

Marathon and the Alcmaeonids

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THE SHIELD SIGNAL to the Persians after the battle of Marathon and Herodotus' treatment of the incident (6.115, 121–24) have engaged the attention of scholars for several decades. Interpretations vary radically, from those who, like Wilamowitz,¹ thought that the Greeks simply imagined the signal, and recently Ehrenberg, who majestically stated that it was “obviously a reflection of the sun,”² to those who accepted the veracity of the fact that a signal was given—among them Grundy, Myres, Hignett and Bengtson. Bury believed that the Persians gave the signal; Maurice that some of Miltiades' men, Grote that Hippias' friends in Athens had done so.³ A related and more serious problem for those who accept the notion that a shield signal was given is the question whether the Alcmaeonids were guilty of collusion with the Persians. Here again paths diverge. Monro felt that “The charge was more than probably just, although the proofs of it are not likely to have emerged at the time”; Olmstead

¹ *Aristoteles und Athen* II (Berlin 1893) 85–86 n.24.

² *From Solon to Socrates, Greek History and Civilization during the 6th and 5th Centuries B.C.* (London 1968) 136. We are not told why such “reflections of the sun” were not constant, given the thousands of shields being carried around in Greek history, or why they were not frequently mentioned in our sources. A shield signal was later given by Lysander to order the attack on Aegospotami (Xen. *Hell.* 2.1.27–28; Plut. *Lys.* 10–11); and the Ionians on the Persian side gave some kind of signal to the Greeks before the battle of Marathon (Suda, *χαρπὶς ἱππείης*). See H. G. Hudson, “The Shield Signal at Marathon,” *AHR* 42 (1937) 446–50. Ehrenberg, 135 and 413 n.26, has some notes on the latter signal, evidently given at night.

³ G. B. Grundy, *The Great Persian War and its Preliminaries* (New York 1901) 167; J. L. Myers, *Herodotus, Father of History* (Oxford 1953) 208–09; C. Hignett, *Xerxes' Invasion of Greece* (Oxford 1963) 72–74; H. Bengtson, *The Greeks and the Persians from the Sixth to the Fourth Centuries* (New York 1968) 45. Cf. J. B. Bury, “The Battle of Marathon,” *CR* 10 (1896) 98; F. Maurice, “The Campaign of Marathon,” *JHS* 52 (1932) 18; and G. Grote, *A History of Greece* IV (London 1884) 280. For a recent view similar to Maurice's, see J. Papastavrou, “Die politische Situation in Athen am Vorabend der Perserkriege und die auswärtige Politik Athens,” *Gymnasium* 70 (1963) 11–18. P. K. Baillie Reynolds, “The Shield Signal at the Battle of Marathon,” *JHS* 49 (1929) 100 n.2, commenting on Bury's point, wrote “If it had been so, some earlier Alcmaeonid apologist would have got hold of the fact.” I suggest that the same is true regarding the explanations of Maurice and Papastavrou. See also H.-F. Bornitz, *Herodot-Studien, Beiträge zum Verständnis der Einheit des Geschichtswerks* (Berlin 1968) 97, and R. W. Macan, *Herodotus, the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Books* II (London 1895) 164–69.

wrote flatly that “the Alcmaeonidae actually did signal by shield from Cape Sunium”; Hudson absolved them of complicity, and McGregor announced that he had “tried the Alkmaionidai and found them not guilty of medism”; more recently Bengtson has noted that there was “no compelling proof to support this interpretation” of the family’s actions.⁴ Others are aware of the clan’s checkered history and of the implications of treason in this incident, but stop short of condemning the Alcmaeonids, most notably Burn: “Many suspected the Alkmeonid faction, whose record of alliances with Peisistratos and his sons, Lydians, Spartans and Persians, as might suit them at any time, gave ample grounds for such suspicion, whatever Herodotos, in the days of Perikles, might say to the contrary. But there was no evidence.”⁵

Herodotus’ defense of the family has occasionally been accepted as valid, for example by Grote and McGregor.⁶ It has also been found “illogical and unconvincing.”⁷ Plutarch’s comments on it in *De malignitate Herodoti* (27) are of little help, because he gravely misunderstands the nature of the passages and reads them as a polemic against the clan. A new analysis of the contents of this defense, and of the placement of the excursus in the *History*, as well as of the historical context of the period before and after Marathon, would seem to be in order. McGregor has already employed the method of relating events to Herodotus’ defense, with different results.⁸ The view suggested here is that the Alcmaeonids are indeed the strongest candidates for treason in 490 B.C., and that the political manoeuvres of subsequent decades in Athens bear this out.

