

Instructive Irony in Herodotus: The Socles Scene

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EVER SINCE Hermann Strasburger's landmark 1955 essay, "Herodot und das perikleische Athen," scholarly attention has been drawn to the deeply ambivalent portrait of democratic Athens found in the *Histories*.¹ In particular, frequent depictions, in the later books, of cynical behavior on the part of the Athenians and their manipulative, emblematic leader Themistocles have been read as foreshadowing the contemporary context in which the *Histories* was completed.² This was Greece in the first half of the Peloponnesian War, the unity of the Persian War period shattered by the imperial overreach of Athens.³ Some scholars have even argued that Herodotus constructs his authorial persona as a 'warner', analogous to internal figures like Croesus who repeatedly attempt to dissuade

¹ *Historia* 4 (1955) 1–25. The text of Herodotus is cited from the OCT of Hude (1927), that of Thucydides from the OCT of Stuart Jones (1942).

² Fundamental is C. W. Fornara, *Herodotus: An Interpretative Essay* (Oxford 1971) 75–91. Excellent recent treatments are R. L. Fowler, "Herodotus and Athens," in P. Derow and R. Parker (eds.), *Herodotus and his World* (Oxford 2003) 305–318, and J. L. Moles, "Herodotus and Athens," in E. J. Bakker et al. (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Herodotus* (Leiden 2002) 33–52.

³ The attitude towards Decelea at 9.73.3 indicates a completion date after the start of the Peloponnesian War but prior to the village's seizure by Sparta in 413. If 523 ff. in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* is a parody of the *Histories*' proem, February of 425 is a *terminus ante quem*. Some scholars, however, remain unconvinced, and C. W. Fornara, "Evidence for the Date of Herodotus' Publication," *JHS* 91 (1971) 25–34, argues that the work was finished after the end of the Archidamian War. I will assume the traditional date of 424, but my arguments can also accommodate Fornara's position.

the rulers of bygone empires from sliding into destructive overconfidence.⁴ In this view Herodotus' narrative of Persian defeat functions, at least in part, as a cautionary tale aimed at an increasingly despotic Athens about the negative eventual consequences of its exploitative behavior.

Such an approach implicitly assumes a clear division in Herodotus between the despotic tendencies of the Athenians, which would become dominant in the latter half of the fifth century, and more positive aspects of their democracy, which contribute decisively to the Greek victory over Persia. In the text these constructive aspects are rooted to a large degree in the high value placed on freedom (ἐλευθερία) by the Athenians.⁵ It is, after all, the motivational capacity of this ideal, together with the "virtuous poverty" of Hellas, to which Herodotus repeatedly attributes the victory of the non-Medizing Greeks against such overwhelming odds—a victory which he depicts Athens as spearheading.⁶ Accordingly, the imperial practices of Athens, both during the Persian War period and afterwards, would represent a striking reversal from a normative commitment to freedom critical to Greece's broader self-definition.

This paper, however, seeks to argue against such a clear division by reexamining the first developed sequence in the *Histories* in which the political situation of Greece is contrasted with that of the author's contemporary world in the 420s. The scene, set in 504, centers on an address to the allied Peloponnesians by the Corinthian Socles arguing against Sparta's plan to reinstall Hippias as tyrant of Athens (5.90–93). Already in

⁴ See especially K. A. Raafaub, "Herodotus' Political Thought, and the Meaning of History," *Arethusa* 20 (1987) 221–248, at 248, and J. L. Moles, "Herodotus Warns the Athenians," *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar IX* (Leeds 1996) 259–284.

⁵ See the discussion of 5.78 below.

⁶ T. Harrison, "The Persian Invasions," in *Brill's Companion* 551–578, at 565–566. See 7.139, also discussed below, for the indispensable role that Herodotus attributes to Athens in the Persian Wars.

this sequence, placed at a key turning point in the text, Herodotus suggests a complex interrelation between a Panhellenic ideal of freedom and the selfish advancement of Athenian interests. It is a connection, moreover, which proves to be instrumental rather than antithetical to Greek success in the Persian Wars and, accordingly, defeats any attempt to compartmentalize the positive and negative qualities of Athens in the text. This interdependence also presents difficulties for equating the imperial evolutions of Persia and Athens, complicating Herodotus' function as a 'warner'. Nevertheless, I will argue that the author does in fact link Athens to Persia within a broader vision of political power as a cyclical phenomenon, albeit one in which the rise and fall of states is variously determined.

The Socles scene as a significant juncture in the Histories

Shortly after the nascent Athenian democracy's surprising defeat of a coordinated attack by the Spartan king Cleomenes, the Boeotians, and Chalcis in 506, Herodotus depicts an assembly of Sparta and its allies in 504. The Spartans propose reinstalling the Pisistratid tyranny as a means to stem the growing power of Athens. But an otherwise unknown Corinthian named Socles rises to deliver an extended speech against the Lacedaemonian proposal (5.92).⁷ He begins and ends by arguing that it would be wrong for any Greek state free of tyranny to impose such a cruel institution on other Greeks, while devoting the middle portion of his remarks to his own city's experience of tyranny under Cypselus and his son Periander. The speech succeeds in persuading Sparta's allies to prevent any regime change in Athens. However, the Pisistratid Hippias, who is present at the meeting, warns the Corinthians about oracles he has heard. These foretell that Corinth will someday suffer at the hands of the very Athens which Socles has just rescued from Hippias' rule (5.93).

⁷ The vulgate reading of the name is Sosicles, but Socles has manuscript support and is the version found in Plutarch (*Mor.* 861A).

Both the content and the dramatic frame of Socles' speech have attracted a great deal of critical attention.⁸ (For convenience, I will refer to these two elements collectively as the Socles scene, i.e. 5.90–93.) Commentators have stressed the pivotal position of the 504 debate within the narrative, and its important consequences for the subsequent action of the *Histories*.⁹ As noted, the sequence is placed in the aftermath of the Athenian victory in 506; and it takes the growing threat of Athens that this achievement represents as the context for the Spartans calling an assembly (5.90–91). Famously, at 5.78 Herodotus attributes the success of 506 to Athens' liberation from tyranny (ἐλευθερωθέντων), which raised the martial prowess of Athens by granting its citizens the ability to fight exclusively on their own behalf.¹⁰ Of equal significance, it is immediately after the assembly that Aristagoras of Miletus first arrives in Athens and involves Athens in the Ionian Revolt (5.97)—an event Herodotus marks as the ἀρχὴ κακῶν ... Ἑλλησὶ τε καὶ βαρβάροισι (“the beginning of evils for the Greeks and barbarians”).¹¹ The Socles scene, accordingly, serves as a key narrative hinge, setting the stage for the *Histories*' movement into

⁸ J. L. Moles, “‘Saving’ Greece from the ‘Ignominy’ of Tyranny? The ‘Famous’ and ‘Wonderful’ Speech of Socles (5.92),” in E. Irwin and E. Greenwood (eds.), *Reading Herodotus: A Study of the Logoi in Book 5 of Herodotus’ Histories* (Cambridge 2007) 245–268, at 245–246, provides a full catalogue of previous scholarly treatments.

⁹ The case for the scene's narrative importance is well made by J. E. van der Veen, *The Significant and the Insignificant: Five Studies in Herodotus’ View of History* (Amsterdam 1996) 68–69. See also C. Dewald, “Form and Content: The Question of Tyranny in Herodotus,” in K. Morgan (ed.), *Popular Tyranny: Sovereignty and its Discontents in Classical Athens* (Austin 2003) 25–58, at 32, and Strasburger, *Historia* 4 (1955) 13–14.

