

Oral Performance and the Composition of Herodotus' *Histories*

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ORAL DELIVERY is usually assumed to have something to do with the composition of Herodotus' *Histories*. We are not surprised to find that several ancient sources report that Herodotus, the great *raconteur*, gave public lectures.¹ These reports in turn have led to theories proposing either that the *Histories* provided the material for the lectures, or that the lectures formed the basis for the text of the *Histories*.² Oral performance has therefore been championed as the solution to various peculiarities of Herodotean style.³ Lattimore, in particular, has argued that the *Histories* as we have it represents a first draft, written as if a text for recitation.⁴ This

¹ For the best summary and discussion see J. Enoch POWELL, *The History of Herodotus* (Cambridge 1939: hereafter 'Powell') 32ff; see further below.

² The *Histories* as a compilation of lectures: F. Jacoby, "Herodotus," *RE* Suppl. 2 (1913) 726–392, esp. 330, 379f. That Herodotus recited from the *Histories* is the usual interpretation of the ancient biographical tradition and therefore an extremely widespread opinion; a convenient summary of early views in J. L. MYRES, *Herodotus, Father of History* (Oxford 1953: hereafter 'Myres') 20–31.

³ Cf. T. E. V. Pearce, "'Epic Regression' in Herodotus," *Eranos* 79 (1981) 89f; M. POHLENZ, *Herodot, erste Geschichtsschreiber des Abendlandes* (Leipzig 1937: hereafter 'Pohlenz') 208ff; R. V. Munson, "Herodotus' Use of Prospective Sentences and the Story of Rhampsinitus and the Thief in the *Histories*," *AJP* 114 (1993) 27–44.

⁴ R. Lattimore, "The Composition of the *History* of Herodotus," *CP* 53 (1958) 9. Lattimore's theory has received some acceptance of late: cf. J. A. S. Evans, *Herodotus* (Boston 1982) 17; S. Flory, *The Archaic Smile of Herodotus* (Detroit 1987) 15. Lattimore is, however, not likely to be right. His assertions on the difficulties of writing are overstated: one would think he had never heard of composing drafts on wax or wooden tablets, pieces of reused papyrus, or leather rolls (convenient as carbon ink was easily erased), or of slaves to help in transcribing and copying. The places where, according to Lattimore, Herodotus corrects himself "in stride" usually find an easy explanation

process has perhaps reached its culmination in Nagy's hypothesis that Herodotus considered himself part of a long tradition of *logioi*, who, like the epic and lyric *aoidoi*, gave oral performances.⁵

Did Herodotus write his history with oral performance in mind? Such has been the almost universal assumption. Even Flory, who makes a strong case that the *Histories* could not have been performed as a whole, concedes that "Herodotus probably did give [public] readings of excerpts from his book or used material from public readings in his book," and imagines that Herodotus' composition was strongly influenced by "oral modes of thought."⁶ Now, any author may of course recite some part of his work to an audience. This is true today and would be true *a fortiori* in a more oral culture. In the sense that the sounds of the words are attended, almost all literary writers will have 'oral performance' in mind. But this sort of commonplace is not what is generally meant by those who speak of the performance of Herodotus' work. The assumption is rather that much or all of the *Histories* is either originally or prospectively a series of public lectures, and that this mode of 'publication' had profound effects upon Herodotus' style of writing.⁷

in a delay of detail intended for some artistic effect. Lattimore's examples are more useful as a grouping that defines certain characteristics of archaic style than as proof of a lack of revision. See E. Fraenkel, *Aeschylus, Agamemnon* (Oxford 1950) 805; H. R. IMMERWAHR, *Form and Thought in Herodotus* (Cleveland 1966: hereafter 'Immerwahr') 13 n.30. Lattimore's arguments regarding the difficulties of book production have more force for revision of larger sections of the work.

⁵ G. Nagy, "Herodotus the *Logios*," *Arethusa* 20 (1987) 175–84, esp. 180f. See also (in the same volume) criticism of Nagy by M. L. Lang, 203ff, esp. 204 (on Herodotus' use of *logios*); W. R. Connor, 255–66; Nagy's reply at 209f. Cf. also Nagy's restatement: *Pindar's Homer: The Lyric Possession of an Epic Past* (Baltimore 1990) 221–24.