The digression on the Alcmaeonids, inserted at a very tense moment in the narrative, is fairly lengthy (6.121–31). Astringent brevity and strict relevance were never criteria of Herodotus’ writing: he was unable to resist telling a good story. But rarely does he tell one in such a bizarre place as this: the defending Greek army, having just won a battle at which so much was at stake, in its exhaustion suddenly faces

⁴ J. A. R. Monro, *CAH* IV (Cambridge 1926) 249–50; A. T. Olmstead, “Persia and the Greek Frontier Problem,” *CP* 34 (1939) 312; H. G. Hudson, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 443–59, esp. 458–59; M. F. McGregor, “The Pro-Persian Party at Athens,” in *Athenian Studies Presented to William Scott Ferguson* (*HSCP* suppl. I, 1940) 88; H. Bengtson, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 45.

⁵ A. R. Burn, *Persia and the Greeks, the Defence of the West, c. 546–478 B.C.* (London/New York 1962) 252; he follows Grote in attributing the shield signal to Hippias’ friends in Athens (251). Cf. A. de Sélincourt, *The World of Herodotus* (Boston 1962) 257–58.

⁶ Grote, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) IV.283, without reasons; M. F. McGregor, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 86–87.

⁷ W. W. How and J. Wells, *A Commentary on Herodotus* II (Oxford 1912) 115.

⁸ McGregor, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 72ff, 85ff.

a still greater danger—the loss of Athens herself—and must race for home. To be sure, Herodotus indulges in a digression on sacrifices after naming the combatants at Plataea (9.33–37), but not at such length or with such striking changes of mood. Further, that digression has a closer relation to the thrust of the narrative, because the enemy could not obtain satisfactory omens in order to begin the battle (9.38).⁹ It is then followed by a reasonably direct account of the several days before the battle, and then the preliminary skirmishes begin (9.49). The writing is slow-moving, perhaps, before the fighting starts in earnest (9.59), but still it corresponds chronologically to events. Matters before other important battles are recorded with similar directness (Lade, 6.11–13; Thermopylae, 7.202–09; Salamis, 8.74–82; Artemisium, 8.6–14).

This is not true of the digression on the Alcmaeonids. A recent effort has been made to establish an organic logic to the appearance of the *λόγοι* that make up this digression: “Thus we have, in Book 6, and especially at the end, in the accounts of the origins of the first Greek families and their descendants, a series of elements which connect early Greece, the Persian Wars, and Herodotus’ own time.”¹⁰ What is the point of achieving this series at this juncture in the *History*? Why did Herodotus wait nearly six books to give us this information (6.125–31)? Why did it not appear in any one of the earlier mentions of the family (1.59–61, 64; 5.62–64, 66–73; 6.121) where it would have provided more appropriate and useful background for his readers, and not a severe dislocation of his narrative?¹¹

The first sections of the digression (6.121–24) are fiery and strident. At no point does Herodotus offer conclusive evidence to disprove the charge of treason levelled against the Alcmaeonids, or even attempt to offer an explanation why this charge was made against them in particular. Instead, his argumentation rests on probabilities, several

⁹ See J. Kirchberg, *Die Funktion der Orakel im Werke Herodots* (*Hypomnemata* 11, Göttingen 1965) 109–11.

¹⁰ H. R. Immerwahr, *Form and Thought in Herodotus* (APA Mon. 23, Cleveland 1966) 126. Cf. H.-F. Bornitz, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 95–102, for an analysis of the excursus.

¹¹ I follow R. Lattimore, “The Composition of the *History* of Herodotus,” *CP* 53 (1958) 9, as to method: “. . . the text of Herodotus as we have it is a continuous piece of writing which Herodotus set down from beginning to end in the *order* in which we now have it . . .” Applied to the digression on the Alcmaeonids, this view means that Herodotus knew precisely what he was doing when he placed it here. A. J. Podlecki, “The Political Significance of the Athenian ‘Tyrannicide’-Cult,” *Historia* 15 (1966) 140, believes it is a later insertion. If so, the motivation was no doubt the same.

of them. He refers to the family's past history as enemies of Peisistratid tyranny, concluding that such a group could not have been willing to collaborate with the Persians in restoring Hippias. This does not rule out the possibility that the Alcmaeonids, never unaware of enlightened self-interest, could have worked out an agreement with the Persians for themselves to replace the aging Hippias as Persia's client. The Persians always chose the best Quislings they could find. The Alcmaeonids' connections with the East, where they initially made their wealth (6.125), seem to have remained cordial. Herodotus does not specifically mention their being the envoys to Sardis in 506 B.C. (5.73), though there is good reason to believe that they were, and that Cleisthenes, a leading member of the family, had sent them.¹² We know that Hipparchus, son of Charmus (a cousin-by-marriage of Hippias) was elected archon in 496 B.C. (Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 6.1.1), and in Cleisthenes' Athens this could only have occurred with the good graces of the clan.¹³ If Herodotus was aware of this, he did not choose to tell us. Someone had convinced the Athenians to withdraw their aid from Ionia in 498 B.C., someone with Medist sympathies. Again, Herodotus does not disclose the identity of this faction (5.103); he speaks simply of "the Athenians." But who led Athens?

