motives, pretends he does) as is also shown by the watchword” (1995, 191).

style: he asks Xenophon's reasons for dismounting (7.3.45); and shows mercy on a boy at Xenophon's request (7.4.8-11).⁸⁵⁰ Immediately following the banquet, then, Seuthes is represented as willing to work together with Xenophon and even displays receptiveness to certain Greek practices.

Seuthes knows Greek

This soon changes, however, once the issue of the soldiers' pay comes to the fore. The ensuing change in relationship, I will argue, is the main reason for Xenophon's delaying the description of Seuthes' linguistic knowledge. When Heracleides, Seuthes' Greek associate, does not bring back the full pay expected, Xenophon is angered (7.5.5). Heracleides consequently begins slandering Xenophon to Seuthes at every opportunity, and Seuthes becomes annoyed at Xenophon's constant demands for pay (7.5.6-7). According to Xenophon, Seuthes stopped mentioning the possible gifts of places on the sea-coast (7.5.8), due to Heracleides' suggestion that it was dangerous to give fortresses to a man with troops.⁸⁵¹ Heracleides eventually takes Xenophon's generals to Seuthes, and offers them to continue without Xenophon; but they refuse (7.5.9). Soon Seuthes' army is larger than the Greek army (7.5.15); pay is still not forthcoming, the soldiers resent Xenophon, and Seuthes "no longer felt kindly towards him" (7.5.16: ὁ τε Σεύθης οὐκέτι οἰκείως διέκειτο). Spartan envoys arrive to say that they are conducting a campaign against Tissaphernes and they want Seuthes' army (7.6.1); Seuthes and Heracleides are thrilled, and take the envoys directly to the men. The Spartans appeal to the soldiers, promising

⁸⁵⁰ Seuthes also appears to have the honour at this stage of focalisation: at 7.3.42, the camera follows him, as it were, as he scouts the roads (as noted by Flower 2012, 89; this is a different phenomenon from narratorial 'mind-reading', of the sort Pelling discusses [2013, 59]).

⁸⁵¹ Cf. similar comment in Herodotus from Megabazus to Darius with respect to the King's gift of Myrcinus in Thrace to Histiaeus of Miletus (Hdt. 5.23).

revenge on Tissaphernes and good pay; the soldiers are happy and an Arcadian gets up to accuse Xenophon. It is in this context that we hear about Seuthes' knowledge of Greek.

While the anonymous Arcadian is criticising Xenophon, we are told that Seuthes himself is present with an interpreter (7.6.8-9):

παρῆν δὲ καὶ Σεύθης βουλόμενος εἰδέναι τί πραχθήσεται, καὶ ἐν ἐπηκόῳ εἰστήκει ἔχων ἑρμηνέα· ξυνίει δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς Ἑλληνιστὶ τὰ πλεῖστα.

Now Seuthes also was present, for he wanted to know what would be done, and was standing within earshot along with an interpreter, although he could really understand for himself most of what was said in Greek.

The detail of Seuthes' use of an interpreter here is not particularly surprising: he had used one earlier at the banquet, as we have seen, although he is not depicted elsewhere as employing one before this point.⁸⁵² However, the second detail is striking: this is the first we hear of any knowledge of Greek on Seuthes' part. At the earlier banquet, he had required his cupbearer to interpret a comment in Greek from the Arcadian, Arystas. Now the Thracian is revealed to be able to "understand most of what was said in Greek".⁸⁵³ Historically, it is entirely plausible that Seuthes II knew Greek to some degree.⁸⁵⁴ The question is not, however, whether this detail is true or plausible, but rather why Xenophon chose to delay this detail until now, instead of raising it when it first became relevant in the banquet scene.

I would like to suggest that the timing of this particular detail, and its suppression during the banquet scene, reflects Xenophon's differing portrayals of Seuthes in these distinct sections of the narrative. The speech that follows from Xenophon, a defence against

⁸⁵² Later, he will send his personal interpreter, Abrozelmēs, to Xenophon (7.6.43).

⁸⁵³ Nankov's conclusion that Seuthes II "did not know Greek" (citing the banquet scene, 7.3.25) is invalidated by this passage, which he fails to cite (Nankov 2012, 121 n.65).

⁸⁵⁴ For the use of Greek in Classical and Hellenistic Thrace, see Dana 2015, 245-253; Nankov 2012 (noting our previous footnote).

charges of enriching himself at the expense of the soldiers, contains many references to Seuthes and even mentions his presence in the audience (7.6.18):

“I swear to you by all the gods and goddesses that I have not even received what Seuthes promised to me for my own services; he is present here himself, and as he listens (πάρεστι δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς καὶ ἀκούων) he knows as well as I do whether I am swearing falsely...”

Now, it could perhaps be argued that this reference in Xenophon’s speech explains why Xenophon, just prior to the speech, mentioned Seuthes’ listening through an interpreter and his linguistic knowledge: that is, it shows the reader *how* the Thracian was listening. But then, how to explain all the other previous examples of Seuthes and the Greeks communicating without reference to language or interpreters?⁸⁵⁵ Why does Xenophon wait until this particular moment to reveal that Seuthes ‘understood for himself most of what was said in Greek’? I would suggest that this particular speech of Xenophon’s helps illuminate his narrative reasons for delaying that detail until now.

After mentioning Seuthes’ presence, Xenophon laments his deception at the hands of his ‘friend’ Seuthes (7.6.20-22):

“And why, then, did I follow this course? I supposed, men, that the more I helped this man to bear the poverty in which he then was, the more I should make him my friend when he should have gained power. But in fact I no sooner see him enjoying prosperity than I recognize his true intention (γνώμην). [21] One might say, ‘Are you not ashamed of being so stupidly deceived?’ I certainly should be ashamed, by Zeus, if I had been deceived by one who was an enemy; but for one who is a friend, to deceive seems to me more shameful than to be deceived. [22] For if there is such a thing as precaution toward friends, I know that we took every precaution not to afford this man a just pretext for not paying us what he had promised; for we neither did this man any wrong, nor did we mismanage his affairs, nor yet did we shrink like cowards from any service to which he summoned us.”

Here Xenophon emphasises the depth of Seuthes’ betrayal. He stresses that they took ‘every precaution’ to prevent Seuthes’ withholding pay, as Xenophon’s account of their

⁸⁵⁵ E.g. 7.2.31-38; 7.3.7-12; 34-39; 41-48.

first meeting had highlighted. Seuthes had been a friend, and only now does Xenophon recognise his true character, his true intentions. In this context, the revelation that Seuthes had also known Greek all along perhaps makes more sense, now that Xenophon presents him in a more revealing light. In light of such a presentation, the earlier banquet scene and the cupbearer's interpreting role is brought into question: if Seuthes' had known Greek all along, then he had not really needed an interpreter at the banquet nor at Xenophon's speech (the latter made explicit by Xenophon the narrator). That is, the incident with the cupbearer at the banquet, right at the outset of the working relationship between Seuthes and Xenophon, is revealed in hindsight to be another example of Seuthes' deceptive ways. Athenaeus, only wishing to depict the banqueting customs of the Thracians, had no need of a detail serving to characterise Seuthes; for Xenophon, however, it was a detail important for the development in Seuthes' character from apparently trustworthy friend to deceiver of the Greeks. If one accepts this argument, then Xenophon here offers an early example of the literary *topos* of the suspicious multilingual (often manifested as 'interpreter as traitor').⁸⁵⁶

Now may be a good time to recall the interpreter that Xenophon had sent to Seuthes' guards, discussed earlier, and how it may highlight the 'barbarian despot' elements in Seuthes' (at that point unknown) character. In light of the passages discussed above, however, it is perhaps worth raising a different angle. As noted, the interpreter is never represented as engaging with Seuthes himself (the ἑρμηνεύς disappears after interacting with the guards), and this is the only interpreting situation of such a kind in the *Anabasis*. It is possible, then, that the absence of interaction between the interpreter and Seuthes works towards ambiguity around the question of Seuthes' personal knowledge of Greek.

⁸⁵⁶ See introduction to Chapter 2.1.

We have seen the ambiguity in the presentation of the cupbearer scene (where it is not clear whether Seuthes simply could not hear Arystas' remark clearly or whether it is because he knew no Greek). The unique use of this first interpreter may also contribute to this ambiguity.

Conclusion

Even if one is not convinced of the argument that Seuthes' changing loyalties to Xenophon are reflected in the historian's comments regarding Seuthes' linguistic ability and the timing of these details, then one must at least accept that Seuthes' linguistic ability is treated differently to all other characters in the *Anabasis*. Only with respect to Seuthes do we have explicit reference to the particular situation in which Person A interprets for Person B from a language of which we later learn Person B understands 'most'. There are no parallels in other literature of which I am aware; Xenophon's narrative act of delaying the revelation of a figure's linguistic ability, however, finds precedent in Herodotus' portrait of Histiaeus of Miletus, and to a lesser extent, Themistocles in Thucydides.⁸⁵⁷ Just as Seuthes is the only major non-Greek figure in the *Anabasis* said to know Greek (cf. his cupbearer and Pategyas), Histiaeus is the only Greek in the *Histories* said to know Persian. Just as Xenophon recounts many dealings between Seuthes and Greeks prior to learning about his linguistic ability, Herodotus devotes two books to Histiaeus' interactions with Persians, including a stay in Susa with Darius, without mention of his linguistic knowledge. However, just as we saw Seuthes adopting certain Greek *nomoi* and mirroring Xenophon's language ("god willing"), Histiaeus also displays signs of 'Persianisation' on linguistic and cultural levels prior to the revelation of his Persian language knowledge, as we have seen.

⁸⁵⁷ On Herodotus' narratological influence on Xenophon, see Hornblower 2006, 311: "Xenophon's borrowings [from Hdt] are not so much factual as stylistic and narratological. But the debt is great."

There are differences between the portrayals of Histiaeus and Seuthes, of course: Seuthes, for example, is never depicted as *speaking* Greek, only ‘understanding most’ of it; and while Histiaeus is shown speaking it, we get no comment on the extent of his linguistic ability. Nevertheless, they are characters who are painted to some degree as deceptive and culturally liminal by their historians, and both Herodotus and Xenophon delay the revelation of their linguistic ability until climactic points in their narratives.

It is difficult to ascertain how Xenophon’s audience would have reacted to the fact of Seuthes’ Greek knowledge; I suspect they would have been indifferent to it, *per se*, given the connections between the worlds of the Greeks and Thracians.⁸⁵⁸ But in Xenophon’s narrative, it is rather what the revelation of his knowledge of Greek represents – an implied deception – and how that reflects the other evident changes in Xenophon’s portrayal of the Thracian dynast. As noted above, perhaps we have here an early example of the “fear of the multilingual”.

Overall conclusion – Chapter 3.1

We have now examined three portraits of ‘culturally liminal’ figures in the first three historians. In each case, the full revelation of their bilingualism is delayed until the end of their portrayals, and *nomoi* are used in addition to language to show the blurring of cultural character. The historians thus exploit various aspects of ethnic identity and narrative structuring to paint a picture of these figures that culminates in their bilingualism.

⁸⁵⁸ See most recently Sears 2013.

On the historiographical level, an explicit reference to a figure's use of a foreign language appears to be a different, stronger statement than the artful deployment of 'Persianising' or 'Hellenising' stylistic features. It is an intrusion into the narrative world of a multilingual reality rarely flagged by historians, who typically represent all speech in Greek. This may explain in part why such clear expressions of language use are delayed until moments of climax. It may also suggest that language is a more profound element of identity than other cultural markers: the depiction of Histiaeus would perhaps support this conclusion, if we read his outburst in Persian as a last-ditch attempt to 'become Persian' and thereby save himself. Seuthes, too, receives a slow reveal: he is first implied to be ignorant of Greek; then he appears to at least approve of certain Greek practices as he works with Xenophon; and, finally, he is revealed as knowing 'most Greek'. Themistocles' Persian language and customs are also delayed, but in a different way: he requests a year to learn them, and this is a calculated decision, part of his controlled, intelligent manner of medism. If language is more profound a marker of identity (perhaps partly related to the relative difficulty of adopting it), then such narrative delay may emphasise the significance contained in such linguistic ability.⁸⁵⁹ This analysis may have ramifications for our views of Greek ethnicity in the classical period.

⁸⁵⁹ On narrative delay for revealing character, see Pitcher 2007, 116.

Chapter 3.2: Major Bilingual Figures

Extant Alexander Tradition

Introduction

In the previous section, we examined the ways in which Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon use bilingualism as one tool among many for the characterisation of individuals. References to the linguistic knowledge of Histiaeus, Themistocles, and Seuthes were studied alongside the select *nomoi* from the same culture attributed to these figures. All three are represented as using certain *nomoi* in order to manipulate people from that culture. One conclusion, however, is that there is little evidence that a Greek learning a foreign tongue in itself was considered a bad thing.⁸⁶⁰ It seems to have been, rather, the reasons for this knowledge that mattered: Histiaeus, a pro-Persian tyrant, evidently picked up some Persian while willingly in Darius' court; Themistocles, on the other hand, forced to medise, appears clever in spending a year studying the language. The notion of the 'fear of the bilingual', however, seems apparent in the case of Seuthes. In this section, we will see how such ideas fare in the historiography and biography of the Roman era.