⁶ S. FLORY, "Who Read Herodotus' *Histories*," *AJP* 101 (1980: hereafter 'Flory') 14, 28. In recent work (*supra* n.4: 16) Flory seems more skeptical about the influence of public readings on the *Histories*.

⁷ Thus most recently Munson (*supra* n.3: 27) feels secure in basing her entire analysis on the assumption that "the *Histories* evidently constitutes a performance in the ordinary sense of the word, being composed of sections which individually or in combination were designed to be delivered orally in front of an audience and whose performance has in turn helped to shape the text we now have."

It may well be that the peculiar habits of composition we associate with archaic Greek literature—such as ring composition, epic regression, λέξις εἰρομένη—are partly or even primarily the result of oral performance, developed originally to facilitate oral comprehension. But we must be careful not to jump too quickly to the assumption that a work that exhibits such characteristics is itself the result of actual oral performance.⁸ Reading in classical Athens is still only partly understood. But it was, doubtless, a complex social phenomenon. Early readers would typically have ‘read’ the *Histories* in the sense of hearing a lector read the work aloud in the context of a private group. Private reading was, in this sense, performance entertainment. But the same private intellectual groups would have read Thucydides and Xenophon in exactly the same way. What then makes Herodotus seem so different from his successors? Many scholars attempt to answer to this question by assuming that the author himself gave public lectures—with sometimes sweeping consequences for our views of the social and literary history of the time, as well as for our interpretation of Herodotus’ methods and aims in the construction of his work.

Without denying the importance of oral traditions, the analysis here will insist upon a view of the changeover from orality to literacy that is less cataclysmic, more complex, more open to the possibility that varieties of traditions existed side by side. Rather than localizing the change from ‘oral’ to ‘literate’ on a temporal axis, as one that can be dated to the generation between Herodotus and Thucydides, we shall maintain here that changing use of and attitudes towards the written word varied from one type of literary production to the next. The work of Herodotus will be seen then primarily as part of an ongoing historiographic literary tradition, which had its own (if evolving) set of habits, attitudes, and goals.

Specifically, this study seeks to demonstrate that the assumption of Herodotus’ oral performances rests on very flimsy evidence. We shall examine two sets of questions: (1) What external sources have been adduced to prove that Herodotus gave

⁸ Thus the best studied of these devices, ring composition, is found not only in Herodotus but also in the works of Thucydides and Xenophon. For studies of ring composition in these and other classical authors, see the references in K. Stanley, *The Shield of Homer: Narrative Structure in the Iliad* (Princeton 1993) 307f n.21, esp. B. Fenik, who emphasizes its use as a principle of formal design in both oral and written literature.

oral performances and can they be trusted? (2) What internal indications suggest that the work may be originally or prospectively oral? And are there counterindications in the *Histories*?

I. Did Herodotus Recite Prize Essays?

κτῆμά τε ἐς αἰεὶ μᾶλλον ἢ ἀγώνισμα ἐς τὸ παραχρῆμα ἀκούειν
ξόγκειται (Thuc. 1.22.4).

Students only passingly familiar with Thucydides recall his claim, apparently a criticism of Herodotus, that he is writing his work “not as a prize-essay to be heard for the moment, but as a possession for all time.”⁹ The sentence, arguably the most famous in Thucydides, also provides, as it seems, the most secure evidence for the assumption that Herodotus gave public recitations of his work. Thucydides seems clearly to set up a contrast between his own written work, composed as a possession for all time, and the work of Herodotus,¹⁰ composed as an entertainment to be recited in some sort of competition. But is this what Thucydides actually says? It is not easy to overcome prejudice implanted at our earliest reading of Thucydides. Commentators and translators almost universally affirm this reading. Yet the Greek, I believe, read with care and without prejudice, cannot stand this interpretation.

Let us begin with ἀγώνισμα. The investigation of this word will lead into an unexpectedly long series of detours, but patience will be rewarded, for the definition of ἀγώνισμα is central to understanding the Thucydidean passage, and the Thucydidean passage in turn is central to the question. LSJ cites ἀγώνισμα at Thuc. 1.22 under the definition “that with which one contends, a declamation”; similarly *DGE* defines the word

⁹ Tr. C. F. Smith (Loeb ed., here as elsewhere in this paper for Thucydides). Cf. Jowett: “My history is an everlasting possession, not a prize composition which is heard and forgotten”; Rex Warner (better): “My work is not a piece of writing designed to meet the taste of an immediate public, but was done to last for ever.”