¹⁰ The progression from the victory in 506 to the assembly in 504 is interrupted in 5.79–89 by a digression involving Aegina, with 5.90–91 self-consciously returning to the topic of the Athenian democracy and Sparta's growing anxiety over its rise.

¹¹ Between the Socles scene and the arrival of Aristagoras Herodotus traces Hippias' flight to Persia (5.94–96).

the Persian Wars, in which the democratic Athenians will play, in the opinion of the historian, the decisive role as σωτήρας ... τῆς Ἑλλάδος (“saviors of Greece,” 7.139.5). Its position therefore suggests a paradigmatic status for the scene’s contents in interpreting the subsequent Persian War narrative.

Proleptic irony

Independently of its larger context, Socles’ appearance claims significance by furnishing the longest speech in Herodotus. It also centers on the condemnation of tyranny, which reappears throughout the *Histories* as a major theme.¹² But particular attention has been paid to the scene’s dramatic irony. In this view Herodotus creates an intentional juxtaposition between Corinth’s role in saving the Athenian democracy from Spartan aggression in 504 and the significant harm this same city would suffer later from the imperial expansion of the Athens it had rescued.¹³ It is Athenian involvement with the Corinthian colonies Corcyra and Potidaea, after all, which helps spark the Archidamian War, and Thucydides unsurprisingly attributes to the Corinthians τὸ σφοδρὸν μῖσος ... ἐς Ἀθηναίους (“vehement hatred against the Athenians,” 1.103.4). Indeed, Herodotus’ text goes out of its way to encourage reading the two moments of Corinthian experience with Athens against each other through the concluding warning of Hippias

¹² M. Stahl, “Tyrannis und das Problem der Macht. Die Geschichten Herodots über Kypselos und Periander von Korinth,” *Hermes* 111 (1983) 202–220, and, more convincingly, V. J. Gray, “Herodotus and Images of Tyranny: The Tyrants of Corinth,” *AJP* 117 (1996) 361–389, provide extensive treatment of the relationship between Socles’ speech and Herodotus’ broader discussion of tyranny, tracing out the many motifs that the Cypselus and Periander stories share with other accounts of tyrants in the *Histories*. Dewald, in *Popular Tyranny* 25–58, is an excellent treatment of tyranny as a theme in the *Histories* that adds much important nuance to the discussion.

¹³ Strasburger, *Historia* 4 (1955) 12 and esp. 18–19, was the first to suggest that Socles’ speech in the debate scene must be understood against the changed political landscape of Herodotus’ own day.

(5.93):

Σωκλῆης μὲν ἀπὸ Κορίνθου πρεσβεύων ἔλεξε τάδε, Ἴππίης δὲ αὐτὸν ἀμείβετο τοὺς αὐτοὺς ἐπικαλέσας θεοὺς ἐκείνῳ, ἧ μὲν Κορινθίους μάλιστα πάντων ἐπιποθήσειν Πεισιστρατίδας, ὅταν σφι ἦκωσι ἡμέραι αἱ κύριαι ἀνιάσθαι ὑπ' Ἀθηναίων. Ἴππίης μὲν τούτοισι ἀμείψατο οἷά τε τοὺς χρησμοὺς ἀτρεκέστατα ἀνδρῶν ἐξεπιστάμενος.

Socles, acting as ambassador from Corinth, made his speech. But Hippias, invoking the same gods as he had, answered him that the Corinthians most of all would long for the Pisistratids, when the appointed days to suffer at the hands of the Athenians arrived. Hippias answered in this way because he understood the oracles most precisely among men.

The careful phrasing not only underscores Socles' position as a surrogate for Corinth as a whole (ἀπὸ Κορίνθου πρεσβεύων), but uses the word οἷα to embrace emphatically the veracity of the oracles quoted by Hippias. Assured that these oracles are correct but not explicitly told their referent, the attentive reader is prompted to draw the obvious inference to events of the 430s.¹⁴

Irony in Herodotus, accordingly, involves a contrast between the expectations of historical actors and the actual course taken by subsequent events—one clearly visible only from the privileged retrospection of the historian and used for serious rather than comic effect. It is important to emphasize that Herodotus portrays such irony as inherent in events themselves without the focus on an individual's clever invention central to both the feigned ignorance of Socratic irony and the deflationary sarcasm of most contemporary ironists. There is thus also a deeper irony. Socles' argument centers on the immorality of tyranny as an institution, but in the later fifth century Athens would itself grow into the polis τύραννος *par excellence*.¹⁵ As such

¹⁴ Similarly, at the start of the episode, Herodotus reports that the Spartans had gained possession of Pisistratid oracles predicting future troubles for their state at the hands of Athens (5.90).

¹⁵ The phrase polis τύραννος is from Thuc. 1.124.3 (cf. 1.122.3), oc-

it would violently encroach on the autonomy of many among the Greek communities which here, with Corinth, insist on the Athenians' right as Greeks to self-determination.¹⁶ Athens is spared the tyrant Hippias, but the way is also cleared for the rise of Athens as tyrant city. Again, Herodotus includes suggestive details. Socles describes how the Bacchiads, the ruling clan at Corinth, warned by oracles that the newborn Cypselus will one day overthrow them, dispatch ten of their number to assassinate him. The sight of the innocent baby, however, evokes pity among the would-be killers, which buys his mother enough time to save him. But the pitiable baby grows up to be a tyrannical monster, repressing both the Bacchiads and others. Similarly, Athens' infant democracy elicits compassion from

curing in the second of two speeches to the Peloponnesian League where none other than the Corinthians take the lead in advocating war with Athens. The idea of Athens as a tyrant city, also embraced in Thucydides by Pericles (2.63.2) and Cleon (3.37.2), is, of course, neither an objective historical datum nor congruent with the author's more complex perspective. But it is valid shorthand for a negative attitude towards Athenian power widely held in the later fifth century that both Thucydides and Herodotus incorporate into their texts; e.g. 7.139.1, where, while explicitly crediting the Athenians as the "saviors of Greece" in the Persian Wars, Herodotus admits that he γνώμην ἀποδέξασθαι ἐπίφθονον μὲν πρὸς τῶν πλεόνων ἀνθρώπων ("presents an opinion that will incur ill-will from the majority of people").

¹⁶ For both ironies see Dewald, in *Popular Tyranny* 31; Gray, *AJP* 117 (1996) 384; Moles, in *Brill's Companion* 39–40; C. Pelling, "Speech and Narrative in the *Histories*," in *Cambridge Companion* 103–121, at 107–109; Raaflaub, *Arethusa* 20 (1987) 224; and M. Węcowski, "Ironie et histoire: le discours de Soclès (Hérodote V 92)," *Ancient Society* 27 (1996) 205–258, at 252–258. Fowler, in *Herodotus and his World* 311–313, raises the stimulating question in discussing the Socles scene whether irony is an appropriate term for the phenomenon here considered. Instead of an emphasis on details with a proleptic resonance, Fowler suggests the product of an author interpreting the past from his contemporary context and thus invariably recasting it in terms that conform with and are borne out by his own situation (compare Attic tragedy's reconfiguration of myth). Such an adjustment in terminology, however, does not change the effects Herodotus achieves with his contemporary intertexts.