As examples of previous Alcmaeonid commitment to freedom, Herodotus notes that they had been in exile during the Peisistratid era, and in fact had originated the plans to overthrow their rivals (6.123). He is not embarrassed to admit that in order to do this, they had prevailed upon the Delphic priestess to insist continually that the Spartans should liberate Athens (6.123); in fact, he had already described this (5.63). These are strange credentials for people whose integrity one is trying to prove. The family, because of its earlier treachery in murdering the adherents of Cylon's *coup* (630 B.C.), in spite of Herodotus' assigning the blame elsewhere (5.71), had been sent into exile under a religious curse.¹⁴ It had played a grim political

¹² See E. M. Walker, *CAH IV* (Cambridge 1926) 157–58.

¹³ See G. W. Williams, "The Curse of the Alkmaionidai, II. Kleisthenes and the Persian Wars," *Hermathena* 79 (1952) 18, who believes that "the election to the archonship of a relative of Hippias might be considered a compromise with the Persian demand for the restoration of Hippias himself." D. Kagan, "The Origin and Purposes of Ostracism," *Hesperia* 30 (1961) 398, notes that after his reforms of 508/7 B.C. "the next two decades give evidence of a coalition between the party of Kleisthenes and that of Hipparchos."

¹⁴ See L. Moulinier, "La nature et la date du crime des Alcmaeonides," *REA* 48 (1946) 182–202; G. W. Williams, "The Curse of the Alkmaionidai, I. The Origin and Early History," *Hermathena* 78 (1951) 32–49; and M. Lang, "Kylonian Conspiracy," *CP* 62 (1967)

game and had lost. Cut off from the sources of power at home, like any self-respecting Greek exiles, it had no doubt worked steadily to effect its restoration and eventually achieved it, perhaps through Delphic influence.¹⁵ As for the second exile, the unsuspecting reader would not guess from the Herodotean account that after the death of Peisistratus the clan quietly and unglamorously returned to Athens, with Cleisthenes becoming archon in 525/4 B.C., as modern research has shown.¹⁶ After the demise of the Peisistratid regime, Cleisthenes' reforms were designed and implemented with a healthy respect for family tradition and preferment.¹⁷ He turned to the *δημος* for support in his struggle with Isagoras, not out of any ideological commitment to its welfare, but because he needed help (*cf.* Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 20).¹⁸ For the Alcmaeonids, the decades preceding Marathon had been harsh and unpredictable.

Perhaps this was all the more reason, on the eve of what looked to many like a certain Persian victory, for the family to have tried to safeguard its own interests and the continuance of its influence in Athens under Persian tutelage. Many Greeks had by now reached an understanding with the invaders. Thasos had given in twice (6.44, 47); Persian power reached into Macedonia (6.44–45); many towns and islands submitted (6.49). Datis made a generous concession to Delos (6.97); Carystos, after a siege, joined the Persian side (6.99); Eretria, also under siege, was betrayed from within and dealt with cruelly (6.101). Worst of all, from the Athenian point of view,

243–49, esp. 249 n.10, where Miss Lang suggests that some member or members of the family may have been involved in the plot and instigated the massacre of the Kylonians “in order to prevent their almost certain disclosure of Alkmaionid guilt if they came to trial.”

¹⁵ Cf. G. W. Williams, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.14) 44–46.

¹⁶ See D. Bradeen, “The Fifth-Century Archon List,” *Hesperia* 32 (1963) 187 n.2, for references; cf. C. W. J. Eliot, “Where did the Alkmaionidai live?” *Historia* 16 (1967) 284 n.25.

¹⁷ See A. R. Burn, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.5) 188: “All that we know of the Alkmaionidai in the sixth century is consistent with the view that they followed a strictly dynastic family policy, with power in Athens as its end, and with any means that would serve.” For the family's rôle in effecting this demise, see A. J. Podlecki, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.11) 130–35 and 138–41; and C. W. Fornara, “The Tradition about the Murder of Hipparchus,” *Historia* 17 (1968) 404–06. W. G. Forrest, *The Emergence of Greek Democracy, the Character of Greek Politics 800–400 B.C.* (London 1966) 199–200, has demonstrated that “the Alkmaeonids rather than democracy were meant to benefit” by Cleisthenes' introduction of the *τριττύες*. Herodotus is silent, of course, on any such motivation (5.66).