¹⁰ The argument is the same regardless of whether Thucydides means Herodotus in particular or early historians in general. That Herodotus is specifically in mind seems likely from the criticisms at Thuc. 1.20; for a different view see A. W. GOMME, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides I* (Oxford 1945: hereafter ‘Gomme, *HCT*’) 148.

in this context as a “competition-piece, declamation.”¹¹ But does the word by itself signify a declamation in a competitive setting? A survey of the lexical range of this word will be instructive.

Fifth-century examples of ἀγώνισμα are not abundant, but most evidence tends toward a single usage: ἀγώνισμα signifies a feat or achievement, the end result (usually glorious) of a competition (be it war, games, or in general); or the popular glory and repute stemming from that feat. This meaning is by no means unexpected. The word is one of hundreds of Greek nouns ending in -μα commonly formed from verbs (here ἀγωνίζομαι); though originally action nouns, they most frequently denote the object or result of an action.¹² As ἀγωνίζομαι commonly means “to contend publicly” (whether in games or battle), we might well expect the noun to refer to the issue of the contest.

In the six Thucydidean examples besides 1.22.2, the word consistently signifies an “achievement” or the popular “glory” that results from such an achievement. At 7.56.2, 59.2, the Syracusans consider that defeating the Athenians would be a glorious achievement, καλὸν ἀγώνισμα, in the eyes of the rest of Greece. The same words are used at 7.86.2 of the glorious achievement it would be for Gylippus if he brought the Athenian generals captured alive to the Spartans. At 8.12.2 ἀγώνισμα without qualifying adjective denotes the diplomatic feat of causing Ionia to revolt, thereby making the Great King an ally of the Spartans; Endius plots not to let this become the (glorious) achievement of Agis, μὴ Ἄγιδος τὸ ἀγώνισμα τοῦτο γενέσθαι. Similarly, at 8.17.2 Alcibiades plots to make sure that the glory (of bringing Ionia to revolt) be credited to Endius, Ἐνδίῳ τὸ ἀγώνισμα προσθεῖναι. The word seems then to signify the accomplishment of a notable act and the glory or fame that accrues to its accomplishment. Note that the word seems appropriate where the writer’s focus is not so much the intrinsic value of the achievement as the popular favor that it brings. This interpretation is consistent with Thuc. 3.82.7, where the man who violates an oath in making a surprise attack is cynically

¹¹ F. R. Adrados, ed., *Diccionario Griego-Español* (Madrid 1980–) s.v. II.2: “pieza de concurso, declamación”; cf. W. Crönert, *Passow’s Wörterbuch der griechischen Sprache* (Göttingen 1912) s.v.: “Prunkrede.”

¹² See P. Chantraine, *La formation des noms en grec ancien* (Paris 1933) 174–90, esp. 177 (on formation from verbs in -ζω) and 182f, 188f (on the meaning).

said “not only to win through deceit, but to gain besides glory/fame for astuteness,” ξυνέσεως ἀγώνισμα.

Other early prose examples support this. At Hdt. 8.76.2 the Persians are eager to trap the Greeks at Salamis so as to “punish the Greeks for their achievements off Artemisium” (δοῖεν τίσιν τῶν ἐπ’ Ἀρτεμισίῳ ἀγωνισμάτων). Hdt. 1.140.2 can also be read in this way: “the Magians kill with their own hands every creature, save only dogs and men; they kill ants and snakes and other creeping and flying things, thinking it a great achievement” (καὶ ἀγώνισμα μέγα τοῦτο ποιεῦνται).¹³ Similarly the one example in Hippocrates (*Prorrheticon* 2.2) refers to “glory” in the sense of popular reputation.¹⁴

References elsewhere are also mostly consistent. In Euripides, the word is found twice. At *El.* 987, Orestes, having determined to kill Clytemnestra, says “but for me the achievement is bitter, not sweet” (πικρὸν δ’ οὐχ ἡδὺ τ’ ἀγώνισμά μοι). *Phoen.* 1355 is more doubtful: the word seems to mean the “issue” (or public manifestation) of the curse of Oedipus (ἄρα τ’ ἀγώνισμ’ Οἰδίπου). In other early poetic use, Ar. *Ran.* 284 (Ἐγὼ δέ γ’ εὐξάιμην ἂν ἐντυχεῖν τινι λαβεῖν τ’ ἀγώνισμ’ ἄξιόν τι τῆς ὁδοῦ), the word can be interpreted as either a “glorious accomplishment” or a “contest, fight,” depending on whether λαβεῖν is understood as “attain” or “undertake.” Last, the orators use the word in a special way to refer to the central argument or issue in a legal contest (Antiphon, *Caed. Her.* 36; *Lys.* 13.77).