Corinth and from Sparta's other allies, but with time it too will come to tyrannize those who earlier had spared it.¹⁷

Structural similarity is reinforced at the level of narrative detail. One of the oracles that tip off the Bacchiads pictures Cypselus' mother as giving birth to a lion: τέξει δὲ λέοντα / καρτερόν ὠμηστήν· πολλῶν δ' ὑπὸ γούνατα λύσει ("she will bear a strong, savage lion, and he will loosen the limbs of many," 5.92β.2). The imagery and language recur later in Herodotus' only direct mention of Pericles, the emblematic figure of imperial Athens. His mother Agariste ἔγκυος ἐοῦσα εἶδε ὄψιν ἐν τῷ ὕπνῳ, ἐδόκεε δὲ λέοντα τεκεῖν· καὶ μετ' ὀλίγας ἡμέρας τίκτει Περικλέα Ξανθίππῳ ("while pregnant she saw a dream-vision and seemed to bear a lion, and a few days later she bore Pericles to Xanthippus," 6.131.2).¹⁸ The reuse of λέοντα τεκεῖν recalls the Socles scene and confirms retrospectively the identification between the tyrant Cypselus and the polis τύραννος led by Pericles.¹⁹

In an influential essay, Kurt Raaflaub locates the irony of the Socles scene within a larger pattern of what he terms "pointers," defined as:²⁰

stories that in various ways, through contrast or analogy, familiar thoughts and arguments, and specifically "loaded" terms, connect the past with the present and remind the audience of their own concerns.

The majority of these pointers deal with the emergence of

¹⁷ Gray, *AJP* 117 (1996) 385–386; Pelling, in *Cambridge Companion* 108.

¹⁸ For tyrants as lions see also 5.56.1, where Hipparchus on the morning of his assassination is called a lion in a dream, and 1.84.3, where the concubine of Meles, king of Sardis, actually does give birth to a lion (τὸν λέοντα τὸν οἱ ἡ παλλακὴ ἔτεκε).

¹⁹ Gray, *AJP* 117 (1996) 386–387, who also persuasively argues that the associations established in the Socles scene make clear that the "lion Pericles" works as a metonym for the external aggression of imperial Athens, and not as a subtle comment on that particular statesman's dominant—but by no means violently oppressive—position within Athens.

²⁰ *Arethusa* 20 (1987) 246, and 223–225 for discussion of the Socles scene.

Athens as an imperial power in the latter part of the fifth century. Often they serve to link it to vanquished *loci* of power from the past, suggesting that imperial Athens will, like these *loci*, be subject to the general pattern of rise and fall that Herodotus sees as operating throughout history. It is a pattern he sets forth memorably in the work's introductory program, where he insists on granting equal coverage to cities both small and large given the ephemeral nature of human prosperity: τὰ γὰρ τὸ πάλαι μεγάλα ἦν, τὰ πολλὰ αὐτῶν μικρὰ γέγονε· τὰ δὲ ἐπ' ἐμεῦ ἦν μεγάλα, πρότερον ἦν μικρά ("for the majority of those that were great long ago became small, and those that were great in my time were earlier small," 1.5.4).²¹

In the case of the Socles scene proleptic irony therefore allows the audience to understand that just as Athens would go on to gain a level of influence over Corinth and other Greek states similar to the one that Corinth and the Peloponnesian allies had once held over it, so too will the Athenians one day suffer an analogous reversal of their fortunes. Thus Athenian power is as tenuous as that which Corinth held over Athens, and the same in turn had been the case with the grip over the Corinthian people held even earlier by Cypselus and his descendants. If Athens under Pericles is to grow from harmless infant to oppressive tyrant like Cypselus, its tyranny will nevertheless someday fall as had the institution in Corinth.

An important element, however, has been overlooked in previous analyses of the Socles scene's dramatic irony. These have failed to identify any convincing hints in the episode of a causal explanation for the change between the Athens under debate in 504 and the imperial Athens to which Herodotus alludes. As Raaflaub himself argues:²²

²¹ See Raaflaub, *Arethusa* 20 (1987) 234 and 246–247; cf. the statement of Croesus to Cyrus that κύκλος τῶν ἀνθρωπείων ἐστὶ πρηγμάτων ("there is a circle of human affairs," 1.207.2).

²² *Arethusa* 20 (1987) 247.

Herodotus' political thought focuses on the rise and fall of tyrants and empires, on the formation and dissolution of power, and on the causes of what he perceives as a repetitive pattern in history.

But in the Socles scene Herodotus seems only to contrast the political position of Athens at two different moments, while providing no meaningful reflection on how the city's earlier status subsequently evolved. Although it is unquestionably ironic that Athens will grow into a great power because it was not destroyed early on, such an irony is superficial and carries no informative or pedagogic substance about why this particular situation came to be. Put more succinctly: it addressed the *post quod* of Athenian imperialism, but fails to give a *propter quod*. Such an omission is particularly surprising given the narrative positioning of the scene at a key juncture in Herodotus' account of the Athenian democracy and its eventual entanglement with Persia. Indeed, it is precisely at such an important crossroads where an interpretive 'pointer' could best be deployed to condition audience understanding of the state's subsequent development in the remaining part of the *Histories* and beyond.

In Socles' account of Cypselus and Periander there seems to be little consideration of how power evolves over time that could be reapplied easily towards understanding the rise of imperial Athens. Cypselus gains his tyranny in accord with oracles, but the actual mechanics through which he seizes control in Corinth are ignored.²³ Periander meanwhile merely succeeds his father. Nor is it appropriate to seek clues about the origin of an impulse towards tyranny from Socles, since his speech is concerned only with cataloguing the institution's evil consequences in order to dissuade Sparta and its allies from reinstalling Hippias. For him, οὔτε ἀδικώτερόν ἐστι οὐδὲν κατ' ἀνθρώπους οὔτε μαιφονώτερον ("there is nothing more unjust among men or more murderous [than tyranny]," 5.92a.1), and

²³ Van der Veen, *The Significant and the Insignificant* 73–74.

his speech is designed to win over the Peloponnesians to this same opinion. His argument concerns the effects of tyranny, not its causes.

Michael Stahl has argued that in linking Athens to the Corinthian tyrants and reminding the audience of the later Athenian tendency towards despotism, Herodotus uses irony to imply that all hegemonic entities eventually fall prey to excess. It is this *Machtprozess* that animates the author's historical cycle.²⁴ A tendency by those in power to overreach is of course a theme that resonates throughout the *Histories*, besides being a cliché of much Greek literature in the Archaic and Classical periods. It is, moreover, a congenial lens through which to view the evolution of Athens, even if it becomes more convincing only after the final defeat in 404. The Archidamian War, during which work on the *Histories* ceased, ended more or less with a nominal return to the pre-war status quo slightly to the advantage of Athens.²⁵ Indeed, as late as the Athenian victory at Arginusae in 406 the city's defeat was not inevitable.

More importantly, throughout the *Histories* imperial overreach is repeatedly characterized as a product of decadence. The theme is developed particularly in relation to the kings of Lydia and Persia.²⁶ As Cyrus foresees in the programmatic flashback with which the *Histories* ends, the 'soft' lands and other prizes of empire over time make 'soft' men of their owners: φιλέειν γὰρ ἐκ τῶν μαλακῶν χώρων μαλακοὺς ἄνδρας γίνεσθαι ("for soft men tend to arise from soft lands," 9.122.3). When these now enervated empires overreach, they inevitably confront 'harder', more rugged peoples able to defeat them, whether the Greeks of the Persian Wars or the Persians early in the reign of Cyrus.²⁷ But the theme of decadent μαλακία,

²⁴ Stahl, *Hermes* 111 (1983) 218–220.

²⁵ D. M. Lewis, *CAH*² V (1992) 431–432.