We will discuss several episodes concerning bilingual individuals in the extant works of Diodorus, Curtius, Plutarch, and Arrian. In the cases of Diodorus and Plutarch, instances of the characterisation of individuals through bilingualism have either already been discussed in other contexts (Alexander's Macedonian dialect use in Plutarch; Chapter 1.2.3) or are lacking in their writing on Alexander (Diodorus). However, beyond Alexander, both writers discuss the bilingualism of Themistocles: the examination of their treatments will naturally follow from our study of Thucydides and will offer helpful

⁸⁶⁰ *Contra* Harrison 1998; Gera 2007.

illumination of their broader methods. The presentation of that famous fifth century bilingual Greek will also allow comparison with the depiction of figures from the Alexander period.

1. Diodorus: Themistocles of Athens

Introduction

In Book 17 of Diodorus' *Bibliothēke*, there are no examples of the characterisation of individuals through bilingualism such as we have seen with Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon.⁸⁶¹ Diodorus does not mention the bilingualism of figures such as Peucestas and Laomedon (Arrian alone does so), nor Darius III (only Curtius). The same is true of Plutarch, as we shall see (Chapter 3.2.3 below). These two writers were writing more abbreviated accounts – universal history and biography – and this is surely a factor in such omissions: we have seen already that Diodorus and Plutarch have little interest in mentioning interpreters beyond those well attested in the tradition. But this is not the whole story, since both also *include* details – not found elsewhere – which could easily have been omitted. They each had their own concerns and presented different pictures of Alexander and his campaigns; as we have seen in the first chapter, Diodorus – through his careful selection and omission – appears interested in the spread and supremacy of Greek culture and language encouraged by Alexander's expedition, and perhaps this is another reason for omitting most bilingual Greeks and Macedonians.

There are instances of characterisation through bi- or multilingualism in Book 17, however, but they tend to characterise groups rather than individuals. Moreover, they have been discussed in terms of Greek language/dialect in Chapter 1.2.1 (Dioxippus/Coragus episode;

⁸⁶¹ Cf. the bilingual Lycian interpreter (17.68), discussed in Chapter 2.2.

the Boeotians in Asia). There is also one example in which the multilingualism of a group contributes to the characterisation of an individual: Darius III's drilling of his multilingual army before Gaugamela – 'lest some confusion of language should arise in the ranks from the numerous *ethne* assembled who differed in language' (17.53.4: μήποτε πολλῶν καὶ ἄσυμφώνων ἔθνῶν ἡθροισμένων ταῖς διαλέκτοις ταραχὴ τις γένηται κατὰ τὴν παράταξιν) – characterises him as following similar tactics to his predecessor Xerxes in preventing problems arising from multilingual military forces (cf. Xerxes' arrangement of ships at Salamis: 11.17.2);⁸⁶² Hannibal is later praised for promoting harmony in his multilingual army in like fashion (29.19.1). Thus, across different sections of the *Bibliothēke* dependent on different source material, Diodorus evinces an interest in overcoming the difficulties of multilingual environments.⁸⁶³ At the same time, such similar treatment of polyglot military forces links these foreign leaders and characterises them as smart strategists; this also has the effect of heightening the eventual success of the Greeks or Romans against an adept opponent. There is also the implication that a common language makes communication much easier, something that I have argued in Chapter 1.2.1 is an element of Diodorus' (perhaps Stoically-influenced) ideological bias.

There is one instance of individual bilingualism in the *Bibliothēke*, however, which Diodorus (along with Plutarch in a separate *Life*) does mention: that of the famous Athenian commander, Themistocles, in Diodorus Book 11.⁸⁶⁴ We have seen how Thucydides treated Themistocles and his bilingualism (Chapter 3.1.2). Here, we shall compare Diodorus' presentation of the same figure in a very different context – first century BCE Rome – and

⁸⁶² Both references do not occur in other sources: on these passages, see James 2018, 441-443.

⁸⁶³ As is evident from James 2018, I see Diodorus not as a "slavish copyist" but as a competent historian capable of careful selection and omission from his source material. This perspective is becoming standard among historiographers and more common among historians: see e.g. Sacks 1990; 1994; Green 2006; Hau 2009; Schmitz 2011; Sulimani 2011; Bissa 2013; Hau 2016; Hau et al 2018.

⁸⁶⁴ Diodorus' account is based on Ephorus (Podlecki 1975, 92-93).

how it aligns with the broader aims of his history, as we have seen already through the lens of Book 17 on Alexander.

Themistocles as hero of all Greeks

Much like Thucydides (and later, Plutarch), Diodorus rationalises Themistocles' medism in the context of his involuntary exile from the Greek world. His account has a more inclusively 'Greek' component to it, however, which is notably absent from Thucydides: while the latter historian holds up Themistocles as Athenian hero *par excellence* in contrast to the Spartan Pausanias, Diodorus broadens his significance to the wider Greek sphere. His narrative of Themistocles' earlier appearances contains an element of Greek unity lacking in Herodotus' Persian Wars narrative too.⁸⁶⁵ At the pass of Tempe, for example, Themistocles and the Spartan commander 'dispatched ambassadors to the states and asked them to send soldiers to join in the common (κοινῇ) defence of the passes; for they eagerly desired that all the Greek *poleis* should each have a share in the defence and make common cause (κοινοποιήσασθαι) in the war against the Persians' (11.2.5; cf. Hdt. 7.172-174). Similarly, Diodorus contrasts Pausanias and his death by Spartan 'fellow citizens' (τῶν ιδίων πολιτῶν) with Themistocles who was 'driven from every corner of Hellas' (11.23.3: ἐξ ἀπάσης τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἐξελαθέντα); Themistocles is thus rejected by all Greeks, not just his own citizens. When he is snubbed for the ἀριστεῖον after Salamis, the Spartans fear his wrath against 'them and the Greeks' (11.27.3: κατ' αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν Ἑλλήνων), perhaps foreshadowing the tradition of his later 'betrayal' of the Greeks to Xerxes, cited but dismissed at 11.58.2-3 (cf. Thuc. 1.138.2, 4). Finally, Diodorus describes Themistocles' esteem after the wars as existing 'not only among his own citizens, but all the Greeks'

⁸⁶⁵ This is probably symptomatic of broader views: for example, Yates 2015 demonstrates that later traditions (including Diodorus/Ephorus) present the Hellenic League as more united than what is found in Herodotus and Thucydides.

(11.41.1). In Diodorus' earlier narrative of Themistocles' exploits, then, he repeatedly highlights Themistocles as a notable 'Greek' figure, rather than merely Athenian.

This more 'Panhellenic' presentation of Themistocles continues in the narrative of his exile (and will persist in the final eulogy of 11.58-59). Hence, we see the Spartans, upon hearing of his exile to Argos, sending embassies to Athens accusing Themistocles of complicity with Pausanias, and demanding that, since his crimes affected not just Athens but all Greece (τῶν κοινῶν τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἀδικημάτων), his trial should take place before the 'common council of the Greeks' (11.55.4: ἐπὶ τοῦ κοινοῦ συνεδρίου τῶν Ἑλλήνων), i.e. that of the Hellenic League.⁸⁶⁶ The trial of Pausanias, by contrast, is seen as a Spartan affair alone (Diod. 11.44-45; cf. also Thuc. 1.131-134; Nepos, *Paus.* 2.6; Plut. *Cim.* 6.3).⁸⁶⁷ Fearing the council's Spartan bias, Themistocles fled to Admetus of Molossia, but was soon forced to move on as the Spartans had marked him as 'betrayed and destroyer of all Hellas' (προδότην καὶ λυμεῶνα τῆς ὅλης Ἑλλάδος); if Admetus did not hand him over, they and 'all the Hellenes' would make war on him (11.56.1-3).⁸⁶⁸ Eventually, through the help of Lyncestians, he made his way to Asia where he had a personal friend (ιδιόξενος), Lysitheides (11.56.4).⁸⁶⁹ This differs from Themistocles' anonymous Persian guide in Thucydides (1.137.3); Themistocles' friend in Diodorus is Greek.

⁸⁶⁶ On the term, see Yates 2015, 2 n.10. Plutarch follows this tradition (*Them.* 23).

⁸⁶⁷ Cf., however, Diodorus' later characterisation of it as Pausanias' 'betraying the Greeks' (11.54.4).

⁸⁶⁸ Diodorus omits Themistocles' flight to Corcyra (Thuc. 1.136.1; Plut. *Them.* 24.1); cf. Podlecki 1975, 41; 93.

⁸⁶⁹ A man bearing this name is not mentioned by other sources; at 11.56.5, he is said to have entertained the Persian force passing through Asia Minor, but in Herodotus that man is called Pythius (7.27).

Lysitheidēs: Themistocles’ ‘cultural interpreter’

The narrative from this point until Themistocles’ arrival at court contains some revealing Persian cultural details.⁸⁷⁰ Themistocles urged his friend, who knew Xerxes, to take him to the King (11.56.5-6).⁸⁷¹ Lysitheidēs initially hesitated, fearing the consequences given all the harm Themistocles had done to the Persians (11.56.5); Diodorus thus reminds us once more of Themistocles’ good works on behalf of all Greeks. Lysitheidēs got Themistocles safely to the King in a covered wagon, something Diodorus notes was a Persian ἔθος for transporting concubines to court (11.56.6-8). Knowledge of a foreign custom, then, facilitates this journey. It is worth pointing out, however, that it is not described as Themistocles’ idea.⁸⁷² Such a presentation may imply Themistocles’ cleverness in choosing Lysitheidēs’ knowledgeable guidance in a delicate matter, whilst avoiding the suggestion of too much familiarity with Persian culture on Themistocles’ part. This is a different tack from Thucydides, who shows Themistocles in his letter to the King as seemingly aware of the Persian *nomos* concerning benefaction, for example. Perhaps in Diodorus’ view, even this little prior knowledge of Persian culture may not have seemed particularly becoming for a legendary Greek hero, who had done so much harm to the Persian enemy (as Diodorus earlier emphasised).

On arrival in court, again we see Lysitheidēs acting as a kind of ‘cultural interpreter’. First, he converses with the monarch ‘cautiously’ (πεφυλαγμένως),⁸⁷³ an adverb which not only displays his sensitivity to the situation but may also reflect his experience of dealing with

⁸⁷⁰ Some have suggested Ephorus’ account of Themistocles’ experiences in Asia contains ‘romantic’ details from a *Persika* (Jacoby, *FGrHist* II C, 90; Podlecki 1975, 93).

⁸⁷¹ For the ancient debate about which Persian King Themistocles met, see Plut. *Them.* 27.1. Thucydides and Plutarch side with Artaxerxes, Diodorus with Xerxes.

⁸⁷² Nor in Plut. *Them.* 26.3-4; see Chapter 3.2.3.

⁸⁷³ A *hapax* in Diodorus.

the powerful King; his *συνήθεια* with Xerxes had been mentioned earlier (11.56.5). Lysitheidēs then receives customary pledges of faith (11.56.8). These preliminaries completed, only then does Lysitheidēs introduce Themistocles (11.56.8):

Then Lysitheidēs introduced him to the presence of the king, who, when he had allowed Themistocles to speak and learned that he had done the king no wrong, absolved him from punishment.

This is the first exchange between Xerxes and Themistocles, and there is no explicit reference to interpreters nor the language of the conversation. As we have seen in Chapter 2.2.1, however, we should not expect Diodorus to mention interpreters; while Lysitheidēs may have acted as such (in addition to the ‘cultural’ role), this is not made explicit.⁸⁷⁴ In Thucydides, Themistocles had learned Persian before ever meeting the King in person, so that he might engage him in the king’s own language; Diodorus differs in delaying the learning of Persian for a special event: Themistocles’ Persian trial.

Themistocles’ trial

The trial was convened by Xerxes after Mandane, the daughter of Darius, urged the king to ‘wreak vengeance’ upon Themistocles for the death of her sons at Salamis. When the king did not heed her request, she stirred up the nobles against Themistocles. Seeing their anger, the king declared that a jury of the noblest Persians would decide Themistocles’ fate (11.57.1-4). In the intervening period Themistocles learned Persian (11.57.5):

πάντων δὲ συνευδοκησάντων, καὶ δοθέντος ἱκανοῦ χρόνου εἰς τὴν παρασκευὴν τῆς κρίσεως, ὁ μὲν Θεμιστοκλῆς μαθὼν τὴν Περσίδα διάλεκτον, καὶ ταύτῃ χρησάμενος κατὰ τὴν ἀπολογίαν, ἀπελύθη τῶν ἐγκλημάτων.

This decision was approved by all, and since a considerable time was given to make the preparations for the trial, Themistocles meanwhile learned the Persian language, and using it in his defence he was acquitted of the charges.

⁸⁷⁴ Marr (1998, 152) says simply that Lysitheidēs was “acting as an intermediary”, but does not explicitly mention the linguistic circumstances.

There is no reference here to Persian customs in addition to *διάλεκτος* (Diodorus' regular term for language), such as the Persian *ἐπιτηδεύματα* which Themistocles learns in Thucydides (1.138.1). Diodorus, however – unlike Thucydides – rarely places customs and language together.⁸⁷⁵ Thucydides' Themistocles elsewhere also displays awareness of Persian *nomoi* like benefaction, while Diodorus' Themistocles instead employs Lysitheidēs as 'cultural interpreter'. This use of Lysitheidēs does not necessarily mean, historically, that Themistocles himself was ignorant of Persian customs – it could even suggest calculation and awareness of self-presentation on his part – but one narrative effect is that the Athenian appears not to 'instigate' Persian behaviour nor adopt any Persian behaviours; he leaves the *nomoi* to Lysitheidēs. Only his learning of Persian is presented as his alone.