That no early instance supports the meaning “declamation” may of course be coincidence. But it is interesting that a single cluster of meaning accounts so well for usage in Thucydides, Herodotus, and most others of the same period. This same interpretation works very well indeed in the passage under consideration here: Thucydides writes that this work is composed as “a possession for all time, not as a glorious (*i.e.*, popular) achievement for the moment.”

But why then does Thucydides choose ἀγώνισμα to contrast with κτῆμα? What exactly does he intend, if not a contrast between what is written and lasting and what is part of a festival (ἀγών) and thus oral and ephemeral? Before attempting an

¹³ Herodotus’ subtle humor has misled lexicographers to suppose a special meaning here: “an object to strive for” (LSJ) or “an aim” (Powell).

¹⁴ The gloss preserved in Hesychius (ἀγωνισμάτων· ὀχλικῶν ἐπιδείξεων) probably derives from this passage in Hippocrates (*cf.* Crönert-Passow [*supra* n.11]), and is itself the probable source of the late scholium (ἐπίδειξις) at Thuc. 1.22.

answer, it will be helpful to complete this survey with a brief look at later usage. Although the meaning “glorious achievement” continues, in later writers ἀγώνισμα is most frequently used as a synonym for ἀγών.¹⁵ The commonest meaning, “contest,” is applied to warfare and games—often for athletic contests, and for dicastic contests and those in the arts as well: music, poetry, drama.¹⁶ More to the point is the use of ἀγώνισμα to signify a literary composition. There are two clear examples, both late.¹⁷ Both seem to refer to written compositions, though at least some of these could plausibly be recited at a public assembly (ἀγών). Thus, [Ps.-]Lucian refers to a poetic encomium on Homer as an ἀγώνισμα (*Dem. Enc.* 9); and Aristides uses the word generally of prose writings, among which he specifies panegyrics, narrations of military campaigns (μύθοι), and legal contests (*Ad Sarap.* I 48 Jebb).

Two important passages remain for consideration. In the first, Polybius interrupts the narrative at 3.31 to justify his focus on

¹⁵ Thus already in the fourth century: cf. Pl. *Leg.* 830A, 832E; *Dem. Erot.* 24; *Xen. Cyr.* 8.2.27, *Hiero* 11.7; *Ages.* 9.7; *Mag. eq.* 3.5; *Eq.* 11.13. There is a possibility that the word is sometimes used as an action noun in the fifth century; thus Powell interprets *Hdt.* 8.76.2 as “fighting” (presumably “successful fighting”), and a similar interpretation will work at *Ran.* 284. Yet if so, the word still carries a connotation of glory and is not in any case used in the sense of a general contest or competition. The survey here is exhaustive through the fourth century B.C.; the summary of later usage is based on a review of all instances of the word through the second century A.D. as well as in selected later authors (taken from TLG CD ROM “D” [1992], supplemented by all additional holdings of the data bank as of winter 1994). The one reference not mentioned is a quotation of Gorgias (D.-K. B8) by Clement of Alexandria, where the word is used metaphorically of the conflict between two forms of ἀρετή; but it is doubtful whether ἀγώνισμα is to be included among Gorgias’ *ipsissima verba*.

¹⁶ Dicastic contests: *Arist. In Capit.* II 321 Jebb; *Philostr. VS* 1.510; musical: *Strab.* 6.1.9; *Phot. Bibl.* 239.320b; cf. *Jos. AJ* 15.269; poetic: *Paus.* 10.7.2ff, 6; *Plut. Mor.* 674D; dramatic: *Ael. VH* 2.30. In the only use of the word for oratorical contests the choice of word depends on the context: *Aristides (In Plat.* II 1) contrasts athletic and musical ἀγωνίσματα with “more urbane contests” (ἀστειοτέρων ἀγωνισμάτων), by which he means oratory.

From the general idea of contest develop further semantic variations: prize, goal (*Ar. Gram. Epit.* 2.201; *Philo Som.* 2.90; *Synesius passim*; cf. *Hesychius ap. Suda s.v.* ἄθλον); labor, ordeal ([*Longinus Subl.* 14.2); difficulty, trouble (*Jos. AJ* 13.111; *Aristid. Περὶ τοῦ παραφθ.* II 393); victim (*Jos. BJ* 1.226, 565).