²⁶ Dewald, in *Popular Tyranny* 32–35.

²⁷ See W. W. How and J. Wells, *A Commentary on Herodotus II* (Oxford 1912) 336–337. Other important instances where the theme of prosperity leading to decadence appears in Herodotus are in Sandanis' advice to Croe-

softness, furnishes a poor pattern for the picture of the ambitious, proto-imperialist Athenians in the *Histories*. Nor does it square with their reputation in the later fifth century for *πολυπραγμοσύνη* (hyperactive meddlesomeness). Indeed, in the funeral oration of Pericles, Thucydides portrays him as drawing attention precisely to the ability of the Athenians to enjoy the good things their power brings without growing soft: φιλοκαλοῦμέν τε γὰρ μετ' εὐτελείας καὶ φιλοσοφοῦμεν ἄνευ μαλακίας (“for we love beauty with thrift and we love wisdom without softness,” 2.40.1).²⁸ Like the Persians they defeat, the Athenians also fall into the trap of overreach, but the reason for their doing so must be somehow different.

The role of ἐλευθερία

Since the contents of Socles' speech do not seem to provide a productive window into the purpose of Herodotus' irony in the debate sequence, I wish to turn instead to the author's presentation of the motives that prompt the speech and the speech's effect on its immediate audience. Both of these framing elements, I argue, highlight political freedom (ἐλευθερία) as a key Panhellenic value, whose presence Herodotus depicts throughout the *Histories* as crucial to the growth of Athens into an imperial power. Initially, Herodotus explains the Spartan

sus not to march against the Persians (1.71) and Pausanias' commentary on the Persian meal he has prepared after Thermopylae (9.82). In a similar manner, Croesus points out to Cyrus the more rugged lifestyle of the Massagetai, who then go on to defeat the Persians and memorably pickle Cyrus' head in a wineskin of human blood (1.207.6).

²⁸ Similarly, during the two central defenses of Athenian imperialism in Thucydides—the Athenian envoy's speech before the Peloponnesian League and Pericles' speech advocating war—both speakers, while admitting to Athens' cruelty towards its allies, nevertheless underline the necessity of such behavior (1.75.2–5, 1.140.4–5). If we take seriously Thucydides' claim to supply arguments for his speakers with situational plausibility (περὶ τῶν αἰεὶ παρόντων τὰ δέοντα, “the necessary things in regard to each set of circumstances,” 1.22.1), the three passages attest to an active concern at Athens with avoiding the kinds of reckless and self-destructive excess brought about, in Herodotus, by a surplus of prosperity.

rationale for wanting to restore Hippias in the following terms (5.91.1):

τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ὄρων ἀυξομένους καὶ οὐδαμῶς ἐτοίμους ἐόντας πείθεσθαι σφίσι νόφ λαβόντες ὡς ἐλεύθερον μὲν ἐὼν τὸ γένος τὸ Ἀττικὸν ἰσόρροπον τῷ ἐωυτῶν ἂν γίνοιτο, κατεχόμενον δὲ ὑπὸ τυραννίδος ἀσθενὲς καὶ πειθαρχέεσθαι ἔτοιμον, μαθόντες δὲ τούτων ἕκαστα μετεπέμποντο Ἰππίην τὸν Πεισιστράτου ἀπὸ Σιγείου τοῦ ἐν Ἑλλησπόντῳ.

They were seeing the Athenians increasing in strength and no longer willing to obey them, mentally grasping that the Attic people, being free, would become of equal weight to their own, but if held in check by a tyranny, would become powerless and ready to obey. And understanding each of these things they fetched Hippias the son of Pisistratus from Sigeum on the Hellespont.

After calling together their allies, the Spartans argue for re-installing Hippias using much the same language (5.91.2). They lament how, after they have freed Athens from the Pisistratids (δι' ἡμέας ἐλευθερωθεῖς), although this family had made the city reliably submissive to Sparta's will (ἀναδεκομένους ὑποχειρίας παρέξειν τὰς Ἀθήνας), the Athenians are now growing in strength and becoming arrogant (δόξαν δὲ φύσας ἀυξάνεται). Not only has this already allowed Athens to defeat Cleomenes, Boeotia, and Chalcis, but the city could also soon threaten any or all of the assembled Peloponnesians. The Spartan position, accordingly, is that a politically autonomous Athens is too difficult to contain; but if the Athenians were under a tyranny their dangerous ambitions could be effectively curtailed. Thus a capacity for political self-determination makes a community ἐλεύθερον, free, with subjugation to a tyrant presented through antithesis as the opposite state (ἐλεύθερον μὲν ἐὼν ~ κατεχόμενον δὲ ὑπὸ τυραννίδος).

The Spartan view corresponds to a more general conception of ἐλευθερία, prevalent by the Classical period, as the absence of any coercive external restraint on action, whether at the

level of the individual citizen or of a citizen community considered collectively.²⁹ If, for a polis, ἐλευθερία amounted to the ability of its full citizens to be self-determining, for the individual it meant status as a free citizen in contrast to δουλεία, slavery. The two levels were related by synecdoche, as is shown by the frequency with which imposing tyranny on a Greek state was characterized as enslaving it. Such metonymic fluidity also facilitated expanding the field of reference for a τύραννος. Instead of only denoting an individual who curtails the self-determination of a polis from within, τύραννος became a label for any and all state actors that did so from without, whether in relation to a single polis or to a group of poleis. Thus an external imperial aggressor—whether Persia or Athens—could be conceived of as a tyrant enslaving not an actual community of free citizens, but an imagined community of free Greek states.³⁰ Accordingly, not only can the tyrant Cypselus prefigure the polis τύραννος of Athens, but also already in the mind of the Spartans the Pisistratid tyranny is viewed as an instrument for a coercive foreign policy that can keep Athens compliant (πειθαρχέεσθαι ἔτοιμον).

The response of Socles wholly ignores the merits of the Spartan proposal as a practical solution to the growing Athenian

²⁹ K. A. Raaflaub, *The Discovery of Freedom in Ancient Greece* (Chicago 2004) 250–265, offers an excellent summation.

³⁰ Raaflaub, *Discovery of Freedom* ch.3, argues that the notion of political self-determination as the antithesis to tyranny emerges only during the Persian Wars as a result of Greece's increasing experience with outside imperialism from the east. Since actors like Persia often used Greek tyrants as local proxies, conflation of Greek tyranny and eastern imperial monarchy into a single negative stereotype of the despotic became common. S. Forsdyke, "Athenian Democratic Ideology and Herodotus' *Histories*," *AJP* 122 (2001) 329–358, makes similar claims, but locates the impetus for these developments specifically in the self-promotion of democratic Athens. Sparta's perspective in the Socles scene would, on either view, be an anachronistic retrojection of a fifth-century concept into the late sixth century (see especially Raaflaub 134). If true, such anachronism helps demonstrate the degree to which Herodotus was positioning the sequence as an allusive commentary on Athens in his own day.

threat. Instead, he vigorously asserts that the institution of tyranny *per se* is immoral and that, consequently, it is wrong for the Spartans to impose it upon others, regardless of immediate advantage (5.92a.1):

ἦ δὴ ὁ τε οὐρανὸς ἔνερθε ἔσται τῆς γῆς καὶ ἡ γῆ μετέωρος ὑπὲρ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ ἄνθρωποι νομὸν ἐν θαλάσῃ ἔξουσι καὶ ἰχθύες τὸν πρότερον ἄνθρωποι, ὅτε γε ὑμεῖς, ὦ Λακεδαιμόνιοι, ἰσοκρατίας καταλύοντες τυραννίδας ἐς τὰς πόλεις κατὰγειν παρασκευάζεσθε, τοῦ οὔτε ἀδικώτερον ἐστὶ οὐδὲν κατ' ἀνθρώπους οὔτε μαιφονώτερον.