One of the implications of this passage is that Themistocles' new knowledge of the language helps him get acquitted by the jury.⁸⁷⁶ There may be a distinction here between Themistocles' relations with the King, on the one hand, and those with Persian nobles on the other: while Themistocles does not need to know Persian to speak with the King, he learns it for the trial. This may suggest a kind of 'performative' element to Diodorus' presentation of Themistocles' linguistic display.⁸⁷⁷ Though Diodorus' source here is unclear,⁸⁷⁸ his narrative presentation perhaps reflects certain contemporary practices of public language choice: it was customary, for example, for Roman representatives to speak Latin publicly in Greece, regardless of ability in Greek.⁸⁷⁹ In practice, the Roman picture was rather more complicated, since we have examples of proceedings occurring in

⁸⁷⁵ For references to languages in Diodorus, see James 2018, 432 n.16.

⁸⁷⁶ As Mayer (1997, 301) notes, "Themistocles learns Persian, not to help the Persians or to adapt to their ways, but to do that most Athenian of all things: to go to court".

⁸⁷⁷ Perhaps implicit in Gera's comment: "Here he must be capable of expressing himself properly and persuasively in front of a jury of Persian nobles, rather than before the king" (2007, 449).

⁸⁷⁸ See Gera 2007, 448-449, n.17.

⁸⁷⁹ "Even Cicero had to use the service of an interpreter for the Greek language" (Peretz 2006, 453, citing Cic. Verr. 2.4.147; Val. Max. 2.2.2; Plut. Cat. Mai. 12.5-7; cf. Balsdon 1979, 140; Adams 2003b). For Cicero's complex relationship with Hellenism, see Gruen 1984, 265.

Greek.⁸⁸⁰ While most elite Romans were bilingual, there was often a distinction drawn between private admiration and public display of Greek culture and language (as we will see with Curtius' depiction of Darius III at 3.2.2).⁸⁸¹

A good example of this performativity of language choice is Curtius Rufus' presentation of Philotas' trial, discussed in Chapter 1.2.2. Although Themistocles' situation is not the same as Philotas', both were choosing the language they thought would be understood by more people (Philotas explicitly so, on Curtius' presentation). Themistocles' genius is evident in his awareness of the need to appeal to the Persians on their own terms and in their own language. His earlier use of Lysitheidēs as 'cultural interpreter' would not be sufficient for the jury; he needed to conduct his defence in the Persians' own *patrius sermo*. The rhetorical, emotive, and practical power of a shared language is a motif across the *Bibliothēke*.⁸⁸² Diodorus' tendency in this regard, along contemporary Roman language choice, may have influenced his presentation of Themistocles' Persian performance.

Conclusion

Diodorus, like Thucydides, builds his initial picture of Themistocles in contrast to Pausanias. However, his Themistocles moves away from Thucydides' depiction of a heroic Athenian foil to Pausanias to become instead the champion of all Greeks. Such a depiction tallies with a wider perspective – evident in Diodorus and other Roman-era Greek writers – that the Greeks of the Persian Wars were more united than Herodotus and Thucydides

⁸⁸⁰ For example, Aemilius Paullus spoke in Greek to Perseus (Liv. 45.8.1-7), while reserving Latin for his own staff (45.8.6) and the announcement of the *senatus consultum* (45.29.3-4); see Gruen 1984, 267. Cf. also Suet. *Aug.* 89.

⁸⁸¹ Gruen 1984, 250-272; Adams 2003b, 12-13.

⁸⁸² One of the arguments of James 2018; see Chapter 1.2.1.

presented them.⁸⁸³ Moreover, this seems also to align with our findings in Chapter 1.2.1 on Diodorus' minimisation of internal Greek linguistic difference, 'promotion' of the Greek tongue, and Alexander's role as 'Hellenising' figure. Under the political power of Rome, memories of past glories were shared among the Greeks as a whole; the fractured *poleis* of old were now incorporated into the Roman empire. In this context, Themistocles is presented as one of the greatest of Greeks, forced into exile in Persia by his own people.

In contrast to Thucydides' presentation, Diodorus does not depict Themistocles as taking the initiative in his medism once exiled; the figure of Lysitheides acts as his 'cultural interpreter', aware of Persian customs so Themistocles did not have to be. Nor does Diodorus dwell on Themistocles' learning of the Persian tongue; he wishes to stress, however, its success in getting him acquitted. In Diodorus' cultural context, Themistocles' deliberate language choice in such a trial setting may highlight his ability to think outside the cultural box and appeal to his audience on their linguistic level.

2. Curtius Rufus: Darius III

Introduction

Curtius has a notable interest in character and motive. Like Tacitus after him, he often employs psychological observations for characterisation.⁸⁸⁴ However, as with other historians, Curtius makes use of what Atkinson calls the 'situational presentation': that is, using situations to reveal character rather than overt statements.⁸⁸⁵ Dihle observed this as a

⁸⁸³ See Yates 2015 (with earlier bibliography), arguing (probably rightly) for its roots in Ephorus' fourth-century 'Panhellenic' context; cf. also Marincola 2007b; 2010.

⁸⁸⁴ Atkinson 1980, 70-73; Baynham 1998; cf. Gill 1983.

⁸⁸⁵ Atkinson 1980, 70-73.

feature of characterisation in antiquity, particularly among the Romans: “The ancients, and above all the Romans, always designed character sketches better with situational portrayals than through purely psychological description”.⁸⁸⁶ This is something that we have seen with respect to Curtius’ treatment of interpreters (Chapter 2.2.2): he is particularly concerned with bilingual individuals and their potential for treachery. However, there is only one figure in the *Historiae* whose bilingualism is not used for interpreting (and even allows him to eschew interpreters): Darius III. An unparalleled story suggests that Darius was sufficiently familiar with the Greek language to converse with a Greek without interpreters. We shall discuss this scene in the broader context of Curtius’ depiction of Darius and the Greeks, as well as Bessus’ conspiracy against him.

Darius III and Patron

Among the extant Alexander narratives, only Curtius gives any kind of substantial characterisation to Darius. This fits with the broader aims of his history: as Baynham demonstrates, Curtius’ study of Alexander’s *regnum* – a key theme – is enhanced throughout the *Historiae* by “systematic comparison with other kings and leaders”, most significantly Darius in the first five books.⁸⁸⁷ This results in the structure of the relevant book here, Book 5, being divided between Alexander and Darius. Regarding Darius’ last days, for example – in which the relevant bilingual episode takes place – Curtius centres the narrative on Darius himself, while Arrian, by contrast, describes Darius’ pursuit as a series of reports to Alexander (3.19.4; 3.21.1). Curtius makes much of Darius as an important part of understanding Alexander and his expedition.

⁸⁸⁶ Dihle 1955, 652 (“Die Antike und vor allem die Römer haben Charakterbilder stets besser mit Situationsschilderungen als durch reine psychologische Deskription entworfen”).

⁸⁸⁷ Baynham 1998, 132-133.

At this stage in the narrative, Darius has fled to Ecbatana after losing the battle of Gaugamela (331 BCE). Darius attempts to rally his men in a speech, including words on how fortunate he is to have loyal friends alongside him (5.8.6-10); indeed, *fides* is a recurrent motif in this episode (as throughout the work).⁸⁸⁸ However, unbeknownst to Darius, two Persian nobles – Bessus and Nabarzanes – had already hatched a conspiracy against him (5.9.2-3). Patron, leader of the Greek mercenaries, ordered his men to be on the alert; the Persians formed a separate group, and remained unpersuaded by Bessus’ attempts to lead them to Bactra. The conspirators feared the Persians’ loyalty to their king, and similarly they could not depend on the *fides* of the Greek mercenaries (5.10.7). Despite Darius’ rhetoric of unity and loyalty, his troops were divided (primarily along ethnic lines), and some were actively conspiring against him.⁸⁸⁹

Patron, the Greek mercenary commander, warns Darius of the plot privately in Greek, and in so doing displays his loyalty to the King (5.11.1-8):

Patron, after waiting for a long time and often being restrained from speaking, kept his eyes fixed upon the king, wavering between loyalty and fear (*inter fidem timoremque haesitans*).

When at last the king turned towards him, Darius ordered Bubaces, a eunuch who was following the chariot among those nearest the king, to ask Patron whether he wished to say anything to him. Patron replied that he did in fact wish to talk with him, but without witnesses, and when bidden to come nearer without an interpreter—for Darius was not unacquainted with the Greek language (*Patron se vero, sed remotis arbitris loqui velle cum eo respondit iussusque propius accedere sine interprete (nam haud rudis Graecae linguae Dareus erat)*)—he said: “My king, out of 50,000 Greeks we are the few that are left, companions of all your fortune, and in your present state unchanged from what we were in your prosperity, ready to seek, in place of our native land and our homes, whatever lands you shall select. Your prosperity and adversity have linked us with you. By this unconquered loyalty (*hanc fidem invictam*) I beg and conjure you, pitch your tent in our camp; suffer us to be your body-guards. We have abandoned Greece

⁸⁸⁸ *Fides* occurs 13 times in this section: 5.8.7; 8; 10.7; 11.3; 6; 9; 11; 12; 12.1; 3; 4; 5; 11. On the motif in Curtius’ first pentad, see Baynham 1998, 132-164. Atkinson (1994, 139) draws attention to the maxim *fortuna mutat fidem*, with which “Curtius no doubt was familiar”. On this speech and its lack of “material substance”, dependent as it is on the possibility of Fortune turning in the Persians’ favour, see Atkinson 1994, 138.

⁸⁸⁹ For the possible “mercenaries’ source” behind this episode, see Berve 1926, no. 612; Badian 2000a, 262-263; Badian 2000b, 87; Rzepka 2009; cf. Briant 2015, 173.

(*omisimus Graeciam*), no Bactra belongs to us, all our hope is in you; would that it were true also of the rest! It is needless to say more. I, a foreigner and of another *genus* (*externus et alienigena*) should not demand the guard of your person, if I believed that another could guarantee it.”

Although Bessus was ignorant of the Greek language (*Bessus, quamquam erat Graeci sermonis ignarus*), yet, pricked by conscience, he believed that Patron had surely revealed his plot; and since the words of the Greek were concealed from interpreters (*interpretibus celato⁸⁹⁰ sermone Graeci*), any doubt was removed. Darius, however, being so far as could be inferred from his expression not at all alarmed, began to question Patron as to the reason for the advice which he brought. The Greek, thinking that there was no room for further delay, said: “Bessus and Nabarzanes are plotting against you, your fortune and your life are in extreme danger, this day will be the last for the traitors or for you”.

This episode, like Philotas’ trial, is an example of Curtius’ exploiting the potential of multilingualism for characterisation and plot.⁸⁹¹ Patron is a minor character in the tradition, yet here he is taking centre stage in a key moment of Darius’ story.⁸⁹² Why is this so? The goal of the scene is to have knowledge of the conspiracy conveyed to Darius without Bessus’ knowledge; Patron’s Greekness – and Darius’ knowledge of Greek – allowed for a conversation to take place which Bessus could not understand, but of which he could become, evidently, suspicious. Curtius creates the scene carefully: Bessus’ close watch on Darius (5.11.1), and the general sensitivity of the information, necessitates a private conversation between Patron and Darius. This means no witnesses (*remotis arbitris*), not even interpreters.⁸⁹³ For this to happen, Darius must be able to speak Greek; it could not have been Patron speaking Persian, of course, for Bessus would then be able to understand. Darius’ bilingualism means that can be avoided.

⁸⁹⁰ Problematic text; this translation is closest to the contextual sense (see Atkinson 1994, 148).

⁸⁹¹ For Philotas’ trial, see Chapter 1.2.2. For other similarities between these two scenes in Curtius, see Rzepka 2009, 19-31.

⁸⁹² Patron is only mentioned once outside Curtius, a minor reference to ‘Paron [sic] the Phocian’ in Arr. *Anab.* 3.16.2; cf. Heckel 2006, 193.

⁸⁹³ As Atkinson notes (1994, 240), *remotis arbitris* is a “pet phrase” of Curtius’. It is found elsewhere in conspiracy contexts: 5.12.10; 6.7.3; 6.11.12; 7.5.22. Cf. similar expression *sine arbitris* at 7.8.2; 10.1.28.

Darius' linguistic ability

Curtius presents Darius as essentially fluent in his conversation with Patron.⁸⁹⁴ While no other Persian King is attested as knowing Greek, it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that Darius III had knowledge of the language, given the regular presence of Greeks in Achaemenid courts.⁸⁹⁵ As we have seen in Chapter 2.2.2, Darius' Greek-Persian interpreter, Melon (5.13.7), does not prove that Darius had no knowledge of Greek. Curtius may have been influenced by his cultural context in depicting Darius as privately competent in the Greek language whilst having an interpreter in his employ.