¹⁷ The unique meaning found in *Himerius the Sophist* (“subject, theme,” applied to tragedy [*Or.* 4.143] and tales [41.46], but also to statues [48.165]), is related rather to the legal usage cited earlier (“central issue” in a case).

the causes of events. He argues vigorously for the instructional value of history as follows:

διόπερ οὐχ οὕτως ἐστὶ φροντιστέον τῆς αὐτῶν τῶν πράξεων ἐξηγήσεως οὔτε τοῖς γράφουσιν οὔτε τοῖς ἀναγινώσκουσιν τὰς ἱστορίας, ὡς τῶν πρότερον καὶ τῶν ἅμα καὶ τῶν ἐπιγινομένων τοῖς ἔργοις. ἱστορίας γὰρ εἴαν ἀφέλη τις τὸ διὰ τί καὶ πῶς καὶ τίνος χάριν ἐπράχθη τὸ πραχθὲν καὶ πότερον εὐλογον ἔσχε τὸ τέλος, τὸ καταλειπόμενον αὐτῆς ἀγώνισμα μὲν μάθημα δ' οὐ γίνεται, καὶ παραυτικά μὲν τέρπει, πρὸς δὲ τὸ μέλλον οὐδὲν ὠφελεῖ τὸ παράπαν.¹⁸

That Polybius deliberately echoes Thuc. 1.22 hardly needs comment. Lexicographers, influenced by their reading of Thucydides, generally translate ἀγώνισμα here as “show-piece,” but impartial consideration will show how little the context demands or even fits this interpretation. In fact the passage seems almost to define ἀγώνισμα: an ἀγώνισμα is what remains when the analysis is removed from history, when the events are simply narrated in a way that is pleasing to most people.¹⁹

Consider, second, Aristotle's sole use of ἀγώνισμα at *Poet.* 1451b: the worst dramatic plots are those in which episodes follow one another with no sense of inevitability. Bad poets write such plays as a matter of course, but good poets write them to please the actors (or judges?):²⁰ ἀγωνίσματα γὰρ ποιῶντες καὶ παρὰ τὴν δύναμιν παρατείνοντες τὸν μῦθον πολλάκις διαστρέφειν ἀναγκάζονται τὸ ἐφεξῆς (“for in writing ἀγωνίσματα and straining the plot beyond its inherent capacity

¹⁸ “Therefore writers and readers of history ought not pay such attention to the narration of events, concentrating on what incidents come before, or at the same time, or after others. For if one takes away from history the why and how and wherefore each thing was done, and whether the outcome makes sense, what is left is an ἀγώνισμα and not an instructive work (μάθημα); and though it delights for the moment, it has no profit at all for the future.”

¹⁹ Further echoes of Thuc. 1.22.4 at Plb. 2.56.11, 38.4.8 are in a similar vein. The contrast between a history that is pleasurable and one that is profitable is a favorite Polybian theme: K. Ziegler, “Polybios,” *RE* 21.2 (1952) 1503ff. Similarly, Lucian's rephrasing of Thuc. 1.22.4 at *Hist. conscr.* 42 clearly understands the contrast not as one of oral against written (the paraphrase omits ἀκούειν and substitutes συγγράφειν for ξυγκεῖται) but rather as the difference between what is truthful, lasting and what is fictional, popular: κτῆμά τε γὰρ φησι μᾶλλον ἐς αἰεὶ συγγράφειν ἢ περ ἐς τὸ παρὸν ἀγώνισμα, καὶ μὴ τὸ μυθῶδες ἀσπάζεσθαι ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀλήθειαν τῶν γεγενημένων ἀπολείπειν τοῖς ὕστερον.

²⁰ Some late manuscripts emend ὑποκριτάς to κριτάς. In either case Aristotle's point seems to be that dramas of this type are written so as to play to the audience, with attendant disregard of higher aesthetic principles.

they are often forced to distort the internal logic"). The exact meaning of ἀγωνίσματα is disputed.²¹ But the 'definition' extracted from Polybius fits well here. Good poets are forced to compose plays in the popular fashion (to please the actors/judges), that is, to set forth the events in a straightforward, pleasurable manner; but the simple exposition of the story line takes the poet beyond what the integral plot requires and neglects the refashioning (*cf.* 1451a36ff) that is necessary to produce the desired sense of inevitability. Is this not exactly what Aristotle means by the "episodic" plot?