Truly the sky will be under the earth and the earth up high above the sky, and men will have their district in the sea and fishes the one that humans did before, at least when you, Spartans, abolishing equal rights, prepare to restore tyrannies to their poleis. There is nothing more unjust among men or more murderous than this.

The use throughout of plurals (ἰσοκρατίας ... τυραννίδας ... τὰς πόλεις) emphasizes that Socles is formulating a general principle. Interestingly, he contrasts tyranny not with ἐλευθερία directly, but with ἰσοκρατία (equal rights), a related concept that alludes to the nominal political equality among full citizens in any ‘free’ polis, and not just democratic Athens. The term forms part of a cluster of compounds built off of ἴσος (equal, like) through which Greeks of the Late Archaic and Classical periods seem to have positively defined oligarchic and democratic poleis as free (ἐλεύθεροι) against those under tyrants.³¹

³¹ See Raaflaub, *Discovery of Freedom* 91–96. The most important of these was ἰσονομία, a difficult term to render but one used repeatedly to designate a full-citizen community’s political equality under terms enshrined in its νόμοι (laws) as opposed to the arbitrary authority of the tyrant or, later, a narrow oligarchy (e.g. Thuc. 3.62.3). Even in Herodotus ἰσονομία can stand both for any form of constitutional government opposed to tyranny (3.142.3, 5.37.2) and, more narrowly, democracy in the Constitutional Debate (3.80.6, 3.83.1). For ἰσονομία as a constitutionally unmarked term see also E. Lévy, “Isonomia,” in U. Bultrighini (ed.), *Democrazia e antidemocrazia nel mondo greco* (Alessandria 2005) 119–137, and the seminal study of M. Ostwald, *Nomos and the Beginnings of the Athenian Democracy* (Oxford 1969),

Socles, therefore, is operating within the same conceptual framework as the Spartans.

It is a framework that Herodotus also encodes at the level of his narrative voice at 5.78, the passage in which he attributes the Athenian victories of 506 to the motivational power of liberation from tyranny:

Ἀθηναῖοι μὲν νυν ἠϋξήντο. δηλοῖ δὲ οὐ κατ' ἓν μόνον ἀλλὰ πανταχῇ ἢ ἰσηγορίῃ ὡς ἐστὶ χρῆμα σπουδαῖον, εἰ καὶ Ἀθηναῖοι τυραννεύομενοι μὲν οὐδαμῶν τῶν σφέας περιοικεόντων ἦσαν τὰ πολέμια ἀμείνους, ἀπαλλαχθέντες δὲ τυράννων μακρῶ πρώτοι ἐγένοντο. δηλοῖ ὧν ταῦτα ὅτι κατεχόμενοι μὲν ἐθελοκάκεον ὡς δεσπότη ἐργαζόμενοι, ἐλευθερωθέντων δὲ αὐτὸς ἕκαστος ἑωυτῶ προεθυμέετο κατεργάζεσθαι.

The Athenians at this point had grown in strength. And it is clear that equality of public speech is an important possession not in one respect but in all, if the Athenians while under a tyrant were no better in war affairs than any of those neighboring them, but became the first by far after getting rid of tyrants. Therefore it is clear that while held in check they were intentionally cowardly, since they were laboring for a master, but once they had been freed each one was eager to achieve things for himself.

The contrast between Athens during and after the Pisistratids is characterized through two paralleled binaries: τυραννεύομενοι (under a tyrant) defines the state opposite to ἰσηγορία (equality of public speech), and δεσπότη ἐργαζόμενοι (laboring for a master) is made the inverse of ἐλευθερωθέντων (freed). As in the Socles scene, the exercise of equality—expressed through a compound involving ἴσος—is constructed as the positive value enabled by the achievement of ἐλευθερία. The structurally equivalent position occupied by ἰσηγορία and ἰσοκρατία makes clear that the former, despite its association with public speech, is not yet an exclusively democratic value, as παρρησία

especially 96–120, who, however, posits a more exclusive association with democracy.

would become by the later fifth century.³² Instead, as I will demonstrate below, the positive effects of ἰσηγορία at Athens anticipate and parallel the military prowess during the Persian Wars shown by all the self-consciously ἐλεύθεροι poleis that oppose Persia, whether oligarchic or democratic. Indeed, the connection between the contexts of 5.78 and the Socles scene is reinforced through the use of the verb ἀυξάνω in the passive to describe the post-Pisistratid flourishing of Athens by both Herodotus and the Spartans.³³ The verb, moreover, is clearly a marked term for Herodotus, since it is also used to describe the growth of Cypselus after he evades assassination (5.92ε.1), and thus like the lion portent supplies another verbal link between Socles' tyrants and imperial Athens.

At the conclusion of Socles' speech Herodotus notes that the other allies were already uncomfortable with the Spartan proposal, but had until then remained silent (5.93.2):

ἐπεῖτε δὲ Σωκλῆος ἤκουσαν εἶπαντος ἐλευθέρως, ἅπας τις αὐτῶν φωνὴν ῥήξας αἰρέετο τοῦ Κορινθίου τὴν γνώμην, Λακε-

³² See Moles, in *Brill's Companion* 38–39, for this passage. For the relationship of ἰσηγορία to παρρησία more generally see Raaflaub, *Discovery of Freedom* 222–223. The evolution from ἰσηγορία to παρρησία is a model instance of the Athenians' larger capacity to appropriate and redefine broader values of 'free' polis-culture within a restricted democratic context, a *modus operandi* appreciated already by the Old Oligarch (1.12). Even if ἰσηγορία originated only within the democratic context of Athens—as is certainly possible—its semantics nevertheless sought to portray a unique emphasis in Athenian democracy on free political speech as conforming to a broader Panhellenic notion of constitutionality rooted in equality.

³³ Cf. the similar characterization by Herodotus at 5.78 of the Athenians as κατεχόμενοι (held in check) while under tyrants and the Spartan preference at 5.91.1 for having the γένος of Attica κατεχόμενον by a tyranny, a connection emphasized by Forsdyke, *AJP* 122 (2001) 332–336. In the case of the Spartans, passive forms of ἀυξάνω actually appear twice. First, Herodotus describes the Spartans as alarmed when they see the Athenians ἀυξομένους (5.91.1), which leads to their decision to recall Hippias and call the assembly of their allies; the speech the Spartans make at the meeting then explicitly draws attention to the fact that Athens ἀυξάνεται (5.91.2).

δαιμονίοισί τε ἐπεμαρτύροντο μὴ ποιέειν μηδὲν νεώτερον περὶ πόλιν Ἑλλάδα.

But after they heard Socles speaking freely, every one of them, breaking into speech, approved the Corinthian's opinion, and they implored the Lacedaemonians not to induce a new political arrangement in the case of a Greek polis.