¹⁸ See D. M. Lewis, “Cleisthenes and Attica,” *Historia* 12 (1963) 22–40, esp. 38: “If there was to be a place for the Alcmaeonids in Athens, new methods had to be used. One lesson could be learnt from the tyrants, and Cleisthenes turned to the *demos* which the tyrants had created and favoured, which he and other dynasts had previously rejected.”

nearby Aegina had collaborated (6.49). Submission to Persia did not necessarily result in instant massacres; refusal to submit, on the other hand, led to trouble, as at Naxos (6.96). And there was enough evidence of Persian inhumanity, once provoked, in the recaptured towns of Ionia (6.32). Medizing must have seemed the best of a bad bargain to peoples facing what seemed like a hopeless situation. Miltiades' statement that if Athens did not fight at once, she might collaborate with the enemy (6.109) suggests that some in Athens found Hippias' return acceptable; surely he expected help from his friends there. Possibly others may have found even more acceptable the substitution of prominent members of the local power-structure—'liberal' civil reformers, at that—under Persian aegis if it had to be, for the exile at the gates. Both groups could account for the Medizers. Some lower-class citizens, able to point to the connections of the two families since Peisistratus' time (1.61) or events in Ionia,¹⁹ perhaps saw little difference between the two, or cared little which ruled, so long as their own democratic interests were preserved and no imposition of an oligarchy were allowed. It is odd that Herodotus never accuses the Athenian followers of Hippias of having given the shield signal, not even at the end of his discussion (6.124). It is less odd that he does not speak of the Alcmaeonids' relations with Persia.²⁰

Herodotus continues his defense by anticipating an argument for the family's guilt—that they might have betrayed Athens because of anger toward the *δῆμος* (6.124). He does not give the precise reason for this anger, but it seems to be because of the acquiescence of the *δῆμος* in the Peisistratid tyranny. In itself this would not be an inadequate

¹⁹ See V. Ehrenberg, *Ost und West* (Brünn 1935) 113: "Alkmaioniden und Peisistratiden haben, wie es scheint, gemeinsam die Politik der Unterstützung der Ionier liquidiert." Herodotus' disapproval of the initial Athenian aid (5.97) seems to reflect the clan's view. A recent study of events in Ionia is by M. Lang, "Herodotus and the Ionian Revolt," *Historia* 17 (1968) 24–36. For the confused domestic politics of this era, see C. A. Robinson, "The Struggle for Power at Athens," *AJP* 60 (1939) 232–37; "Medizing Athenian Aristocrats," *CW* 35 (1941) 39–40; A. W. Gomme, "Athenian Notes, 1. Athenian Politics, 510–483 B.C.," *AJP* 65 (1944) 321–31, repr. in *More Essays in Greek History and Literature*, ed. D. A. Campbell (Oxford 1962) 19–28; C. A. Robinson, "Athenian Politics, 510–486 B.C.," *AJP* 66 (1945) 243–54; H. Schaefer, "Besonderheit und Begriff der attischen Demokratie im V. Jahrhundert," in *Synopsis, Festgabe für Alfred Weber* (Heidelberg 1948) 479ff, repr. in *Probleme der alten Geschichte, Gesammelte Abhandlungen und Vorträge*, ed. U. Weidemann and W. Schmitthenner (Göttingen 1963) 137–47.

²⁰ See A. E. Raubitschek, "The Treaties between Persia and Athens," *GRBS* 5 (1964) 153–54. For the prewar period, see F. Schachermeyr, "Marathon und die persische Politik," *HZ* 172 (1951) 1–35; J. Papastavrou, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 11–18; and K. Kraft, "Bemerkungen zu den Perserkriegen," *Hermes* 92 (1964) 144–71. For the battle, see A. W. Gomme, "Herodotus and Marathon," *Phoenix* 6 (1952) 77–83, repr. in *More Essays (supra* n.19) 29–37.

motive for the Alcmaeonids' revenge, albeit belated. But whatever the source of the alleged ill-feeling, Herodotus' reaction is to reject such a view on the grounds that the Alcmaeonids were the most highly respected family in Athens. Perhaps they were. But this is not proof that they themselves had wholly forgiven what they surely must have considered collaboration with the tyrants and complicity in causing their own exile. The admiration which Herodotus claims for them was perhaps not reciprocated by the clan. The argument based on their high position, further, cuts both ways: if the Alcmaeonids were so much respected, why were they not the very last ones to be singled out on such a deadly charge? Should there not have been heavy resistance among the people to believing such a rumor? Why were no other names raised? Herodotus admits that a sign was given by a shield (6.124); he does not attempt to deny it. But then he drops the subject. He does not point to the guilt of anyone else; he does not explain why the admiring *δῆμος* suddenly focused on the Alcmaeonids in this crisis of treason; he does not even attack the rumor-mongers—the simplest technique of defense.