To return to Thuc. 1.22, Thucydides describes the rigor of his investigations and his intention to report the information accurately. The lack of fabulous stories (τὸ μὴ μυθῶδες) may make the narrative less pleasing to his audience. It will suffice if the narrative is profitable (ὠφέλιμα; *cf.* Polybius) to those who wish to see clearly the events that have happened, for these events will likely happen in much the same way again. In conclusion, the narrative is composed as a possession for all time, and not as an ἀγώνισμα for an ephemeral audience. The central contrast here is between historical narrative that is full of tales (μῦθοι) and plays to the popular audience of today, and historical narrative that focuses on facts and analysis and hopes to instruct generations to come (*cf.* μάθημα in Polybius). In our analysis of ἀγώνισμα we saw that the dominant meaning in early usage is a "feat" or "glory," where a focus on popular favor is usually present; in later usage, we found some references that showed the meaning "(written) literary composition," but passages in Polybius and Aristotle seem to imply the more specific meaning "a composition in which the events are set forth in a straightforward, popularizing fashion." Can it be coincidence that here too ἀγώνισμα refers to a literary composition that is ephemeral and pleasing to the crowd and (as the previous context implies) is full of tales? My suggestion, simply put, is that ἀγώνισμα refers to a popular piece of narration; that Thucydides contrasts not something written with something oral but a difficult, factual, analytic style of composition intended for the ages with the easy, anecdotal, popular style of Herodotus.

Those who would wish to relate ἀγώνισμα too narrowly to ἀγωνίζομαι in the sense of "contend for a prize in the public games" miss the important point that at the basis of ἀγωνίζομαι

²¹ D. W. Lucas, *Aristotle, Poetics* (Oxford 1972) 125, points out some difficulties of the usual interpretations without reaching a conclusion.

is not only ἀγών in the sense of “festival” and “contest” but also ἀγών in the more general (and probably original) sense of a “public assembly.” The verb can mean “to argue the way one does in front of the assembly,” *i.e.*, in a crowd-pleasing and point-scoring manner (Pl. *Tht.* 167E). Derivatives of ἀγωνίζομαι refer to the ἀγών not always literally, in the sense of the contest or assembly itself, but often figuratively, in the sense of that which is pleasing to the populace. Thus, the adjective ἀγωνιστικός can refer to things that are “striking, impressive” to the populace, and to people who are “eager for applause” (LSJ *s.v.*). Similarly, ἀγωνιστής signifies not only a competitor in the games, but more generally a crowd-pleaser: someone impressive before the ἀγών in speaking or acting (*e.g.* Isoc. 13.15; Pl. *Phdr.* 269D; Aeschin. 3.43; Arist. [*Pr.*] 19.15). Thucydides writes ἀγώνισμα then referring not so much to a contest as to the popular assembly; an ἀγώνισμα is a composition written in a popularizing, crowd-pleasing fashion, *i.e.*, a composition written as though to appeal to the ἀγών.

The evidence has led far from any implication of actual public performances by Herodotus, and detailed investigation has yielded no suggestion whatsoever that ἀγώνισμα can by itself signify “prize-declamation” or the like. Yet some will argue that the word takes on a somewhat different significance in this sentence. They will argue that we must construe the word closely with ἐς τὸ παραχρῆμα ἀκούειν, and that Thucydides adds the prepositional phrase specifically to make clear what ἀγώνισμα means. Thucydides contrasts the κτῆμα, which is his written work, with the ἀγώνισμα ἐς τὸ παραχρῆμα ἀκούειν, which is something *heard*, *i.e.*, a declamation. It is, however, a prejudice of our own culture that causes us to take ἀκούειν as a reference to a lecture. Readers of the fifth century typically read aloud.²² Thucydides writes ἀκούειν where we would write “to read.” Thus Thucydides says his work is composed “as a possession for all time, not as a popular narrative for ephemeral listening (*i.e.*, reading) pleasure.” The point of comparison in the sentence is the lasting value of the work, not the method of