A speech Herodotus frames as condemning a Spartan attempt to curtail the ἐλεύθερον-state of Athens succeeds because the allies hear Socles speak ἐλευθέρως, freely.³⁴ Through this verbal and conceptual echo the author economically but emphatically connects the effect of Socles' speech to the cause that had first led him to speak. A clear affinity is thus established between the political autonomy from Sparta that Socles defends for Athens, his own parallel autonomy as a speaker voicing a dissenting view from the Lacedaemonians, and the similar assertion of autonomy he inspires among the other Spartan allies.³⁵ Put another way, what Socles asserts for Cor-

³⁴ The arguments of G. Nenci, *Erodoto: Le Storie V* (Milan 1994) 299–300, in favor of adopting the manuscript alternative ἐλευθερώσαι, πᾶς, in which case Socles would not be heard “speaking freely” but “talking about freeing [Athens],” are unconvincing. As Nenci admits, ἐλευθερώω, to set free, in Herodotus involves achieving freedom from a form of enslavement. But Socles' speech argues instead for preserving a currently free Athens from again becoming “enslaved” to Hippias. This is a similar but ultimately different matter and suggests that ἐλευθερώσαι is the result of a reductive scribal misunderstanding. Moreover, Nenci underestimates the degree to which ἐλευθέρως εἰπεῖν is a significant phrase even beyond Herodotus (see below).

³⁵ As a modern term, autonomy is useful shorthand for capturing not only the emphasis on self-determination in positive conceptions of ἐλευθερία, but also the transferability of these notions between the social and personal realms. Greek αὐτονομία, self-regulation, almost exclusively refers to political freedom. Thus αὐτόνομοι is another way for Herodotus at 1.96.1 to denote those in a ‘free’ political state as opposed to tyranny, although in the non-Greek context of Media. However, αὐτονομία came increasingly to be defined more narrowly in the period from the Delian League onwards as the political state of subjects in a hegemonic alliance granted control over local affairs only. This is the sense ascribed to the αὐτόνομοι in the only

inth and inspires among the other allies creates, at the inter-polis level, the state of ἰσηγορία, equality of public speech, that had characterized the Athenian achievement of ἐλευθερία in an intra-polis context.³⁶ In the terminology of speech act theory, the phrase draws attention to how Socles ‘performs’ the practice of equality-based ἐλευθερία that his speech advocates.³⁷

This parallelism, in turn, leads to a further irony. Socles, through the assertive reaction his freely-spoken defense of political freedom produces among the allies, succeeds in undermining Sparta’s ability to impose its will. But this was the very purpose for which the Spartans had wanted to restore tyranny at Athens in the first place.³⁸ At one ironic level, Socles’ in-

other appearance of the word in Herodotus (8.140α.2). True political autonomy required αὐτονομία augmented by ἐλευθερία. It was the latter that implied self-determination in external affairs also; hence the pairing of the two in the King’s Peace, the charter of the Second Athenian Confederation, and Hellenistic treaties. Meaningful political autonomy, accordingly, always includes for Greeks the notion of ἐλευθερία. See the seminal analysis of E. Bickerman, “*Autonomia*: Sur un passage de Thucydide (1, 144, 2),” *RIDA SER. III* 5 (1958) 313–344, with supplementary discussion in Raaf-laub, *Discovery of Freedom* 147–157.

³⁶ Moles, in *Reading Herodotus* 255.

³⁷ On the speech-act model outlined by J. L. Austin, *How to do Things with Words*² (Cambridge [Mass.] 1975), Socles’ speech is a ‘performative’ utterance, since it enacts through language the very thing to which that same language refers, namely a state of ἐλευθερία. The three parallel assertions of autonomy I have outlined in the Socles scene can accordingly be understood as ἐλευθερία expressed at the levels of illocution (Socles speaks freely), locution (Socles argues for freedom), and perlocution (Socles inspires the other allies to speak freely also). In this regard the choice of the phrase ἐλευθέρως εἰπεῖν, to speak freely, is particularly apt for characterizing Socles’ address, since it often appears in contexts where a speaker asserts his ability to speak truth to power, thereby defying an implicit threat to autonomous self-expression. See esp. Hdt. 8.73.3 (cf. 7.46.1), Aeschin. 2.70, Soph. fr.201b, and, in a humorous vein, Pl. *Symp.* 218c.

³⁸ Gray, *AJP* 117 (1996) 383–384; van der Veen, *The Significant and the Insignificant* 81; S. Forsdyke, “From Aristocratic to Democratic Ideology and

sistence that the Spartans not support tyranny at Athens may facilitate the rise of Athenian tyranny against other Greek states in the long run, but in the context of 504 it also ironically prevents the Spartans from instituting their own form of imperialism. Thus the power of ἐλευθερία as a normative value—understood here as the state of political autonomy in the absence of tyranny—is portrayed as possessing tremendous currency among the Greeks. Indeed, faced with a Socles who both argues for ἐλευθερία and in doing so makes a display of it, even powerful Sparta must back down from installing tyranny in Greek states generally (περὶ πόλιν Ἑλλάδα).

Seth Benardete has classified the arguments of the Spartans and Socles as arising, respectively, from positions of self-interest and justice.³⁹ Christopher Pelling has voiced the contrast in terms of a focus on the external interstate advantages of a tyranny for its neighbors vs. the internal intrastate drawbacks for those governed by it.⁴⁰ Both classification schemes contain much insight, but perhaps a more contextually sensitive way of parsing the difference is to say that Socles adopts a Panhellenic or communal perspective against Sparta's local and self-centered orientation. Whereas the Spartans argue for what they

Back Again: The Thrasybulus Anecdote in Herodotus' *Histories* and Aristotle's *Politics*," *CP* 94 (1999) 361–372, at 367; Pelling, in *Cambridge Companion* 107.

³⁹ S. Benardete, *Herodotean Inquiries* (The Hague 1969) 149. But cf. van der Veen, *The Significant and the Insignificant* 71–73, who adapts Benardete's terminology into the less exclusive categories of moralizing (Socles) and pragmatic (the Spartans) perspectives. Van der Veen rightly points out that it is wrong to see Sparta's motives as purely self-interested, since Herodotus stresses that they also wished to restore Hippias to power in order to make good on the relationship of ξενία, guest-friendship, that they had had with the Pisistratids. The Spartans had broken this relationship only at the behest of oracles from Delphi, which they later discovered had been forged and planted by anti-tyrannical elements in Athens (5.63.1–2 and 5.91). Such a consideration does, however, again evidence Sparta's prioritizing of local issues over Panhellenic considerations (see below).

⁴⁰ Pelling, in *Cambridge Companion* 107.

see as best for Sparta and its allies considered on their own, Socles' perspective extends itself to include Athens as a peer Greek community. There is certainly, as John Moles has pointed out, a practical dimension to Socles' approach.⁴¹ The Corinthians and the other allies have a real interest in curbing Sparta's aggressiveness towards Athens lest it set a precedent for constitutional manipulation that the Lacedaemonians could eventually turn against these very allies in case of future disagreement. But this hedge against longer-term Spartan domination is achieved by subscribing to a communitarian ideal that not only surrenders an advantage in power to the Athenians in the short term, but also involves reciprocal limitations on Corinth's scope for future action. Protection from future tyranny is secured only through relinquishing it as a tool for extracting immediate advantage from others.