No other source mentions Darius' knowledge of Greek, however, and it is doubtful historically that Darius was as fluent as Curtius claims.⁸⁹⁶ It is necessary for the historian's story that the Great King be depicted as such, so that Bessus could become suspicious of the – from his perspective – indecipherable conversation between Darius and Patron. Moreover, another tradition appears to contradict the notion that Darius spoke Greek. Before breaking off in Darius' final moments, Curtius makes reference to a Macedonian soldier, Polystratus, who discovers Darius half-dead (5.13.24). Plutarch also mentions this man (*Alex.* 43.2);⁸⁹⁷ Justin mentions 'one of the soldiers' discovering Darius' body (*Just. Epit.* 11.15.5), but does not name him.⁸⁹⁸ Justin then goes on, however, to state that a

⁸⁹⁴ Aside from presenting the conversation in Greek as going smoothly, the emphasis that comes with the *litotes* (*haud rudis*) suggests a firm grasp of the language. Compare similar usage of *haud* in *litotes* elsewhere in Book 5, e.g. 5.1.2; 5.1.5; 5.1.24.

⁸⁹⁵ See references at Harrison 1998, 11 n. 41. Greeks attested at the court of Darius III: Amyntas (*Arr. Anab.* 2.6.3; *Plut. Alex.* 20.2) and Charidemus (*Arr. Anab.* 1.10.6; *Curt.* 3.2.10-19; *Diod.* 17.30.1-6). Artabazus may also have known some Greek, as he had spent time in the court of Philip II (*Curt.* 5.9.1).

⁸⁹⁶ Heckel considers it "doubtless a fiction", but without explanation (2006, 318 n. 419); cf. Bosworth 1980a, 345.

⁸⁹⁷ Arrian and Diodorus omit this detail (*Arr. Anab.* 3.21.10; *Diod.* 17.73.3). There were traditions that Darius was still alive when Alexander arrived (*Diod.* 17.73.4); Arrian's comment that Darius died 'before Alexander had seen him' also hints at his awareness of this tradition (3.21.10); cf. Bosworth 1980a, 345.

⁸⁹⁸ The name of Polystratus "may have been edited out" of Justin's epitome of Trogus (Baynham 1998, 43).

Persian captive was then brought to Darius, giving the king consolation that his last words would be understood (Just. *Epit.* 11.15.6):

A captive was brought and from his voice (*ex uoce*) Darius recognized him to be a fellow-countryman (*ciuem*). Darius said that this at least brought him some consolation in his present misfortune since he would now be talking to someone who would understand him (*apud intellecturum locuturus esset*), and not uttering his final words in vain.

Justin's tragic version implies that Darius did not know Greek, since he needed a Persian captive to be 'understood'. Thus, it is unlikely that Curtius would have also included the Persian: having already made Darius fluent in Greek, the point of the scene – that Darius would not utter his final words in vain – would not be applicable since Polystratus would have understood him.⁸⁹⁹ Justin's account suggests that there is no tradition outside Curtius in which Darius spoke such fluent Greek that he could converse *sine interprete*; rather, Justin implies the opposite, that Darius could not make himself understood without an interpreter. Even so, communication in a multilingual environment evidently appeared in the tradition of Darius' last words – Curtius and Justin simply dealt with it in different ways.⁹⁰⁰ Since no other source even hints at Darius' knowledge of Greek, it is likely that this is Curtius' own elaboration. I shall now explore some possible reasons for this choice, and how it adds to Darius' characterisation. I will suggest that Darius' bilingualism is part of Curtius' depiction of the succession from Darius to Alexander.

⁸⁹⁹ Heckel and Yardley 1984, 285 n. 85; Heckel 1994, 73. Cf. the reconstruction of the end of Book 5 by Freinshem and Hedicke, included in Rolfe's 1946 Loeb translation. If I am right, this presentation would work in harmony with the revelation during Philotas' trial that most Macedonians – like Polystratus – understood Greek (see Chapter 1.2.2).

⁹⁰⁰ Briant stresses Curtius' and Justin's probable lack of information regarding Darius' linguistic knowledge and their primary concern for the 'coherence' and 'effectiveness' of their 'literary devices' (2015, 156); cf. Heckel 1994, 73.

Darius, the Greeks, and the ‘succession’ narrative

The last words of Darius would have helped in understanding Curtius’ portrait of the king, but unfortunately the text breaks off as Polystratus discovers his half-dead body. Nevertheless, it was probably in essence similar to the accounts of Justin (11.15) and Plutarch (*Alex.* 43), in which Darius views Alexander as his successor. He also entreats him to respect his family and avenge his death; finally, he pledges his right hand to Alexander in *fides*. Such affinities are already present in Curtius’ earlier narrative: Darius had acknowledged Alexander’s *pietas* (4.10.34) and, in his last days, perceived Alexander as an avenger (5.12.5); thus, as Baynham puts it, “it would be appropriate for [Darius] to recognize [Alexander] as a successor with his last breath”.⁹⁰¹ On a structural level, too, it would form a natural conclusion: Baynham plausibly argues for the likelihood that Curtius will have brought Alexander and Darius together through Polystratus (allowing the two to speak in Greek, perhaps), and probably also exploited Darius’ death as a structural conclusion (as Justin did): “The two protagonists would be united, and so would the twin themes of the first pentad – the *fortunae* and *regna* of the kings”.⁹⁰² Indeed, in order to understand more fully the role of Darius’ bilingualism in the narrative, we need to look at his characterisation and interaction with Greeks in the preceding books 3-5, i.e. the extant books of the first pentad of Curtius’ work (his chief unit of structure). The question of the loyalty of the Greeks within the armies of both Alexander and Darius is a favourite motif of Curtius’ in these books.⁹⁰³

Let us focus on Darius’ Greek mercenaries. These men appear rather consistently in a positive light, at least with respect to their loyalty and utility to Darius. At 3.2.9, they appear

⁹⁰¹ Baynham 1998, 43-44.

⁹⁰² Baynham 1998, 43.

⁹⁰³ Atkinson 1980, 68.

in the Persian army catalogue with praise from Curtius: ‘To these forces were added 30,000 Greek mercenaries, excellent young soldiers’ (*egregiae iuventutis*). At 3.3.1, Darius orders Thymondas to take over the ‘foreign [i.e. Greek] troops, in whom Darius held the greatest hope’ (*peregrinos milites, in quis plurimum habebat spei*).⁹⁰⁴ Before Darius’ courtiers question their *fides* (3.8.3; cf. *fides* again at 3.8.4; 6), Curtius labels the Greeks in his army ‘his principal and almost sole hope’ (3.8.1: *praecipua spes et propemodum unica*).⁹⁰⁵ At 3.9.2, Curtius again compliments Darius’ Greek soldiers, labelling the mercenary infantry ‘without doubt the strength of the army, equal to the Macedonian phalanx’ (*haud dubie robur exercitus, par Macedonicae phalangi acies*).⁹⁰⁶ Although not depicted during the battle itself (Issus), Curtius describes the Greek mercenaries’ escape as ‘not at all similar in manner to those fleeing’ (3.11.18: *haud sane fugientibus similes evaserant*), which seems to mean that they were somehow braver than other *fugientes* (cf. 3.11.16; 17; 19). In Book 5, just before the revelation of Bessus’ plot, Darius’ Greek troops are described thus: ‘Darius was followed by... Greeks, whose loyalty to the king remained unconquered to the end’ (5.8.3: *fide erga regem ad ultimam invicta*).⁹⁰⁷ Patron, in his first appeal to Darius to let the Greeks protect him, recalls ‘this unconquered loyalty’ (5.11.6: *hanc fidem invictam*). The Patron episode is the culmination of the mercenaries’ loyalty to Darius. Indeed, the Greeks’ loyalty to the Persian King contrasts well with the betrayal by his own Persian nobles.

⁹⁰⁴ As with the expression from Philotas’ trial – that conquerors and conquered alike must learn a foreign tongue (cf. Chapter 1.2.2) – here ‘foreign’ (*peregrinus*) refers to Greek.

⁹⁰⁵ Curtius alone refers to the courtiers’ suspicions of the Greeks’ loyalty: cf. Diod. 17.32.3; Plut. *Alex.* 20.2; Arr. *Anab.* 2.6.3. While the silence of Plutarch and Diodorus on this detail could perhaps be explained by concision, this would only strengthen the argument that Curtius’ inclusion of such detail reflects his own interest in *fides* and the Greek mercenaries.

⁹⁰⁶ Cf. Arr. *Anab.* 2.8.6. Arrian includes a similar sentiment to Curtius concerning the Greek mercenaries but in the context of Gaugamela rather than Issus (3.11.7).

⁹⁰⁷ See Atkinson (1994, 137) for the textual difficulties.

The Greeks in Curtius generally appear to be a kind of *tertium quid* between the orientalising ‘luxury and barbarism’ of the Persians and the ‘simple, military values’ of the Macedonians. Charidemus the Athenian perhaps captures this best when he plays a role akin to Herodotus’ Demaratus on the Spartans and explains Macedonian military prowess to Darius in contrast to the Persian army’s luxury (3.2.10-16). Moreover, Curtius makes it clear that there are Greeks fighting on both the Persian and Macedonian sides; they are a kind of ‘liminal’ people for the Roman historian. The Greeks in Alexander’s army, by contrast, are generally depicted as a negative influence on the Macedonian king: he apportions blame for Alexander’s degeneration into Persian ways to Greek flatterers, who corrupt themselves with *mali mores* while the Macedonians preserve their *patrii mores* (8.5.7-8).⁹⁰⁸ Alexander himself, as in other accounts, struggles to find his identity between the three cultures. His ostentatious adoption of Persian customs after Darius’ death was not well received by his Macedonian companions, and resulted in fatal clashes with Philotas, Cleitus, Parmenion, and Callisthenes.

Curtius brings out the early stages of this cultural *agon* in the trial of Philotas, as we have seen in Chapter 1.2.2. In his defence, Philotas had offered the rhetorical *sententia* that ‘a foreign language must be learned by both victors and vanquished’ (6.10.23). This maxim may have greater significance even than previously discussed: within Curtius’ narrative, the victor Alexander and the vanquished Darius are connected by their use of Greek, a *peregrina lingua* to them both. Indeed, it is only Curtius who calls explicit attention to the fact that both Darius and Alexander can speak Greek (in the Patron and Philotas episodes respectively). By the end of the first pentad, Darius has lost the loyalty of his own Persian

⁹⁰⁸ Cf. also his comments on the mainland Greeks as ‘time servers’ (*temporaria ingenia*) with ‘wavering minds’ (*pendentes animos*) at 4.5.11-12; see Atkinson 1980, 80-81; Atkinson 2009, 9, 26.

troops, while the Greek mercenaries prove themselves extremely faithful. In this way, Darius' use of the Greek language perhaps points to a kind of transitional status: as he loses the *fides* of his own people and dies at their hands, he realises the future of his realm lies with Alexander, another Greek-speaker. Darius' Greek forms part of his symbolic passing of the torch to Alexander (and may have actually been part of his death scene). In this respect, Darius' 'Greekness' may also anticipate Alexander's adoption of Persian customs in Book 6; both kings appear culturally liminal figures to some degree in this transitional space in the very centre of the *Historiae*.

We must recall a passage from Book 3 which arguably also anticipates this succession. As Charidemus the Athenian is dragged off to execution, he cries that Alexander will avenge him (3.2.18-19). Immediately after, we hear that Thymondas has taken over the Greek mercenaries (3.3.1). Then Darius has a dream of Alexander's camp gleaming with fire, and the Macedonian king is brought to him wearing the (Persian) clothing in which he himself had been made king (3.3.2-3). These visions are interpreted both negatively and positively by the soothsayers; then, in an almost Thucydidean flourish (cf. Thuc. 2.54), Curtius claims that the 'anxiety had recalled old omens' (3.3.6):

For they remembered that Darius at the beginning of his rule had ordered that the sheath of the Persian *acinaces* should be changed to that shape which the Greeks used (*iussisse mutari in eam formam qua Graeci uterentur*), and that the Chaldeans had at once interpreted it to mean that the empire of the Persians would pass to those whose *arma* he had imitated.

The dream, its interpretations, and the foreshadowing contained therein have a distinctly Herodotean flavour.⁹⁰⁹ Curtius' readers, aware of Darius' ultimate fate, would not have missed the symbolism of Alexander's eventual victory. It is interesting, however, that Greek weapons rather than Macedonian are used; indeed, Curtius normally distinguishes

⁹⁰⁹ Blänsdorf 1971, 14.

the two *ethne*.⁹¹⁰ Moreover, by contrast, Plutarch's account of the dream makes no reference to Greeks, only Macedonians (*Alex.* 18.4-5). The Persian focalisation in Curtius may be relevant, since the Persians tended to lump all Greeks together as *Yauna*, though it is worth noting that the Macedonians may have been distinguished from other *Yauna* as 'having hats that look like shields' (*yauna takabara*).⁹¹¹ It could even be a loose reference to the 'Panhellenic' justification for the expedition (cited by Alexander at Curt. 5.6.1 without reference to Macedonians).⁹¹² Within Curtius' narrative, however, it is also possible that the reference to Greek arms holds greater irony – the Greek mercenaries are held up as a source of *spes* for Darius both before (3.3.1) and after (3.8.1) this episode (as we have already seen), and it would thus be ironic if the same *arma* on which he depended for his defence would also defeat him. In any case, Curtius is here writing about the passing of power from Darius to Alexander, and 'Greekness' is part of that succession.