²² See J. Balogh, “Voces Paginarum: Beiträge zur Geschichte des lauten Lesens und Schreibens,” *Philologus* 82 (1927) 84–109, 202–40; G. L. Hendrickson, “Ancient Reading,” *CJ* 25 (1929) 182–96; and B. M. W. Knox, “Silent Reading in Antiquity,” *GRBS* 9 (1968) 421–35, who accepts that reading aloud was general, even while presenting strong evidence for some silent reading.

composition: other works may receive more praise today, but the work of Thucydides will be more valued in the end.²³

The other supposed reference in Thucydides to lectures by early historians is similarly misleading. At 1.21.1 the logographers are said to “compose with a view rather of pleasing the ear than of telling the truth” (ὡς λογογράφοι ξυνέθεσαν ἐπὶ τὸ προσαγωγότερον τῇ ἀκροάσει ἢ ἀληθέστερον). But again, we forget the ancient habits of reading. “To the ear” translates ἐς ἀκρόασιν, which simply means “to the hearing,” *i.e.*, “to the reader as he listens,” where we would say “to the eye.”²⁴ At 1.22.4 Thucydides uses the same phrase with reference to his own work: καὶ ἐς μὲν ἀκρόασιν ἴσως τὸ μὴ μυθῶδες αὐτῶν ἀτερπέστερον φανεῖται. Yet no one supposes that Thucydides’ composition is influenced by his public performances.

Scholars seem to be caught in a circular web of prejudices. As we ‘know’ that Herodotus gave public lectures, passages such as Thuc. 1.21.4, 22.1 are taken to refer to lectures; when pressed for reliable evidence of Herodotus’ public lectures, the passages of Thucydides are presented as decisive.²⁵ Other evidence for Herodotus’ lectures does of course exist. The late biographical tradition, widely cited despite Powell’s rough treatment, will be reviewed below. More important is the only other early source for this idea.

²³ It is possible to take ἀκούειν as exegetic to ἀγώνισμα and ἐς τὸ παραχρῆμα as adverbial. In that case, the parallel syntax predisposes the reader to take κτῆμα ἐς αἰεὶ as parallel to ἀγώνισμα ἐς τὸ παραχρῆμα in the comparison, and ἀκούειν applies equally to both. Thus Thucydides’ composition is “a possession to hear (*i.e.*, read) for all time, not a glorious achievement to hear (*i.e.*, read) for the present.” The point of comparison remains the longevity of the work. Commentators are, however, probably right to insist that τὸ governs the infinitive; *cf.* ἐν τῷ παραντίκῳ ὄραν at 2.11.7.

²⁴ Similarly, Gomme, *HCT* I 139. A telling parallel is Plb. 38.4.8, where in echoing Thucydides (see *supra* n.19) he speaks of the ears (ταῖς ἀκοαῖς) of his readers (τοὺς ἀναγινώσκοντας); *cf.* 36.1.7: τοῖς ἀκούουσιν as the audience for τοῖς ἱστοριογράφοις; *cf.* also Hdt. 1.48.1, where the process of reading from written tablets is related by the sequence: unfold (ἀναπτύσσων), look upon (ἐπώρα), and then “hear” (ἤκουσε).

²⁵ Thus H. W. Parke, “Citation and Recitation: A Convention in Early Greek Historians,” *Hermathena* 67 (1946) 87; E. Badian, “Archons and Strategoi,” *Antichthon* 5 (1971) 23 n.59 (neither of whom gives credence to the biographical tradition); *cf.* W. W. How and J. Wells, *A Commentary on Herodotus* (Oxford 1912) 6f, Evans (*supra* n.4) 7 (who believe parts of the biographical tradition, but place special emphasis on the evidence in Thucydides).

Plato ([*Hp. Ma.*], *Hp. Mi.*) presents Hippias of Elis as an orator and teacher who traveled about, often on state business, exacting fees for his lectures. Hippias was a true polymath, claiming expertise in mathematics, astronomy, poetry, music, grammar, and mnemonics, not to mention metalworking and weaving ([*Hp. Ma.*] 285C–86A, *Hp. Mi.* 368B–D). He also, however, claimed knowledge in certain historical topics, such as genealogies and foundation stories ([*Hp. Ma.*] 285D). This last has been taken as evidence for lectures by historians (*i.e.*, narrators of *logoi*) in this period.²⁶ Yet clearly Hippias was a sophist: the depiction here implies it and he is so named by Plato ([*Hp. Ma.*] 282E) and generally (*e.g.* Plut. *Lyc.* 3); Luc. *Hdt.* 3; Philostr. *VS* 1.495; Ath. 13.609A; Liban. *Decl.* 2.1.24). As a sophist, he is by definition a traveling educator and lecturer. The historical nature of two of Hippias' many lecture topics is irrelevant for defining the usual practice of historians or Herodotus' habits. Moreover, though the *Hippias Maior* is set in the last quarter of the fifth century (a reference to Gorgias at 282B), the author presents the practice of lecturing for a fee as a somewhat recent innovation (282C–83D). Protagoras was the first to lecture for a fee (282D), thus the practice seems to date to the latter half of the fifth century. If the early historians were itinerant lecturers, it is remarkable that their contemporaries do not mention this practice so frequently cited for the sophists.²⁷ The case of the sophist Hippias, in any event, hardly affords reliable evidence for the early historiographical tradition.