The nuance introduced by the notion of Panhellenism is significant. It makes of ἐλευθερία a concept able to unite disparate Greek states in pursuit of a larger goal outside the immediate self-interest of each individual community. This use of ἐλευθερία evokes the similar role that the idea plays later during the Persian War narrative in uniting and defining the non-Medizing Greeks against another threat of tyranny, this time from the invading armies of Darius and Xerxes. This later attitude is epitomized in the explanation provided to the Asian satrap Hydarnes by two Spartan ambassadors in 480 for why Sparta will not submit to Persia (7.135.3):

Ἵδαρνες, οὐκ ἐξ ἴσου γίνεται ἡ συμβουλίη ἢ ἐς ἡμέας τείνουσα. τοῦ μὲν γὰρ πεπειρημένος συμβουλευεῖς, τοῦ δὲ ἄπειρος ἐών· τὸ μὲν γὰρ δοῦλος εἶναι ἐξεπίστεται, ἐλευθερίας δὲ οὐκ ἔπειρήθης, οὐτ' εἰ ἔστι γλυκὺ οὐτ' εἰ μῆ. εἰ γὰρ αὐτῆς πειρήσαιο, οὐκ ἂν δόρασι συμβουλεύοις ἡμῖν περὶ αὐτῆς μάχεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ πελέκεσι.

Hydarnes, your advice pertaining to us does not arise from a balanced position. For you give advice about what in part you

⁴¹ Moles, in *Reading Herodotus* 252–254; cf. Gray, *AJP* 117 (1996) 382–383.

have experienced, but in part about what you are inexperienced in. For you are familiar with being a slave, but of freedom you have not yet had experience, neither if it is sweet nor if it is not. For if you should experience it, you would not advise us to battle for it with spears, but also with axes.

These sentiments are echoed several times in the Persian War books, most notably in the conversation between Xerxes and the exiled Spartan king Demaratus (7.101–105).⁴² On all these occasions, as here, a connection is made between the possession of ἐλευθερία and an enhanced willingness to fight effectively on behalf of one's political community. This motif complements and amplifies the idea of freedom's motivational effectiveness that Herodotus introduces explicitly in explaining the martial prowess of Athens in 506 after the expulsion of the Pisistratids (5.78, cited above).⁴³ Together with the theme of virtuous poverty, this 'freedom-advantage' is a frequent if by no means exclusive explanatory device in the *Histories* for Greek success in the Persian Wars, and one which would become a stock theme in later historiography.⁴⁴ Regardless of the degree to which Herodotus endorses this view in his complex account, the various independent and autonomous Greek states that band together against Persia are repeatedly portrayed as stressing their status as ἐλεύθεροι as a key constituent in a united and unique identity as Greeks.

The uses and abuses of eleutheria

Despite the apparent benefits that a communal commitment to ἐλευθερία confers on the non-Medizing Greeks, Herodotus

⁴² Demaratus draws special attention to the equalizing force of νόμος, law, in Spartan society, seeing it as clearly distinguishing Sparta's constitution from a potentially arbitrary Persian monarchy. The emphasis on this aspect of νόμος fits well with the dominant conception in the early fifth century of ἰσονομία as the defining type of equality in Greek poleis free of tyranny (see above).

⁴³ Fornara, *Herodotus* 48–50.

⁴⁴ Xen. *Hell.* 4.1.35–36 is typical. Alexander's conquest of Persia gave the idea renewed relevance (see e.g. Arr. *Anab.* 2.7.4).

also connects the notion to less positive effects, particularly in regard to Athenian actions in the naval sphere. At several points in the Persian War narrative the Athenians are shown exploiting the possibilities opened up by participation in the Panhellenic defense of Greece for their own, state-specific advantage. This becomes a motif particularly associated in Book 8 with the statesman Themistocles. Presenting himself as acting on behalf of the entire Greek navy and thereby able to exploit the threat of its full strength, he extorts protection money from the Aegean islands without the knowledge or consent of the other Greek naval commanders (8.111–112). Earlier, he makes a large personal profit by accepting bribes in secret from the Euboeans, who wish to keep the allied Greek navy stationed off their island. He then redistributes only a fraction of this amount in further bribes among his fellow commanders in order to convince them to remain and face the Persian navy at Artemisium, as the Euboeans had wished (8.4–5). Indeed, Herodotus portrays the great Panhellenic achievement of Salamis itself as the result of Themistocles intriguing with the Persians in order to force the battle on the Greeks there before they can sail to the Isthmus and abandon Attica. Thus when the other Greeks vote to leave Salamis behind, Themistocles sends a messenger to the Persians urging that they attack before the fleet can move out of the narrows (8.74–75, 80). As Thomas Harrison has succinctly observed, “Themistocles uses the Greeks’ disunity to impose his own view upon them. The fleeting unity of Salamis is in some senses then actually the product of the Greeks’ political *disunity*.”⁴⁵

Athenian proto-imperialism also appears apart from Themistocles. As early as 490, in the aftermath of Marathon, Miltiades uses an Athenian fleet to pursue a personal grudge against Paros, from which he attempts to extort funds (6.132–135). Even before the battle Miltiades reassures the reluctant polemarch Callimachus that facing the Persians at Marathon

⁴⁵ Harrison, in *Brill’s Companion* 568.

will not only secure Ἀθήνας ... ἐλευθέρας, “a free Athens,” but will also clear the way for turning the city into a leading power in Greece (οἷη τέ ἐστι πρώτη τῶν Ἑλληνίδων πολιῶν, “of the kind that is first among the Greek states,” 6.109.3).⁴⁶ Most ominously, the work’s narrative of Greek affairs ends with a surprisingly cruel Athenian siege of Sestos under the command of Xanthippus, none other than the father of Pericles, after the rest of the Greek fleet has sailed home after judging the war to have ended (9.114–118).⁴⁷ In a nascent and, in the case of Salamis, ultimately beneficial form the *Histories* thus present Athens as conforming to the aggressive, manipulative, and self-interested persona that would characterize its empire and lead to it becoming the tyrant state of Greece through coopting the Delian League.⁴⁸ As in the following decades of the fifth century, during the Persian Wars the rhetoric of ἐλευθερία and the resulting feelings of Panhellenic unity and trust that the concept is able to produce among the Greek states become a vital tool in the Athenians’ operations to secure their own interest. Such self-interest, moreover, is often achieved even to the possible detriment of this greater Greek political freedom. At the same time, however, it is also in the case of Salamis an insoluble element in the survival of such ἐλευθερία.

⁴⁶ Already in 5.78.1, discussed above, there may be a similar intimation of the intimate link between freedom and empire at Athens in the connection Herodotus draws between the establishment there of ἰσηγορία and the Athenians becoming μακρῶ πρώτοι, “first by far.”

⁴⁷ M. A. Flower and J. Marincola (eds.), *Herodotus: Histories, Book IX* (Cambridge 2002) 300: “Sestos is thus in a sense only the culmination of the Athenian movement towards imperialism.”

⁴⁸ H. Y. McCullough, “Herodotus, Athens and Marathon,” *SymbOslo* 57 (1982) 35–55, stresses Miltiades’ campaign against Paros after Marathon as programmatic in this regard. W. Blösel, “The Herodotean Picture of Themistocles: A Mirror of Fifth-Century Athens,” in N. Luraghi (ed.), *The Historian’s Craft in the Age of Herodotus* (Oxford 2001) 179–197, argues that Herodotus has carefully manipulated the historical traditions informing the various negative Themistocles episodes of his text in order to subtly foreshadow particular actions by imperial Athens.

Herodotus, therefore, portrays Athens as already in the Persian Wars exploiting ἐλευθερία for its own ends, and just such a *modus operandi* came to be seen as characteristic of the later tyrannical Athenian empire. It is with these two factors in mind that one can detect the author's particular purpose in alluding to the imperial future of Athens during the Socles episode. Herodotus depicts the young Athenian democracy as rescued from tyranny through an appeal to the very ἐλευθερία that it would later use to subvert this same Greek freedom and establish its empire. He then introduces the prophecies of Hippias to remind his audience of these later circumstances. Through this pronounced juxtaposition Herodotus encourages his audience to think about the complex interaction between the uses of Panhellenic ἐλευθερία at these two different moments. The notion of political freedom for all of Greece, after all, gives the non-Medizing Greeks a point around which to organize themselves and a goal toward which to strive. But their success in the Persian Wars is a product of both the unity born from this idea and, even at this early stage, Athens' exploitation of it for Athenian ends, as best illustrated during the battle of Salamis. The unstable mix responsible for Greece's victory in the Persian Wars, the Socles scene thereby suggests, would also result in the oppressiveness of the later Athenian Empire.