Herodotus then shifts to a richly detailed history of the family. The unsatisfying conclusion of his defense gives way to a pedigree, complete with comic relief. The story of Hippocleides' dancing, delightful as it is, is hardly enough to paper over the troubling questions of high treason that Herodotus had left dangling. This excursus—surely relaxing to hear in an oral recitation, or to read—is in the nature of a diversionary action. This is especially pointed up by the immediate resumption of the narrative with the lean account of Miltiades' desperate moves to save Athens once the shield signal had been noticed, and his subsequent indictment and death (6.132–36). It would be difficult to think of sharper contrasts in mood than here.

In our tradition, a defendant is innocent until proven guilty. Why, it might be argued, should Herodotus not have been content to leave the burden of proof on the defamers of the Alcmaeonids? Simply because of the persistency of the rumor, which was strong enough to provoke such an energetic response from a normally genial writer. But it deserved a better response than this. If the evidence had been at hand to refute the charges, to wreck their credibility forever, Herodotus would surely have used it with appropriate fanfare. We are instead treated to probabilities, frivolities and tales of the past. The tales end with the birth of Pericles (6.131). Perhaps Herodotus has

himself revealed the motive behind this odd section of the *History*. It was no doubt something of a political liability for Pericles to have this unpleasant rumor cling to his mother's family name; obviously not enough to derail his political ambitions, but enough to be annoying.²¹ On the eve of the Peloponnesian War, the Spartans dredged up the old curse with a view toward securing his exile from Athens (Thuc. 1.127.1); he was clearly considered in the context of the clan. Herodotus answers the charges as best he can. He would have done his friend Pericles a better service by skillfully destroying them with irrefutable proofs. The point is that there were none. From the *History* it is evident that Herodotus' sympathies were more broadly extended to the entire family, from which "he learned his Athenian history."²² His bias is plain throughout the book, as Monro, with ferocious bluntness, noted thirty years ago: "consciously or not, he reflects their self-congratulation, their malice, their exculpations."²³

We need not agree with A. W. Gomme that the charge against the Alcmaeonids was of recent origin in Herodotus' time and was aimed at Pericles.²⁴ The years after Marathon tell us much about them, and imply that the family labored under the suspicion of treason from the day the shield signal was given. Herodotus does not tell us who had prosecuted Miltiades in 493 B.C. on the grounds of having been tyrant in Thrace (6.104);²⁵ in Miltiades' later trial of 490/89 B.C. Xanthippus, son of Aripbron and father of Pericles, brought the indictment. The 480's were a decade of enforced exile for several Athenian politicians, under the newly applied device of ostracism. Among them were Megacles (487/6 B.C.) and Xanthippus (485/4 B.C.). Pindar (*Pyth.* 7.15ff),

²¹ Two recent treatments of his earlier career are by R. Sealey, "The Entry of Pericles into History," *Hermes* 84 (1956) 234-47, repr. in his *Essays in Greek Politics* (New York 1967) 59-74; and H. D. Meyer, "Thukydides Melesiou und die oligarchische Opposition gegen Perikles," *Historia* 16 (1967) 141-54.

²² See W. G. Forrest's "Introduction" to the Rawlinson translation of the *History* (New York 1963) xxv.

²³ Cf. "The Ancestral Laws of Cleisthenes," *CQ* 33 (1939) 86. In n.6 he supplies the textual bases for his views. G. W. Williams, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.14) 34 n.5, writes that "Herodotus was certainly pro-Alkmaionid, but either not sufficiently so, or possibly too uncritical in his admiration to recognise in the long account of the debt of Kleisthenes to his grandfather, tyrant of Sicyon, a clever and telling piece of anti-Alkmaionid propaganda." Plut. *De malig. Herod.* 27 oddly enough does not notice this ambivalence and use it as evidence that Herodotus maligned the family.

²⁴ See Gomme, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.20) 325 (= *More Essays*, 20).

²⁵ H. Berve, *Miltiades* (*Hermes Einzelschr.* 2, 1937) 66ff, suggests that Herodotus was unwilling to give the name of Miltiades' Alcmaeonid accuser. See also H. T. Wade-Gery, "Miltiades," *JHS* 71 (1951) 212-21.

addressing Megacles at Delphi in 486, discreetly skirts the reason for his exile.²⁶ Kagan has noticed that in the list of those ostracized in this decade, "Each of these men was either a tyrannist or an Alkmaionid, that is, a member of the coalition established by Kleisthenes"; Stamires and Vanderpool have shown that the Alcmaeonid Callixenus was ostracized, probably in 482 B.C.²⁷ New power alignments were in the making, and Themistocles emerges as the key figure of the period, carefully shaping Athenian resources for an inevitable return match with Persia. Thucydides' estimate of his vision and ability to implement it (1.138.3) is sound. But Themistocles' success was achieved in part at the expense of the Alcmaeonids, and they were not to forget this. Their loss of power after Marathon made them reasonably vulnerable targets for systematic ostracism of their leaders. Surely the suspicions surrounding the shield signal contributed to their vulnerability. It might be held that there were other signs of weakness, even earlier.²⁸