Conclusion

The historicity of Darius' bilingualism should be considered with great scepticism; Justin's tradition contradicts it and it fits well with Curtius' literary themes through the first pentad and beyond. For Curtius, this detail not only allows for a private conversation to take place but also adds to the connection between Darius and Alexander in a narrative of succession, already evident in Book 3 and culminating in his death scene. As with Histiaeus, Themistocles, and Seuthes, the revelation of Darius' bilingualism comes towards the end of his *logos*. In contrast to the Greek historians discussed in this chapter, however, Greek *nomoi* (or, rather, *mores*) play little part in Darius' own characterisation; instead, in line with his own interest in *fides*, Curtius builds up a picture of Darius' dependence on the

⁹¹⁰ See Borza 1996.

⁹¹¹ Olbrycht 2010, 344.

⁹¹² Cf. the 'avenging Greece' tone also evident in 5.7.3-4; 8; 11.

fides of the Greek mercenaries, as well as omens and comments pointing toward Alexander as his successor. His bilingualism is one part of this picture.

Curtius' treatment of Darius' bilingualism is also evidence of his profound interest in languages and the workings of multilingual environments. Throughout the *Historiae*, there is a constant awareness of competing ethnic identities. On the one hand, this clearly reflects the very nature of Alexander's expedition – the greater Greek world, containing Greeks and Macedonians, against the multi-ethnic Persian Empire. On the other, Curtius' narrative is much more visibly conscious of multilingualism overall than any of the other three chief extant texts: this may reflect his working from Greek sources and being aware of the translation process, but more broadly he evidently had an interest in the linguistic debates of his time.

3. Plutarch: Themistocles of Athens

Introduction

As noted above in the introduction to the Diodorus section, Plutarch's *Life of Alexander* contains only one example of the characterisation of individuals through 'bilingualism': Alexander's use of Macedonian in the Cleitus incident, already discussed in Chapter 1.2.3, in which the use of his ancestral tongue marks a break with his 'Hellenic façade' as presented by Plutarch. Alexander's 'bilingual' break occurs in his most barbaric moment, and the aggregation of Hellenic elements in the Cleitus narrative prior to the killing itself argue for the anomalous nature of the king's murderous behaviour. Although there is no other major instance of individual 'bilingualism' in the *Alexander* with which we can compare that episode, Plutarch, like Diodorus, was elsewhere interested in the adoption of

Persian by the most famous Greek, Themistocles; Plutarch's treatment of this episode can help illuminate his methods of depicting bilingualism in a different kind of setting. We shall see that the use of elements of Persian cultural identity, in addition to language, contribute to a broader picture of Themistocles' strategy of Persian 'acculturation', just as Plutarch employs elements of Greek cultural identity to magnify the exceptionally 'barbaric' Macedonian outburst in the *Alexander*.

In his *Life of Themistocles*, Plutarch recounts the Athenian's exile and learning of Persian. Another episode presents Themistocles as a defender of the Greek language, when he executes an interpreter bearing Persian demands in Greek. As we saw in Chapter 1.2.3, Plutarch is typically 'Second Sophistic' in his concern for Greek linguistic supremacy and conservatism – how does this affect his presentation of Themistocles' learning of the enemy tongue? As we shall see, Plutarch defends this act as necessary cunning, much as he dismisses Alexander's behaviour in the Cleitus affair as 'un-Hellenic' by including the detail of Macedonian dialect.

The interpreter's execution

In the chapter describing Themistocles' behaviour as the Persians descend on Hellas, Plutarch offers several anecdotes of the general as 'Hellenic patriot'. He bribes a rival general to renounce his ambition, for the greater good (6.1); he disenfranchises Arthmius of Zeleia for bringing Persian gold to the Greeks (6.3); he reconciles the Greek states to fight the common Persian foe (6.3); and in the lead-up to the invasion of 480, Themistocles executes an interpreter for using Greek to convey Persian demands (6.2):⁹¹³

⁹¹³ This episode is discussed briefly above at Chapter 2.2.3.

ἐπαινέται δ' αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ περὶ τὸν δίγλωττον ἔργον ἐν τοῖς πεμφθεῖσιν ὑπὸ βασιλέως ἐπὶ γῆς καὶ ὕδατος αἵτησιν. ἐρμηνέα γὰρ ὄντα συλλαβὼν διὰ ψηφίσματος ἀπέκτεινεν ὅτι φωνὴν Ἑλληνίδα βαρβάροις προστάγμασιν ἐτόλμησε χρῆσαι.

Praise is given to his treatment of the affair of the bilingual in the company of those who were sent by the King to command earth and water as tokens of submission: this interpreter he caused to be arrested, and with a majority of votes passed a decree for his execution, because he dared to employ the Greek language for barbarian commands.

Herodotus mentions no such incident; indeed, he notes specifically that heralds were *not* sent to Athens and Sparta in 481 because of the treatment they had received in 491 when the Athenians had thrown the herald into the *barathron* (Hdt. 6.48; 7.32; 7.133).⁹¹⁴ It is likely a tall tale based on a confusion of several Herodotean embassies, matching Themistocles' image as saviour of Greece and, now, defender of Greek language. Aelius Aristides follows Plutarch in saying that Themistocles had an interpreter executed for using Greek language in service of the Persians (1.99; 3.229; cf. 1.125). While Plutarch is not explicit on whether the interpreter was a Greek or a Persian, Themistocles' anger and the context of chapter 6 – anecdotes of Themistocles acting upon other Greeks for the greater Greek good – suggest that the man would have been a Greek himself. Indeed, in Aristides, the interpreter is clearly Greek; the scholiast even adds that the interpreter was a Persian-speaking Samian named Mys or Mysos.⁹¹⁵ The similarity to the Carian-speaking Mys from Herodotus (8.133-135) further suggests a confused tradition.⁹¹⁶

One might suspect the story arose in a later period (fourth century BCE onward), perhaps in opposition to the legend of Themistocles' learning Persian. This would have the effect of intimating Themistocles' 'natural Hellenic patriotism', which in turn would support the idea – present in all the narratives from Thucydides onward – that Themistocles was forced

⁹¹⁴ Laid out well by Frost 1980, 95; cf. Marr 1998, 85. Cf. Diodorus, who mentions heralds but not their specific destinations in Hellas (11.2.3; 11.3.5).

⁹¹⁵ Schol. *Panathen.* 122.

⁹¹⁶ Frost 1980, 96; Dubuisson 1983, 210-211; Mayer 1997, 299-300.

into his medism.⁹¹⁷ We have already seen (in Chapter 1) how Plutarch deals with Alexander as ‘Hellenising’ figure, spreading Greek throughout the barbarian world; here, Themistocles is a defender of Greek, protecting its virtue against barbarian incursion.⁹¹⁸ In a ‘Second Sophistic’ context, this is apt: one of the common *topoi* among Greek writers of the Roman empire is the need to protect Greek from corrupting foreign influence.⁹¹⁹ This sometimes manifests itself in the ‘interpreter as traitor’ motif, of which this is probably the starkest example.⁹²⁰ Elsewhere in his corpus, Plutarch offers examples of how Greek withers away in a barbarian environment (*De fac.* 941C; *Quaest. Rom.* 269A); perhaps Themistocles acts here against this phenomenon, preventing the Persian cultural (as well as political) conquest of Greece. We will see in the next section how Plutarch treats Themistocles’ learning of Persian, and how he reconciles this with his ‘Hellenic patriotism’.

Themistocles learns Persian, I: Nomoi

The second major linguistic moment in the *Life* is Plutarch’s rendition of Themistocles’ famed adoption of the Persian tongue. After recounting his ostracism and subsequent flight from Argos via Corcyra to Molossia, Plutarch’s Themistocles crosses to Asia and is taken in by his ξένος, Nicogenes. This man is not mentioned elsewhere; he differs from Themistocles’ ἰδιόξενος in Diodorus, Lysitheides, although both Diodorus and Plutarch agree on the Greekness of Themistocles’ friend in contrast to the unnamed Persian in Thucydides (1.137.3). While staying with Nicogenes, Themistocles has a dream in which a snake entwines itself about his body, turns into an eagle, and flies him a long distance

⁹¹⁷ The incident also reflects well on the Athenians, and characterises them as more united against medism than in reality: Plutarch writes that the execution was voted on in the ἐκκλησία (implied by διὰ ψηφίσματος); Mairs 2011, 70.

⁹¹⁸ Mayer 1997, 299-300; Mairs 2011, 70.

⁹¹⁹ See Swain 1996.

⁹²⁰ Cf. Mairs 2011.

before setting him down on a herald's wand (κηρυκεῖον), and he is 'freed from helpless terror and distress' (*Them.* 6.3). Commentators have noted that this is likely a symbol for peace and the end of hostilities.⁹²¹ It could even carry connotations of supplication.⁹²²

Either interpretation is appropriate for his refuge in Persia.

Plutarch follows Diodorus in having Themistocles' friend transport him in a women's wagon to the King (26.3-4). Only Plutarch adds the detail, however, that Themistocles' attendants, when asked who they were carrying, replied that it was a 'young Greek woman from Ionia' (26.4: γύναιον Ἑλληνικὸν...ἀπ' Ἰωνίας).⁹²³ This description adds an extra Hellenic element to what is found in Diodorus, and perhaps heightens the cultural contrast for the discussion of *nomoi* to follow. As in Diodorus, Themistocles does not speak to the King immediately, but unlike in Diodorus, his friend does not step in: Plutarch's Themistocles first speaks with Artabanus the *chiliarch*, saying that he is a Greek and desires to speak with the King on important matters (27.2). There is no mention of the language of the conversation, nor the presence of interpreters (on which, see below). In Herodotean style, Artabanus responds with a speech on how different cultures have different *nomoi*, and Themistocles will need to respect those of the Persians (27.2-3):

'Stranger, men's *nomoi* differ; different people honour different practices; but all honour the exaltation and maintenance of their own peculiar ways (τὰ οἰκεῖα). [3] Now, you Greeks are said to admire liberty and equality above all things; but in our eyes, among many fair *nomoi*, this is the fairest of all, to honour the King, and to pay obeisance (προσκυνεῖν) to him as the image of that god who is the preserver of all things. If, then, you approve our practice and will pay obeisance, it is in your power to behold and address the King; but if you are otherwise minded, it will be necessary to send messengers (ἄγγελοις) to him in your stead, for it is not traditional (οὐ πάτριον) that the King give ear to a man who has not paid him obeisance'.

⁹²¹ Carena et al. 1996, 275.

⁹²² Flower and Marincola 2002, *ad loc.*

⁹²³ Another difference: in Diodorus, the concubine is for the King himself, while in Plutarch she is for 'one of the King's courtiers'.

Themistocles responds that he intends to augment the King's power and fame, and not only will he observe the Persian *nomoi* – 'since such is the pleasure of the god who exalts the Persians' (ἐπεὶ θεῶ τῷ μεγαλύνοντι Πέρσας οὕτω δοκεῖ) – but he will 'induce more men than do so now' to pay obeisance to the King; therefore, he says, 'let this matter by no means stand in the way of the words I wish to speak to him' (27.4: ὥστε τοῦτο μηδὲν ἐμποδὼν ἔστω τοῖς λόγοις, οὓς βούλομαι πρὸς ἐκεῖνον εἰπεῖν). He then refuses to answer Artabanus' question as to 'who of the Greeks' had come; that was for the King alone (27.5).

There is a very Herodotean flavour here. Artabanus' initial comment on 'cultural relativism' recalls Hdt. 3.38 (Darius, the Greeks, and Callatian Indians on funeral customs), while the discussion of προσκύνησις reminds us of the two Spartans who refuse to perform it for Xerxes, since it is not their *nomos* (Hdt. 7.136). Even the discussion of custom with attendants before meeting the King perhaps recalls Syloson's meeting with Darius as his 'benefactor' (Hdt. 3.140). The emphasis on προσκύνησις also reminds us of the Callisthenes episode from Alexander's campaigns (e.g. Plut. *Alex.* 54.4-6), and the pressure put on Greeks and Macedonians to pay obeisance to Alexander as 'Great King'. In the words of Marr, Plutarch's presentation of Themistocles here "serves to illustrate Themistocles' supreme adaptability, through his willingness to perform an action deeply repugnant to Greek sentiment".⁹²⁴ This adaptability will be on display again in his learning of Persian language.

Themistocles' willingness to follow Persian *nomoi* means he avoids the alternative of sending 'messengers' in his stead. His access to the King is thus dependent on his respect for Persian *nomoi*. This is also true in Thucydides and Diodorus, as we have seen, but to a

⁹²⁴ Marr 1998, 150.

less explicit degree: Themistocles displays his awareness of Persian custom in his letter to Artaxerxes (Thucydides), and through Lysitheidēs' role as 'cultural interpreter' (Diodorus). Plutarch's Artabanus serves to make explicit what was only implicit in those earlier accounts. Themistocles' response highlights his willingness to adapt to his audience, including linguistically: he says he will follow Persian *nomoi* 'since such is the pleasure of the god who exalts the Persians'. This seems to recall Artabanus' words that the finest *nomos* is 'paying obeisance to the King as the image of that god who is the preserver of all things' (27.3: προσκυνεῖν ὡς εἰκόνα θεοῦ τοῦ τὰ πάντα σώζοντος). Like Histiaeus in Herodotus, and Seuthes in Xenophon's *Anabasis*, Themistocles is depicted as adopting the religious expression of his audience. As with those historiographical predecessors, perhaps this linguistic adaptation foreshadows Themistocles' later adoption of the Persian tongue proper.