When, therefore, in accordance with Herodotus' many forward-looking 'pointers', the audience considers the Persian War narrative against the Greek politics of the author's own time, it becomes apparent that the unity of the Persian Wars contains the seeds of the internecine strife that would erupt in the Peloponnesian War. Through the irony of the Socles episode Herodotus shows his audience that this conflict was latently present even earlier, at a key point in the first years of democratic Athens. Already then Sparta's fear of Athenian ambition and the Corinthian Socles' rhetoric of ἐλευθερία find themselves at odds and, as would happen often subsequently, being resolved ultimately to Athens' singular advantage. Such a conflict, by helping to explain both the Persian defeat by the allied Greeks and, simultaneously, the later fall of a large part

of this united Greece under the despotic Athenian empire, advances what Raaflaub has identified as Herodotus' intellectual agenda of exploring the rise and fall of political hegemonies. Stated succinctly, through the associative connection created using irony, the Socles scene insinuates a corresponding causal relationship in the paradoxical ability of ἐλευθερία both to preserve Greek freedom and at the same time to provide the Athenians a vehicle for subverting it. This suggested causal connection is then validated in the subsequent Persian War narrative, and confirmed through further allusion there to events of the later fifth century.⁴⁹

Herodotus' choice to introduce this theme—the tension between Athens' self-focused ambitions and the Greek unity that it feeds upon—specifically through a Corinthian is particularly apt. As noted, Corinth would come by the start of the Peloponnesian Wars to be seen as an emblematic victim of Athenian imperialism, and appears as such in the first book of Thucydides. But even within the Persian War narrative of the *Histories*

⁴⁹ C. Dewald, "Wanton Kings, Pickled Heroes, and Gnostic Founding Fathers: Strategies of Meaning at the End of Herodotus' *Histories*," in D. H. Roberts et al. (eds.), *Classical Closure: Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature* (Princeton 1997) 62–82, at 71–82, makes the excellent point that Herodotus' repeated emphasis on withholding final judgment on historical actors until after their end should discourage readers from seeking any definitive prejudgment in his work of an Athens whose fate remained undetermined at the time of writing. In my reading Herodotus accordingly emphasizes the ambivalent role that ἐλευθερία plays in the transformation of Greek relations between the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars, but only hints at the possible end point of this transformation and its ultimate significance. Through polyvalent irony the Socles scene thus helps the audience understand the rise and apparent overreach of Athens without necessarily prescribing how it will fall, although it suggests that ἐλευθερία could again play a role in frustrating hegemonic ambitions. Less convincing is Dewald's view that the work's closing Cyrus anecdote models the open-ended approach that Herodotus takes towards Athenian power by suggesting it is equally possible that Athens will fall victim to or overcome the μαλακία that Cyrus warns against; but, as I have argued, μαλακία is a quality that finds no parallel at Athens.

Herodotus has begun using the Corinthians as a focal point for highlighting the slowly building tension between increasing Athenian self-assertion and the common interest of the Greek allies.⁵⁰ Accordingly, when Themistocles bribes the Spartan chief of the allied navy to keep the fleet at Euboea, it is the Corinthian contingent's commander in particular who objects to this change from the agreed-upon plan, at least until he too is paid off (8.5). Then again, during the meeting of the allied naval commanders before the battle of Salamis, when Themistocles jumps in and addresses the council first in violation of the allies' agreed-upon order of speakers, it is this same Corinthian commander who objects (8.59). He goes on, moreover, after Themistocles argues against the prevailing allied desire to depart for the Isthmus, to lead the opposition to this proposed change of plan (8.61). The Panhellenic position that Socles argues, therefore, and the theme of its tension with growing Athenian power that Herodotus introduces through irony alongside it are reinforced by the subsequent role that Corinth plays as a foil to Athens' self-focus throughout the Persian War narrative.⁵¹

However, the issue of rising and falling power is analyzed in the case of Athens under the rubric of the ambiguous possibilities afforded by an ideology of ἐλευθερία, and not through the also common theme in Herodotus of power leading to 'softness'.⁵² If so, the proposed 'warner'-function of the *Histories*

⁵⁰ P. Stadter, "Herodotus and the Cities of Mainland Greece," in *Cambridge Companion* 242–256, at 252–253; Pelling, in *Cambridge Companion* 107. Even before the Socles scene, Corinth's association with a strong defense of Panhellenic ἐλευθερία is emphasized. When in 506 Cleomenes marches Sparta's allies against Athens in order to reinstall Hippias it is the Corinthians who first abandon the expedition, believing ὡς οὐ ποιοῖεν τὰ δίκαια ("they were not acting justly," 5.75.1).

⁵¹ It may in this regard be significant that Socles is introduced in the text first by his ethnic, characterizing him more as a generic Corinthian than as an individual with personal political views: Κορίνθιος δὲ Σωκλῆς ἔλεξε τὰδε (5.92.1).

⁵² The promise of liberation from Assyria also explains for Herodotus the

in relation to Athens, with which this paper began, becomes complicated. What changes between the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars after all is not some disposition of a dominant power that a warner's message could seek to counteract. Instead, it is the circumstances in which a constant disposition is deployed. For Athens this involves the shifting degree to which ἐλευθερία provides a useful pretext for self-advancement. It is a development paralleled to some degree even in the more orthodox account of the Persians succumbing to softness, since Herodotus depicts their acquisition of empire as affording access to a μαλακία previously out of reach, but already highly desired from the initial stages of Cyrus' rise.⁵³ The rise and fall of powers due to some necessary but inherently destabilizing factor therefore is a universal in Herodotus, but the destabilizing factor can vary, and in the case of the Greeks the force of ἐλευθερία is marked as a unique feature.⁵⁴

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martial prowess initially shown by the Medes: οὔτοι περὶ τῆς ἐλευθερίας μαχεσάμενοι τοῖσι Ἀσσυρίοισι ἐγένοντο ἄνδρες ἀγαθοὶ καὶ ἀπωσάμενοι τὴν δουλοσύνην ἐλευθέρωθησαν ("these men, fighting against the Assyrians for freedom, demonstrated their courage, and after casting off their slavery they were freed," 1.95.2). However, any motivational capacity of a *positive* conception of ἐλευθερία rooted in a Greek-like respect for equality is absent, as the Medes soon embrace willingly the monarchy of Deioces.

⁵³ Although the Persians, like the Greeks, are a 'hard' people who defeat a 'soft' empire (see 9.122, the conclusion of the *Histories*, discussed above), it is the promise of acquiring the goods accompanying the soft lifestyle of the ruling Medes that Cyrus must use to motivate their initial rebellion (1.126). Contrast the derision with which the Spartan king Pausanias regards the Persian luxuries confiscated from the tent of Xerxes after Plataea (9.82).

⁵⁴ An early version of this paper was given at the 2009 meeting of the American Philological Association. I wish to thank Deborah Kamen, Paula Perlman, Alexander Hollmann, Deborah Beck, and the anonymous reader for their invaluable suggestions.