Yet the clan survived the attrition of ostracisms, so well in fact that it was able to ensure ostracizing Themistocles himself, perhaps in 471/70.²⁹ Revenge takes time. Leobotes, son of Alcmaeon, a member of the family, brought the indictment that ostracized the upstart democrat who had rudely shoved aside its illustrious sons ([Themistocles], *Epistles* 8, 11).³⁰ Plutarch mentions cooperation with the Spartans for

²⁶ G. B. Grundy, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 167, notes that Pind. *Pyth.* 7 "hints strongly that sinister reports on this subject were existent even at that time." I find unsatisfying the views on this given by R. W. B. Burton, *Pindar's Pythian Odes, Essays in Interpretation* (Oxford 1962) 34–35, and C. M. Bowra, *Pindar* (Oxford 1964) 108. See W. Kierdorf, *Erlebnis und Darstellung der Perserkriege (Hypomnemata 16, Göttingen 1966)* 30.

²⁷ D. Kagan, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.13) 399; G. A. Stamires and E. Vanderpool, "Kallixenos the Alkmeonid," *Hesperia* 19 (1950) 376–90. For more recent discussions of the case of Callixenus, see P. Lévêque and P. Vidal-Naquet, *Clisthène l'Athénien (AnnLittBesançon 65, 1964)* 54–55, and W. R. Connor, *Theopompus and Fifth-Century Athens* (Washington 1968) 126–27 and 183 n.23. See also A. E. Raubitschek, "Das Datislied," in *Charites, Studien zur Altertumswissenschaft*, ed. K. Schauenburg (Bonn 1957) 239–40, for other references; cf. G. W. Williams, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.13) 20–21.

²⁸ See G. W. Williams, *ibid.* 19, who feels that the acquittal of Miltiades meant "the downfall of the Alkmaionid pro-Persian policy." Not only was Miltiades acquitted in 493, but at the time of Marathon was alive and very well, having been chosen *στρατηγός*.

²⁹ See R. J. Lenardon, "The Chronology of Themistokles' Ostracism and Exile," *Historia* 8 (1959) 23–48, and C. W. Fornara, "Some Aspects of the Career of Pausanias of Sparta," *Historia* 15 (1966) 271.

³⁰ For the view that Themistocles' ostracism was caused by his association with Ephialtes, see M. Lang, "A Note on Ithome," *GRBS* 8 (1967) 273. For this murky period, see also G. W. Williams, "The Curse of the Alkmaionidai, III. Themistokles, Perikles, and Alkibiades," *Hermathena* 80 (1952) 58–62; W. G. Forrest, "Themistokles and Argos," *CQ* n.s. 10 (1960) 232–41.

this purpose (*Them.* 23). This is firmly in the Alcmaeonids' tradition of filling present needs by sleeping with all kinds of bedfellows.

Herodotus' portrayal of Themistocles is unfair, to say the least. G. E. M. de Ste. Croix once made the useful distinction between the "news columns" in Thucydides and the "editorial Thucydides," two aspects of the writer that were occasionally at variance.³¹ The same distinction can be applied to Herodotus in his treatment of Themistocles. His own evidence is sufficient to prove that Themistocles was a very great leader indeed. Yet the reader will look in vain for genuine praise, for a true acknowledgement of the many important services that were uniquely Themistoclean. Thucydides was well aware of Themistocles' high qualities; his evaluation is really a brief panegyric, an attempt to rehabilitate Themistocles while at the same time subtly downgrading Herodotus, in whose shadow he was writing (1.138.3).³² Themistocles did not have the social credentials that Thucydides might have preferred him to have. But Thucydides' enthusiastic appraisal of him suggests that perhaps Thucydides was not as rigidly pro-oligarchic as we in recent years may have tended to think.³³

Plutarch's *Life* is generally more friendly than Herodotus; his remarks on Themistocles in *De malignitate Herodoti* are similarly motivated. G. W. Williams has noted some of the hostile traits of Herodotus' pages on Themistocles,³⁴ but some additional comments should be made. It is obviously not easy to cut a traditional war-hero down to size. A frontal attack would be ludicrous, because popular memories of such relatively recent vintage had not yet 'enhanced' the hero out of all recognition. There were, to be sure, no written historical works. But there were people who had heard from their elders about the Persian Wars and Themistocles. The legend was already there and thought to be acceptable to most. Only an oblique approach to the war hero, a quiet undercutting, a slight here and there, excessive

³¹ "The Character of the Athenian Empire," *Historia* 3 (1954) 3.