Themistocles learns Persian, II: Interpreters

Before learning Persian himself, however, Themistocles speaks to the King through an interpreter. After doing what he promised and performing προσκύνησις, the conversation commences (28.1):

ἐπεὶ δ' οὖν εἰσήχθη πρὸς βασιλέα καὶ προσκυνήσας ἔστη σιωπῇ, προστάξαντος τῷ ἑρμηνεῖ τοῦ βασιλέως ἐρωτῆσαι, τίς ἐστι, καὶ τοῦ ἑρμηνέως ἐρωτήσαντος, εἶπεν· “ἦκω σοι, βασιλεῦ, Θεμιστοκλῆς ὁ Ἀθηναῖος ἐγὼ φygὰς ὑφ' Ἑλλήνων διωχθείς...”

When he was led into the presence of the King and had made him obeisance, and was standing in silence, the King ordered the interpreter to ask him who he was, and, on the interpreter's asking, he said: 'I, who thus come to you, O King, am Themistocles the Athenian, an exile, pursued by the Hellenes...'

Plutarch does not mention interpreters often, as we have seen, and all those included are central to his purposes (Chapter 2.2.3). During the scene with Artabanus, Plutarch did not mention the language of the conversation nor the presence of an interpreter. The interpreter with the King most likely serves the narrative purpose of highlighting the linguistic

difference between Themistocles and the King at this stage;⁹²⁵ after all, this is the man who earlier executed an interpreter in defence of the Greek tongue. This allows Plutarch to set the stage for the elaborate tapestry simile in ch.29, and provides a scene to contrast with Themistocles' later study of Persian which allows him to speak with the King directly.

Themistocles learns Persian, III: Tapestries and language

On the next day, the King introduces Themistocles to his companions, who are hostile to him (29.1). He performs προσκύνησις once more, to the King's pleasure (29.2). Just as in Diodorus, there is a distinction between the King and Persian nobles in their feeling towards Themistocles. Unlike in Diodorus, however, Plutarch includes no trial; the King bids Themistocles to say whatever he wishes regarding Greek matters, with all παρρησία (29.2). But, Themistocles notes, this is not ideal through interpreters (29.3):

ὁ δὲ Θεμιστοκλῆς ἀπεκρίνατο, τὸν λόγον εἰκέναι τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τοῖς ποικίλοις στρώμασιν· ὥς γὰρ ἐκεῖνα καὶ τοῦτον ἐκτείνόμενον μὲν ἐπιδείκνυσθαι τὰ εἶδη, συστελλόμενον δὲ κρύπτειν καὶ διαφθείρειν· ὅθεν αὐτῷ χρόνου δεῖν. ἐπεὶ δέ, ἡσθέντος τοῦ βασιλέως τῇ εἰκασίᾳ καὶ λαμβάνειν κελεύσαντος, ἐνιαυτὸν αἰτησάμενος καὶ τὴν Περσίδα γλῶτταν ἀποχρώντως ἐκμαθὼν ἐνετύγχανε βασιλεῖ δι' αὐτοῦ .

Themistocles replied that the *logos* of man was like embroidered tapestries, since like them when stretched out it displayed its patterns, but when rolled up it concealed and distorted them. Because of this, he needed time. The King at once showed his pleasure at this comparison by bidding him take time, and so Themistocles asked for a year. Having learned the Persian language sufficiently, he met with the King by himself with no need of interpreters.⁹²⁶

The idea of 'extended/rolled out speech' is found several times in the classical period: for example, Herodotus' Artabanus says to Xerxes that 'there is need for extended speech

⁹²⁵ Just as with Syloson and Darius in Herodotus (Chapter 2.1.1), stressing an initial distance which is then resolved.

⁹²⁶ Although not explicitly mentioning ἐρμηνεῖς, the context here (including the expression δι' αὐτοῦ, used elsewhere in contrast to employing an interpreter: cf. Plb. 5.83.7) makes clear that Themistocles is referring to speech translated by interpreters, rather than the broken speech of a foreigner (Gera 2007, 452-453). Plutarch's other use of this simile also clarifies this (*Mor.* 185E-F: Ἡτήσατο δὲ καὶ χρόνον, ὅπως τὴν Περσικὴν διάλεκτον καταμαθὼν δι' ἑαυτοῦ καὶ μὴ δι' ἑτέρου ποιήσαιτο τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐντευξίν).

when our affairs are so great’ (Hdt. 7.51.1: ἀναγκαίως γὰρ ἔχει περὶ πολλῶν πρηγμάτων πλεῦνα λόγον ἐκτείνειν).⁹²⁷ Only Plutarch, however, brings in the tapestry imagery, and even uses the same simile elsewhere (*Mor.* 185E).⁹²⁸ As a metaphor for translated speech, it is comparable to that of Strabo’s Mandanis, who complains that expecting philosophical ideas to be effectively communicated through interpreters is ‘like expecting water to flow pure through mud’ (Strab. 15.1.64).⁹²⁹ In the context of the scene itself, the simile is another example of Themistocles adapting his language to his audience – the decadence and splendour of the Persian court was legendary, thus the imagery of ‘embroidered tapestries’ was apt.⁹³⁰ An anecdote from Athenaeus, for example, even has this same Artaxerxes send luxurious coverings to another Greek, sending along a slave since ‘Greeks did not know how to use’ such items (Athen. 2.48C).⁹³¹ Themistocles’ simile also has the benefit of displaying his famed sensitivity to the subtleties of language (cf. e.g. the ‘wooden wall’ interpretation); in his hands, the Greek notion of ‘extended speech’ has been turned into a culturally relevant simile relating to translated speech.

Plutarch follows Thucydides (and Nepos) in the tradition of Themistocles requesting a year to learn Persian (Thuc. 1.137.4; 138.1; Nep. *Them.* 9.4).⁹³² The extent of his success in learning the language differs, however: while Thucydides has Themistocles learn “as much as he could” (Thuc. 1.138.1: ὅσα ἐδύνατο κατενόησε), Plutarch’s Themistocles learns it “sufficiently” (ἀποχρόντως ἐκμαθὼν), suggesting a greater degree of fluency.⁹³³ There is

⁹²⁷ Cf. also Aesch. *Eum.* 201; Eur. *Med.* 1351; Soph. *Trach.* 679; Pl. *Soph.* 217E; *Leg.* 887A. Gera (2007, 453) recalls the carpet scene from *Agamemnon* (908–56).

⁹²⁸ Cf. also *Mor.* 174A, in which Parysatis advises that anyone who intends to speak to the king with *παρηρησία* should use ‘words of linen’ (βυσσίνοις...ρήμασιν); see Gera 2007, 453.

⁹²⁹ The same comparison is made by Gera 2007, 451 n.30.

⁹³⁰ Gera 2007, 452.

⁹³¹ For more possible reasons for this choice of simile, see Gera 2007, 451–452.

⁹³² Aristodemus (*FGrH* 104 F10.4) also speaks of a year. Diodorus has “a long time” (ικανοῦ χρόνου), but not specifically a year (see above).

⁹³³ Though not as great as Nepos, who suggests Themistocles spoke more fluently than native speakers (*Them.* 10.1).

also no mention of *epitedeumata* or *nomoi* alongside language, as in Thucydides; however, as I have suggested, Plutarch has already demonstrated sufficiently Themistocles' awareness of Persian customs. Indeed, his performance of that knowledge seems the key that unlocks his permission to learn Persian; we might recall Themistocles' words to Artabanus: "Let this matter [of performing προσκύνησις to the King, i.e. *nomos*] by no means stand in the way of *the words I wish to speak to him*" (27.4: ὥστε τοῦτο μηδὲν ἐμποδὼν ἔστω τοῖς λόγοις, οὓς βούλομαι πρὸς ἐκεῖνον εἰπεῖν). After passing the *nomoi* test, Themistocles learns the language. His linguistic ability allows him to become close with the King, inspiring the jealousy of the Persian nobles for his παρρησία (29.4).

The idea of παρρησία here deserves more comment. It is particularly Greek and democratic – even Athenian – and thus there is great irony in Themistocles' need to learn Persian to practise it.⁹³⁴ Gera suggests that Themistocles is conscious of the danger involved in speaking freely to a King:

"Open and frank conversation, παρρησία, with a ruling monarch demands great caution, and Themistocles, who used Greek when pleading his own cause in front of the king, is unwilling to leave the niceties of such dangerous discussions in the hands of interpreters... Once he learns Persian, Themistocles is able to leave the interpreters behind. This allows him not only to conduct intimate conversations with the king, but also retain full control over the quantity and quality of his words. While the Persian autocrat may have invited the Greek to express frank and potentially unwelcome ideas freely, Themistocles is wise enough to know that such invitations are often regretted and can be cancelled at a moment's notice."⁹³⁵

The thrust here is that Themistocles knew such conversations were too delicate – and the consequences too great – to be left to translation. This is surely a key aspect of the tapestry simile. However, there may be another side to this which is usually overlooked: the implication that Themistocles is conscious of the difference of sentiment towards him

⁹³⁴ Gera 2007, 452.

⁹³⁵ Gera 2007, 452.

between the King and his nobles. The hostility from the King's *philo*i is, after all, the focus of the start of ch.29, before the King urges him to speak freely (29.1-2). Moreover, Themistocles' tapestry simile is spoken in the same context, before the assembled *philo*i and the King. If we take this into account, then there seems more to the idea of translated speech being 'distorted': not just through transmission, as with any translation (Gera's point), but perhaps also that Themistocles cannot speak as freely to the King when intermediaries – whether the nobles, or interpreters, or both – are present. That is, his speech is also 'distorted' because it must be more carefully chosen around an interpreter who may side with the nobles rather than the King; only learning Persian prevents this distortion, allowing direct access to the King. This is in stark contrast to Diodorus' account: there, Themistocles learns Persian in order to convince a jury of noblemen; he does not need it to speak with the King. In this respect, Plutarch's approach to the issue perhaps more closely recalls Curtius' treatment of Darius' bilingualism, which is exploited in order to depict private conversation with Patron, a Greek mercenary commander. The suspicion that comes from such secret discussion is evident in both Curtius and Plutarch: after learning Persian, Themistocles is presented as influencing the King in his court practices, which the nobles interpret as him abusing his *παρρησία* with the King to do them harm (29.4).⁹³⁶ This leaves the impression that Themistocles' adoption of Persian is effective in manipulating the Persian King; his famous rhetorical skill is now put to use in Persian.

How does this all come together? Plutarch seems to build on Thucydides' comment that Themistocles held out the hope of helping the King conquer Greece (Thuc. 1.138.2). He had earlier promised to make more men than currently submit to the King (27.4), but

⁹³⁶ Cf. Xerxes' brother's suspicion of Demaratus' advice in Herodotus (7.236.1: "O king," he said, "I see that you are listening to a man who is jealous of your good fortune or is perhaps even a traitor to your cause. These are the ways that are dear to the hearts of all Greeks: they are jealous of success and they hate power").

Plutarch's presentation suggests that we are meant to understand this as trickery on Themistocles' part. After gaining the King's trust through learning the language, Themistocles becomes powerful at court and lives peacefully, since the King did not concern himself with Greek affairs for a long time (29.4-31.2). Only when the Egyptian revolt happened did the King call up Themistocles, and he chose to end his life nobly (31.3-5).

Conclusion

Like Diodorus before him, Plutarch manages to present Themistocles as a Greek hero in the final summation, a Hellenic patriot even when in exile in Persia. As in Thucydides, Plutarch emphasises how Themistocles was forced into exile by his own people and his medism comes across as calculated and crafty in the Greek cause. Plutarch, like Diodorus, could not change the fact of Themistocles' medism – but he could control his own presentation of it. By contrast, Alexander's use of Macedonian in the *Alexander* is an uncontrolled outburst revealing his 'barbaric' ancestral tongue, not the studied adoption of Themistocles' Persian. However, both narratives share the common use of *nomoi* to heighten the use of language: just as Plutarch stressed the Hellenic side of Alexander in the narrative leading up to his 'barbaric' use of Macedonian immediately before the murder of Cleitus, Plutarch presents Themistocles' willingness to adapt to Persian *nomoi* before his eventual study of Persian.

Is there, as Gera believes, "something demeaning about Themistocles having to take the trouble to learn Persian, the barbarian language of his former enemies"?⁹³⁷ There is, *prima facie*, an apparent contradiction between the Themistocles who killed an interpreter for

⁹³⁷ Gera 2007, 454.

abusing the Greek tongue and the Themistocles who bowed down before the King and learned Persian. The former story, as I have suggested, may work to magnify the forced, ‘unnatural’ nature of the latter. However, although Plutarch does not make the case explicitly, perhaps there is no contradiction: by learning Persian, Themistocles avoids using the Greek tongue for discussing the King’s desires. As Gera puts it:

“When betraying Greece, Themistocles will use the Persian tongue: learning Persian means that he will not have to use Greek in order to further his treachery. He will fawn, plot and deceive in Persian and consequently will avoid degrading his native language. In this manner Plutarch’s Themistocles remains loyal to his native tongue, if not to his native country. Plutarch also tells us that Themistocles uses Persian when encouraging the king to introduce changes in his court; here, too, he does not sully the Greek language, but uses a barbarian language to deal with barbarian affairs. Is Themistocles using his Persian language skills against the Greeks or for the Persians?”⁹³⁸

As I have suggested, such an interpretation is only viable with the earlier inclusion of the interpreter anecdote, which displays Themistocles’ passion for defending his native tongue. That story helped Plutarch (and Aelius Aristides) work against the later history of Themistocles’ medism. Plutarch’s narrative choices perhaps mirror Thucydides’ in this respect: both writers structure their accounts carefully in order to present Themistocles in the best light possible. One implication of this may be that there was something innately ‘traitorous’ about learning Persian; otherwise, perhaps it would not require such defence.

Gera’s comments here, moreover, are perhaps not entirely fair to Plutarch’s Themistocles: as we have shown, Plutarch suggests the imposed nature of Themistocles’ exile, and implies that any promises to betray Greece are not kept (up to and including his suicide). The portrait that emerges from the *Life* is one in which Themistocles manipulates the King and gets one over on the hostile nobles, through his willingness to adapt culturally and linguistically to the Persian court. As with Herodotus’ Histiaeus, Thucydides’ and

⁹³⁸ Gera 2007, 455.

Diodorus' Themistocles, Xenophon's Seuthes, and Curtius' Darius, Plutarch exploits Themistocles' use of *nomoi* as well as language in order to build a narrative that progresses through various stages of cultural adaptation to culminate in its ultimate form – the learning of a foreign tongue.

4. Arrian: Peucestas of Macedon

Introduction

In Arrian's *Anabasis*, we find several details concerning language not found elsewhere in Alexander historiography. As we have seen in earlier chapters, Arrian alone refers to Pharnuches, Alexander's interpreter among the Sogdians (4.37), while no other account mentions the old man who addresses Alexander in Boeotian dialect (6.13.5). In this chapter, we will discuss one prominent figure in Alexander's circle, Peucestas, whose bilingualism the *Anabasis* is the only extant account to record.⁹³⁹

Peucestas

The only Macedonian recorded as learning the Persian φωνή is Peucestas. Both Diodorus and Arrian mention his adoption of Median dress, but only Arrian attests that Peucestas learned the Persian tongue (Diod. 19.14.5; Arr. *Anab.* 6.30.3; 7.6.3). In the closing chapter of Book 6, in the wake of Arrian's account of the plundering of Cyrus' tomb in 324 BCE, Alexander appoints Peucestas as satrap of Persis (6.30.2-3):

As satrap of Persis he appointed Peucestas the bodyguard, whom he regarded as especially loyal to him, chiefly on account of his exploit among the Mallians, where he risked his life and helped to save Alexander, and as otherwise not unsuited to the post because of his barbarian mode of life (ἄλλως τῷ βαρβαρικῷ τρόπῳ τῆς διαίτης οὐκ

⁹³⁹ Cf. also Laomedon, described as 'bilingual with respect to barbarian letters' (Arr. *Anab.* 3.6.6); see Chapter 2.2.4.

ἄξύμφορον), which he publicly adopted as soon as he was made satrap of Persis; he was the only Macedonian to change over to the Median dress and learn the Persian language, and in all other respects assimilated himself to Persian ways (μόνος τῶν ἄλλων Μακεδόνων μεταβαλὼν τὴν Μηδικὴν καὶ φωνὴν τὴν Περσικὴν ἐκμαθὼν καὶ τᾶλλα ξύμπαντα ἐξ τρόπον τὸν Περσικὸν κατασκευασάμενος). This brought him Alexander's commendations, and the Persians were gratified that he preferred their ways to his own ancestral ways.

As I have noted, this passage comes in the wake of Alexander's discovery of the plunder of Cyrus' tomb at Pasargadae. Arrian records that Alexander ordered Aristobulus to repair the tomb (6.29.10); evidently, he took offence to the desecration of the King's tomb at a time when he was seeking legitimacy as successor to the Achaemenid throne. Likewise, Arrian next records Alexander's newly discovered guilt over his earlier burning of the palace of Persepolis (6.30.1; cf. 3.18.12). Then we hear that Alexander executed Orxines, satrap of Persis, who had desecrated tombs and killed innocent Persians (6.30.1-2). This is an important factor behind the presentation of Peucestas: at this time, Alexander is presented as eager to please the Persians, attempting to rule as legitimate Great King, and thus appointing a Persophile was good policy. As Stadter puts it: "The last item in the book, the appointment of Peucestas as satrap of Persia and the comment on his Persian ways, continues the theme of Persian kingship... In a sense it revives the question of Book IV, whether Alexander would be spoiled by his role as king of Persia".⁹⁴⁰ This will be an ongoing theme of the final book too.

While Arrian makes no explicit judgement on Peucestas' Persian ways, the last comment – focalised through the Persians – could be interpreted as indirect criticism: Alexander approved of Peucestas' medism, while the Persians were 'pleased that he preferred their ways to his own ancestral ways' (6.30.3). This vocabulary perhaps recalls Arrian's earlier explicit disapproval of Alexander's adoption of Persian dress (4.7.4-5):

⁹⁴⁰ Stadter 1980, 86.

Nor do I at all approve that, though a descendant of Heracles, he substituted the dress of Medes for that traditional with Macedonians (ἐσθῆτά τε ὅτι Μηδικὴν ἀντὶ τῆς Μακεδονικῆς τε καὶ πατρίου Ἡρακλείδης ὦν μετέλαβεν, οὐδαμῇ ἐπαινῶ) and that he exchanged the tiara of the Persians, whom he himself had conquered, for the head-dress he had long worn, but I take it that nothing is clearer proof than Alexander's great successes of the truth that neither bodily strength in anyone nor distinction of birth nor continuous good fortune in war... that not one of all these things is any contribution to man's happiness, unless the man whose achievements are apparently so great were to possess at the same time command of his own passions.

Just as with the comment on Peucestas, Arrian uses the loaded term *πάτριος* to refer to the 'ancestral' dress of the Macedonians, censuring Alexander for preferring 'Median garb'.⁹⁴¹

The implication is that Alexander was eschewing his noble lineage in going so far as to adopt this Persian *nomos*. Peucestas, by contrast – not the main subject of Arrian's work – does not get the same explicit censure; it is perhaps strongly implied, however, in the focalised words of the Persians.⁹⁴² Furthermore, it is worth noting that – like Themistocles in Thucydides (and beyond) – Peucestas is described as adopting both language and customs; the only *nomos* explicitly cited, however, is 'Median dress'. This is probably because Alexander himself had prominently assumed this custom – on Arrian's prior presentation (4.7.4; 4.9.9; 4.14.2) – and would thus put the reader in mind of this as Alexander is described as approving of this behaviour. It seems Arrian's presentation of Peucestas' 'medism' depends partly on his depiction of Alexander's.

Arrian mentions Peucestas' medism on one other occasion. After the weddings at Susa, the payment of his soldiers' debts, and rewards to prominent figures like Peucestas, Leonnatus, and Nearchus (7.4-5), the Epigonoι ('Successors') join Alexander's army – a unit of 30,000 Persian boys 'equipped with Macedonian arms and trained in Macedonian-style warfare'

⁹⁴¹ Arrian uses the adjective sparingly, six times total. On four occasions, it refers to Macedonian ancestral custom (3.16.9; 4.7.4; 6.30.3; 7.23.4); cf. 1.1.2; 1.9.3. On Alexander's adoption of Persian dress, see e.g. Bosworth 1980b, 3-4; 1995, 49-50; Atkinson 1994, 202-203; Fredricksmeyer 1997.

⁹⁴² The idea of eschewing 'ancestral customs' (Latin, *patrii mores*) is also found in Curtius with respect to Alexander's adoption of Persian ways (and Philotas'; see Chapter 1.2.2).

(7.6.1: κεκοσμημένους Μακεδονικοῖς ὅπλοις καὶ τὰ πολέμια ἐς τὸν τρόπον τὸν Μακεδονικὸν ἡσκημένους). Arrian notes that this apparently aggrieved the Macedonians (7.6.2); he then lists all their grievances about ‘barbarian’ influence on Alexander and the army itself:

It is said that their arrival aggrieved the Macedonians, as if Alexander was actually contriving every means of reducing his dependence on Macedonians in future, that in fact they were greatly pained to see Alexander wearing the Median dress (Μηδικὴν τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου στολὴν), while the marriages celebrated in the Persian style did not correspond to the desires of most of them, including even some of the bridegrooms, despite the great honour of being raised to equality with the king. Peucestas, satrap of Persia, who had adopted Persian apparel and language, also vexed them, since Alexander approved of his going barbarian (Πευκέστας τε ὁ Περσῶν σατράπης τῇ τε σκευῇ καὶ τῇ φωνῇ περσίζων ἐλύπει αὐτούς, ὅτι τῷ βαρβαρισμῷ αὐτοῦ ἔχαιρεν Ἀλέξανδρος)... [*list of other grievances concerning the incorporation of barbarian forces*]... and at the provision [to those barbarians] of Macedonian lances in place of barbarian thonged javelins. All this aggrieved the Macedonians, as they thought that Alexander was going utterly barbarian at heart, and treating Macedonian customs and Macedonians themselves without respect (ταῦτα πάντα ἐλύπει τοὺς Μακεδόνας, ὥς πάντῃ δὴ βαρβαρίζοντος τῇ γνώμῃ Ἀλεξάνδρου, τὰ δὲ Μακεδονικὰ νόμιμά τε καὶ αὐτοὺς Μακεδόνας ἐν ἀπίμῳ χώρῳ ἄγοντος).

In the first passage about Peucestas’ medism in Book 6, we heard about the approval of both Alexander and the Persians, but nothing about the response of the Macedonians. Here, in the wake of the controversial Susian weddings, we get the full laundry list. This will soon result in the ‘mutiny’ at Opis, during which Arrian summarises these same grievances (7.8.2ff).⁹⁴³ Here, however, there is no evidence that the Macedonians actually expressed these grievances: note that Arrian hedges in his expression that the Epigonoι ‘are said’ (λέγονται) to annoy the Macedonians.⁹⁴⁴ With this narrative choice and specific placement, Arrian seems to lay the groundwork for the Opis incident by combining all ‘barbarian’ grievances into one section.

⁹⁴³ On the terminology of this incident as ‘mutiny’, see Carney 1996.

⁹⁴⁴ Cf. 7.30.2 (oracles “are said” to have prophesied Alexander’s death).

The key criticism concerning Peucestas here appears to be rather Alexander's approval of his medism. Peucestas bothered the Macedonians 'because Alexander approved of his going barbarian'. Just as Arrian appears to have described Peucestas in Book 6 in a manner dependent on his presentation of Alexander's own medism, so too here Peucestas is only an indirect object of criticism. As the final words suggest, the Macedonians placed the blame for these phenomena on their king: 'All this aggrieved the Macedonians, as they thought that Alexander was going utterly barbarian at heart, and treating Macedonian customs and Macedonians themselves without respect'.

The implication of this criticism of Peucestas within Arrian's combined list of grievances, culminating in this concluding statement, is that Peucestas was not operating in a vacuum within the satrapy of Persis, but within a 'barbarising' atmosphere encouraged by Alexander across the army more broadly. It was, after all, Alexander who had first introduced medizing ways (in Arrian's Book 4); it is perhaps quite natural, then, that Arrian would frame Peucestas' medism with respect to Alexander's own. The reference to 'Macedonian customs' (Μακεδονικὰ νόμιμά) perhaps recalls earlier comments about the medizing behaviour and eschewing of 'ancestral ways' by Peucestas and Alexander.

The focus on the Macedonians' criticism of Alexander's response to Peucestas, rather than Peucestas himself, perhaps makes sense in the context of the *Anabasis* as a whole – not only in that Alexander is the 'protagonist' of the work, but also that Peucestas is elsewhere treated in a rather positive light. The only other episode in which he features is the rescue of Alexander among the Mallians (6.9-11; 28; 30). Arrian notes that there is historiographical confusion about the incident, but that all agree that Peucestas was present (6.11.7). Arrian also records that, because of these exploits, Alexander made Peucestas his

‘bodyguard’, in addition to his intention to make him satrap of Persis (6.28.3-4). Peucestas emerges as a loyal friend to Alexander, and perhaps for this reason a prime candidate to ‘go native’ in a manner which aped Alexander’s own behaviour. Perhaps one implication of the presentation of Peucestas is that he appears as someone who had adopted the Persian mode of life even more profoundly than Alexander, and the king’s approval of such behaviour encouraged fears that Alexander would soon be introducing greater ‘barbarising’ expectations – such as the need to learn Persian language. This could be one reason for Arrian’s inclusion of Peucestas’ language knowledge in these two passages. Indeed, we might recall that the Macedonians’ grievances are prompted by the arrival of the Epigonoι, and many criticisms refer to the need for Macedonians to fight alongside barbarians: on a practical level, this would have necessitated either interpreters or the learning of a common language. Perhaps seeing Peucestas’ adoption not only of customs but Persian language raised Macedonian heckles. Given the fears of ‘barbarisation’ evident throughout Arrian’s corpus (and, indeed, the ‘Second Sophistic’ more broadly), Arrian’s readers may have been more perceptive regarding the significance of Peucestas’ adoption of Persian language for the Macedonians’ wider fears of barbarian influence.