³² R. J. Lenardon, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.29) 36 n.68, fully accepts the Thucydidean portrait of Themistocles; *cf.* p.45 n.105. H. D. Westlake, *Individuals in Thucydides* (Cambridge 1968), unfortunately omits an analysis of this portrait, on the grounds that Themistocles died before the Peloponnesian War began (*cf.* p.4). A. Andrewes, *The Greeks* (London 1967) 194, rightly notes that Pericles and Themistocles are the two statesmen Thucydides most admired.

³³ For Thucydides' political stance, see de Ste. Croix, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.31) 31-37; M. F. McGregor, "The Politics of the Historian Thucydides," *Phoenix* 10 (1956) 93-102; G. W. Bowersock, "The Personality of Thucydides," *Antioch Review* 25 (1965) 135-46.

³⁴ Williams, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.30) 60.

generosity toward rival figures, and a transfer of admiration from Athens' leader to Athens herself (*cf.* 7.139) could feasibly demote Themistocles. His rôle must be that of one prominent man among several, not a catalyst of the action and the symbol of resistance for all of Greece. This is the approach Herodotus judiciously follows. At no time does he attack Themistocles vehemently. The harshest facts offered about him are presented offhandedly. Herodotus denies Themistocles personal recognition for what were thought to be his own achievements in the war. What little praise of Themistocles may be found in the *History* usually comes from others.

When we meet Themistocles, he is interpreting the oracle of the "wooden walls" (7.143). His *nouveau* background is carefully noted. A grudging remark admits that he had organized the Athenian navy which eventually saved Greece (7.144). We are told that he accepted bribes from the Euboeans at Artemisium and then proceeded to bribe Eurybiades and Adeimantus while retaining a profit for himself (8.4–5). The strategy of fighting at Salamis is attributed to "an Athenian," Mnesiphilus (8.57–58; *cf.* Plut. *Them.* 2). Plutarch's version seems intended to correct this (11). Aristides, who plays no more a rôle in these events than effecting a patriotic reconciliation of differences with Themistocles in the interests of the resistance, is most generously praised by Herodotus as "the best man and the most just" of the Athenians (8.79).

Even more noteworthy is the brief summary of Themistocles' speech to the navy before the battle of Salamis. In a book overloaded with lengthy speeches, not all of them by any means relevant or even interesting, it is amazing to find what is, by virtue of its context, perhaps the most exciting moment in the entire war, a speech of the Greek commander to his men condensed into a paraphrase one sentence in length (8.83). Herodotus does preface it with a remark that Themistocles spoke better than all others; but no speech is given. We *sense* the drama and the tension of this scene at dawn, but Herodotus does not wish us to savor it, or to admire Themistocles for what was probably his most eloquent speech.³⁵ At the very least, this

³⁵ G. T. W. Hooker, "Their Finest Hour," *G&R*, SER. II, 7 (1960) 99, has caught the essence of this scene in comparing it to Britain in 1940: "Many of us can still hear a robust, rasping voice, now low and sombre, now lifting in defiance, and can recall the rolling cadences and unabashed rhetoric of our own leading citizen." See also K. H. Waters, "The Purpose of Dramatisation in Herodotus," *Historia* 15 (1966) 169–71, for a more friendly estimate of Herodotus' 'artistry' than that made here.

omission is artistically disappointing. More reprehensibly, it is a bold denial of Themistoclean responsibility and genius. Themistocles is given, it is true, a forceful but brief speech after the battle, urging demobilization rather than pursuit of the fleeing Persians. But editor Herodotus hastens to add that the real motive for Themistocles' advice was to win favor with Xerxes in case he might one day need him (8.109). Oddly enough, Herodotus had not assigned any such motive to Themistocles' first message to Xerxes encouraging him to prevent the Greek fleet from escaping (8.75–76; 80). But at this point, if this thought had escaped a reader's imagination earlier, it would leap immediately to mind. The same might be said of the second message to Xerxes (8.110), claiming credit for cessation of harassment of the defeated Persians. Herodotus thus manages to imply that Themistocles was in fact a Medizer all along.

Themistocles' grasping for money is duly stressed, as he goes about visiting the islands and demanding contributions (8.111–12). When the votes for awarding honors are tallied, Themistocles is named as nearly everyone's second choice (8.123); each commander had vainly named himself as first choice. Herodotus has no comment on this fraud (*cf.* Plut. *De malig. Herod.* 40). He does record the fact that Themistocles was considered to be the wisest of the Greeks in the whole country (8.124), but does not add his own approval of the nation's judgement at that time. Similarly, he details the honors the Spartans bestowed on Themistocles, but asserts that his reason for visiting them was personal pique (8.124). At no time is there the admission that this man richly deserved these honors, refused him by his erstwhile colleagues at Salamis, for having whipped the resistance into line by a combination of wits, courage, will power and force of personality, at a time when much of Greece was compromised and much was wavering.³⁶ In the two speeches by "the Athenians" to Alexander of Macedon and to the Spartan ambassadors on the issue of an alliance with Persia (8.143–44), the speakers reaffirm what the stakes in this war had been, and then assert Athens' refusal to betray her recent past. No mention is made of the fact that it was Themistocles who had developed this policy and forced it on Athens and Greece. Nor do these speeches hint at his own rôle in actual events as they evolved. It is immaterial who these

³⁶ For studies of wartime collaboration, see H. D. Westlake, "The Medism of Thessaly," *JHS* 56 (1936) 12–24; P. A. Brunt, "The Hellenic League against Persia," *Historia* 2 (1953) 135–63; G. Huxley, "The Medism of Caryae," *GRBS* 8 (1967) 29–32. See also J. Labarbe, "Timodèmos d'Aphidna," *RBPhil* 36 (1958) 31–50.

Athenian speakers were; Themistocles led Athens at the moment and he, if not directly responsible for the official reformulation of his war policy for Alexander and the Spartans on this occasion, could only have allowed "the Athenians" to make speeches with his consent and approval. We have been told by Herodotus that Themistocles needed praise (8.124): we certainly need not assume that any claims of modesty prevented him from having the speakers note his rôle in recent political and military history. Herodotus did not want Themistocles included in this impressive scene in any form. The same is true of his passionate outburst on Athens' salvation of Greece (7.139): no one would suspect from that passage that Themistocles had led the city through her gravest crisis.³⁷ And if the famous "Themistocles Decree"³⁸ is genuine, then Herodotus has indeed withheld much from Themistocles.³⁹ His treatment of Miltiades after Marathon (6.132–36) is similar.⁴⁰ Herodotus seems to have been the 'house historian' of the Alcmaeonids, still laboring under the cloud of treason. He proved a loyal servant. Though in many ways indispensable, his *History* should be read with the greatest caution.⁴¹

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³⁷ See J. Wells, "Herodotus and Athens," *CP* 23 (1928) 317–31; H. Kleinknecht, "Herodot und Athen," *Hermes* 75 (1940) 241–64, repr. in W. Marg, ed., *Herodot. Eine Auswahl der neueren Forschung* (Munich 1962) 541–73; H. Strasburger, "Herodot und das perikleische Athen," *Historia* 4 (1955) 1–25, repr. in W. Marg, *ibid.* 574–608; and H. Erbse, "Vier Bemerkungen zu Herodot," *RhM* 98 (1955) 99–120.

³⁸ See M. H. Jameson, "A Decree of Themistokles from Troizen," *Hesperia* 29 (1960) 198–223; "Waiting for the Barbarian," *G&R*, SER. II, 8 (1961) 5–18; "A Revised Text of the Decree of Themistokles from Troizen," *Hesperia* 31 (1962) 310–15; and "The Provision for Mobilization in the Decree of Themistokles," *Historia* 12 (1963) 385–404. A full bibliography of this topic is given by M. Chambers, following his article "The Significance of the Themistocles Decree," *Philologus* 111 (1967) 159–66, on 166–69. See also G. Huxley, "Kleidemos and the Themistokles Decree," *GRBS* 9 (1968) 313–18; and G. A. Lehmann, "Bemerkungen zur Themistokles-Inschrift von Troizen," *Historia* 17 (1968) 276–88.

³⁹ See M. H. Jameson, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.38) *G&R* 8 (1961) 11: "If the foresight and leadership of Themistokles emerge all the more brilliant from a fog of anecdote and scandal, the courage of the Athenian people, who chose to follow him, is equally remarkable." See also J. F. Lazenby, "The Strategy of the Greeks in the Opening Campaign of the Persian War," *Hermes* 92 (1964) 264–84; and A. J. Podlecki, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.11) 138–39. For the beginnings of Athenian expansion, see H. D. Meyer, "Vorgeschichte und Begründung des delisch-attischen Seebundes," *Historia* 12 (1963) 405–46; R. Sealey, "The Origin of the Delian League," in *Ancient Society and Institutions. Studies presented to Victor Ehrenberg on his 75th Birthday* (Oxford 1966) 233–55; A. H. Jackson, "The Original Purpose of the Delian League," *Historia* 18 (1969) 12–16.

⁴⁰ On Miltiades, see H.-F. Bornitz, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 102–09.

⁴¹ For a refreshing but sobering account of what is needed in research on Herodotus, see M. Lang, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.19) 24–25.