Conclusion

Arrian’s presentation of Peucestas appears to be dependent, in part, upon his description of Alexander’s own medism. Peucestas’ behaviour becomes a bone of contention for the Macedonians, but Arrian presents it as merely the icing on the cake of grievances centred around Alexander’s behaviour. The king, at this stage of the narrative, is trying to please the Persians in his quest for Achaemenid legitimacy, and his adoption of ‘barbarising’ ways – in several respects, including encouraging Peucestas’ behaviour – is at the heart of the Macedonians’ grievances. The only Persian *nomos* adopted by Peucestas that Arrian

mentions is Median dress, and it is unlikely to be a coincidence that that is the key *nomos* adopted by Alexander; Arrian's narrative encourages connection between the two 'medisms'.

Peucestas' bilingualism shows him to be a step beyond Alexander in medism. Arrian's inclusion of this detail and Alexander's approval of such behaviour – *even learning the enemy language!* – would perhaps have been received in a less positive light by Arrian's Second Sophistic audience. *Nomoi* was one thing, but language, quite another. Thus, Arrian's inclusion of Peucestas' adoption of Persian serves to characterise Alexander as much as Peucestas himself. The king emerges as very receptive to such barbarising behaviour.

Overall conclusion – Chapter 3.2

We have now examined case studies of bilingual figures from four historians writing under Rome. Each use these details in different ways. Diodorus and Plutarch both justify Themistocles' medism in a manner similar to Thucydides, but their presentation of his bilingualism specifically is distinct: Diodorus has Themistocles learn Persian for a trial, employing it successfully and publicly to get him acquitted; Plutarch, by contrast, had Themistocles learn Persian to speak with the King privately. Both also deal with the need for the adoption of *nomoi* too: Diodorus supplies Lysitheides as 'cultural interpreter', perhaps removing the stain of Persian cultural knowledge from Themistocles; Plutarch has Themistocles fully aware of Persian customs, but presents him as manipulating them to his own ends. In both cases, however, while *nomoi* allow entry to the Persian court, it is rather the learning of Persian language which is presented as decisive in either getting him acquitted or gaining access to the King's ear. This contrasts with Thucydides, for whom

both language and ἐπιτηδεύματα are equally key. Such narrative presentation perhaps suggests the greater importance of language as an element of Greek identity under Rome.

Curtius presents Darius' bilingualism as one way of suggesting a connection with Alexander as his natural successor, working within several narrative motifs of succession and the *fides* of Greek mercenaries. Like other bilingual figures we have studied, Darius' bilingualism emerges towards the end of his *logos*. Moreover, unlike most other case studies, Greek *mores* do not play a significant part in Darius' characterisation before the revelation of his linguistic ability: Curtius instead builds up a narrative around Darius' relationship to his Greek mercenaries. By contrast, Peucestas' bilingualism in the *Anabasis* allows Arrian to magnify Alexander's own adoption of Persian customs. By presenting the two 'medisms' as similar, Peucestas' added layer of having learned Persian language – instead of merely *nomoi* – perhaps signified a greater threat to the Macedonians in the eyes of Arrian's audience.

For the most part, these historians employ similar techniques to the classical historians in their exploitation of bilingualism for characterisation. The use of *nomoi* alongside language is ever present, though to a lesser degree in Curtius, which perhaps suggests a uniquely Greek historiographical tradition worth greater examination. Just as with the first three historians, language emerges as a profound – perhaps the most profound – element of cultural identity.

Thesis conclusion

This study has demonstrated the significance of examining explicit references to languages and language use in classical Greek historiography and the Alexander tradition from a historiographical, rather than purely historical, perspective. The centrality of language to ancient identities demands we pay attention to such *prima facie* ‘incidental’ references, and the case studies presented here – encompassing three themes and seven ancient historians and biographers – bear out this thesis. Metalinguistic references to languages and their speakers often serve key narrative functions and contribute to historians’ broader historiographical concerns.

Chapter 1 examined the metalinguistic treatment of the Greek language. One of the chief findings of the chapter’s first half is that the three classical historians present their conceptions of Greek language in opposition to the ‘barbarian Other’. Herodotus constructs a rhetorical ideal of ‘the Greek tongue’ throughout the *Histories* as a potential unifying factor for the Greek peoples against the Persians; it is consistently undercut, however, by internal Greek political divisions, which are also reflected in his references to Greek dialects (and which also often occur on the axis of the Greek/barbarian antithesis). Herodotus’ comments suggest ‘concrete’ thinking about the ‘abstract notion’ of Greek as common language, and reflect his views of the relationship between language and broader society. Thucydides’ metalinguistic references are equally influenced by the Greek/barbarian polarity, from the discussion of the name ‘Hellenes’ and spread of Greek in the *Archaeology*, to the Amphilochean Argives’ ‘Hellenised’ (rather than ‘Dorianised’) language and the Eurytians’ ‘barbarian’ dialect and customs. The Ionian/Dorian antithesis operates in ways similar to the Greek/barbarian, and his presentation occasionally problematises connections between dialect and *ethnos* (Demosthenes use of Doric to

confuse opponents; Nicias' implication that one cannot become 'Athenian' through adopting dialect and customs). In Xenophon's *Anabasis*, the early reference to the 'Greek tongue' in the Pategyas episode occurs in opposition to the 'barbarian', marking off the Greeks from the *barbaroi* even as they operate together under Cyrus. The Greek/barbarian polarity also influences his references to Greek in the Thracian sphere. Apollonides' Boeotian dialect occurs in an intra-Greek context, as the Greeks decide how to proceed after the slaughter of their generals at Persian hands. It is only when he displays 'barbarian' tendencies in his costume and attitude towards the King that he becomes a traitor on a Greek vs. barbarian scale. This ancient antithesis, heightened during the fifth and fourth centuries, appears to be the overarching influence upon the metalinguistic treatment of the Greek language in classical historiography.

The extant Alexander historians evince a greater concern for the preservation of the Greek tongue than is generally presented in classical historiography, coexisting with an appreciation for Alexander's 'Hellenising' attitude and spreading of Greek culture and language across the East. The presentation of 'threats' to Greek (or Macedonian) language detectable in these authors' presentations of Alexander's campaigns also differs; it is evidently linked to the cultural *agon* of the contemporary settings of Republican and Imperial Rome. While overarching political power belonged to the Romans, the Greeks still held much cultural and linguistic capital. The cross-section of ancient historiography provided by the extant Alexander historians allows us a broader perspective on how historians employed their material to talk as much about the present as the past. The general role of references to the Greek language, however, is similar to that of classical historiography: Greek is a unifying language in the face of barbarian power, while dialects are generally markers of intra-Greek difference. However, while the classical historians

were contributing to a relatively early conception of Greek identity, extant Alexander historiography reflects a later age of well-established Greek cultural supremacy, but one tempered by the anxieties of former glories and current subjugation.

Chapter 2 demonstrated that references to bilingual intermediaries in the historians are employed in a variety of ways and can contribute significantly to each author's unique concerns and historiographical strategies. In Herodotus, the accuracy of the information conveyed by the *histor*'s interpreters is shown to be a key element, which works to bolster the historiographical authority of the *histor*'s own activities as ἐρμηνεύς. In historical narrative, Herodotus' interpreters can symbolise an initial gap in understanding and power which is later bridged; a particularly vast cultural distance; and the great power of the Persian King. Thucydides' only reference to the bilingualism of Tissaphernes' ambassador, Gaulites, suggests not only why Tissaphernes sent that particular Carian but also the seriousness with which he treated that embassy. Xenophon's depiction of Pigres seems linked to the Greeks' behaviour as separate from the Persians in Cyrus' army, and his presentation of his own use of interpreters highlights his self-presentation as strong leader.

In Alexander historiography, Diodorus shows how generally unimportant bilingual intermediaries were for his universal history: the only two instances in the *Bibliothēke* occur in Book 17, reflecting strong traditions of intermediaries in first generation Alexander historiography. Arrian, too, generally omits these figures, unless his sources displayed evident interest. This results in references to the multilingual capabilities of Laomedon and Pharnuches, not mentioned elsewhere. Like Diodorus, Plutarch's biographical *Lives* include bilingual intermediaries only when necessary, but to illuminate character: the bilingual Lycian is included to symbolise Alexander's associations with the

gods. Curtius is clearly the most interested in intermediaries, especially *interpretes*, and they often appear as markers of cultural distance between his interlocutors. His attention to these figures is linked to his interest in collaborators, and he betrays Livian influence at several points.

In addition to what is unique, however, there is much that is shared. Perhaps the most common use of interpreters, especially anonymous ones, is to signal cultural distance between interlocutors. Sometimes in association with this presentation, interpreters can also symbolise the power of their leader; they thus act as agents of a powerful figure. Another recurrent motif is the notion of ‘interpreter as traitor’, perhaps implicit in classical historiography but more strongly depicted in the extant Alexander historians. This no doubt reflects the nature of Alexander’s expedition, since most interpreters were unknown entities and open to suspicion. Nevertheless, this may also be due to the aforementioned cultural anxieties of Greeks (and Romans) in the Roman period and consequent competition for cultural supremacy.

Chapter 3 took the ideas developed in the first two chapters and brought them to bear on portraits of major historical individuals and their bilingualism. Sensitivity to other aspects of cultural identity as well as language contribute to a broader characterisation through ‘acculturation’ in our case studies, typically culminating in the revelation of bilingualism towards the end of an individual’s portrayal. This analysis may have ramifications for our views of the significance of language for characterisation in ancient historiography and Greek identity more broadly.

Placed alongside each other, the narrative delay of the bilingualism evident in nearly all cases (with varying emphasis) is stark and demands explanation. Historiographically, a metalinguistic reference to a historical figure's use of a foreign language appears to be a different, stronger statement than the artful deployment of 'Persianising' or 'Hellenising' stylistic features in their speech, and certainly different from mentioning *nomoi*: it is an intrusion into the narrative world of a multilingual reality rarely flagged by historians, who typically represent all speech in their own Greek or Latin. This may explain in part why such clear expressions of language use are delayed until moments of climax and may also suggest that language is a more profound element of identity than other cultural markers.

This is particularly relevant for the classical case studies, but also holds for the most part in extant Alexander historiography. Diodorus and Plutarch both delay Themistocles' adoption of language while mentioning *nomoi* along the way: Diodorus supplies Lysitheides as 'cultural interpreter' for Themistocles; Plutarch has Themistocles fully aware of Persian customs, but presents him as manipulating them to his own ends. In both cases, however, while *nomoi* allow entry to the Persian court, it is rather the learning of Persian language which is presented as decisive in either getting him acquitted or gaining access to the King's ear. This contrasts with Thucydides, for whom both language and ἐπιτηδεύματα are equally key. Such narrative presentation perhaps suggests the greater importance of language as an element of Greek identity under Rome.

Curtius uses Darius' bilingualism to suggest a connection with Alexander as successor, working within several narrative motifs of succession and the *fides* of Greek mercenaries. Darius' bilingualism also emerges towards the end of his *logos*. Unlike most of the other case studies, however, customs (Greek *mores*, in this instance) do not play a significant

part in his characterisation before the revelation of his linguistic ability; Curtius instead builds up a narrative around Darius' relationship to his Greek mercenaries. By contrast, Peucestas' bilingualism in the *Anabasis* allows Arrian to magnify Alexander's own adoption of Persian customs. By presenting the two 'medisms' as similar, Peucestas' added layer of having learned Persian language – instead of merely *nomoi* – perhaps signified a greater threat to the Macedonians in the eyes of Arrian's audience. For the most part, these historians employ similar techniques to the classical historians in their exploitation of bilingualism for characterisation. The use of *nomoi* alongside language is ever present, though to a lesser degree in Curtius, which perhaps suggests a uniquely Greek historiographical tradition worth greater examination. Just as with the first three historians, language emerges as a profound – perhaps the most profound – element of cultural identity.

The value of studying a wide range of historians and biographers linked by their interest in Greek contact with the East is evident. Such a collective study highlights commonalities and recurring motifs, but also illustrates how each historian is a product of their own contemporary cultural context. Moreover, the very nature of each of these historical works is different. Indeed, while the classical historians were formulating a nascent approach to the past through inquiry and the documentation of contemporary wars, the extant Alexander historians were working within their particular genres to reshape material composed hundreds of years earlier. Nevertheless, we can discern a surprising consistency in treating certain issues, which suggests a Greek historiographical tradition in the depiction of languages and language use.

This thesis has illuminated the historiographical practices of seven key Greek historians and biographers through an examination of their representation of languages and language

use. It has also demonstrated that understanding the historiographical deployment of languages and language use is a necessary precursor to effectively analysing the evidence for multilingualism in Greece and the East. Moreover, it is my hope that this thesis will contribute to a broader appreciation for ‘insignificant’ details in historiographical narratives. The ‘literary turn’ in historiography has introduced narratological and other literary insights which often repay study of previously misunderstood *minutiae*, and this study has shown how historians build up characterisation (of individuals and cultures) from seemingly minor details. Language is a particularly important one, as it seems to hold greater sway on the imagination than the presentation of other *nomoi*. Beyond historiography, too, my conclusions will have implications for the study of Greek ethnicity, identity, and the role of language in the classical and Roman periods.

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