The late accounts of Herodotus' lectures fall into three categories: (1) the story of Thucydides, who as a boy burst into tears after hearing Herodotus speak, thus prompting Herodotus to tell Thucydides' father that the boy showed a great passion for learning (in one version, this occurs at Olympia); (2) the story of Herodotus' recitation of his *Histories* at the Olympic games, resulting in instant fame and the designation of his nine books as "the Muses"; (3) various stories that Herodotus was paid (or not paid) for telling stories favorable to a city: thus the Athenian Council voted him ten talents for his flattery of Athens; the Thebans refused to pay him or let him speak with their young men, so he wrote malicious stories against them; the Corinthians did not think his favorable stories worthy of

²⁶ L. Pearson, *Early Ionian Historians* (Oxford 1939) 8; Evans (*supra* n.4) 8.

²⁷ Athenian writers of the fifth and fourth centuries are almost uniformly silent about the early historians: Pearson (*supra* n.26) 8f.

pay, so he rewrote them to be negative. Powell both conveniently collects and effectively disposes of these tales, none of which is earlier than the first century A.D.²⁸ Critics since Powell vary in the credence they give to these stories, but remain united in their conviction that actual lectures by Herodotus lie behind the tradition.²⁹ It is not clear how several fantasies add up to a fact, but suspicion mounts that the passages in Thucydides remain the decisive evidence. To Powell's critique only a few remarks need be added.

First, detailed studies of the ancient biographies have concluded that there is little evidence of reliable biographical traditions for early Greek writers.³⁰ Factual material, where it exists, is derived from the author's own works, or from the writings of his contemporaries. Ancient biographers freely invented stories about writers to make history fall into neat patterns, to explain curious details in the author's text, or simply to spin a good tale. All the tales surrounding Herodotus have a motive: to establish a relationship between the two most famous Greek historians; to explain why the nine books are named after the Muses; to motivate the favorable or unfavorable accounts of various cities. All the tales contain elements that are suspicious (the pairing of Thucydides and Herodotus, reminiscent of the pairing of Homer and Hesiod)³¹ or demonstrably false (the story of the Muses, which must be false because the current book divisions are late),³² or absurd (the

²⁸ Powell 32ff; further criticism in Badian (*supra* n.25) 23 n.59; Flory 14.

²⁹ Myres 3, 5 (unaffected by Powell's arguments); T. Kleberg, *Buchhandel und Verlagwesen in der Antike* (Darmstadt 1969) 4; Evans (*supra* n.4) 7; K. H. Waters, *Herodotos the Historian: His Problems, Methods and Originality* (London 1985) 14.

³⁰ See J. Fairweather, "Fiction in the Biographies of Ancient Writers," *AncSoc* 5 (1974) 231-75, esp. 275; M. R. Lefkowitz, *The Lives of the Greek Poets* (Baltimore 1981) viii, *passim*.

³¹ Similarly, Lysias is said to have known Demosthenes, although Demosthenes was no more than four years old when Lysias died. Inventing relationships between literary figures of a given time is a fundamental tendency in ancient biographies: see Fairweather (*supra* n.30) 256-64, esp. 261f.

³² A reference to an alternative division by books appears in the Lindian Chronicle (securely dated to 99 B.C.), where an event in Book 3 is cited as Book 2: Ἡρόδοτος ... ἐν τῷ Β τῶν ἰστο[ρι]ῶν (29, C38). See C. Blinkenberg, *Die Lindische Tempelchronik* (Bonn 1915) 4 (on the date), 24f (on the text). The earliest reference to a division into nine books is Diod. 11.34.6. Similarly, the division of Thucydides into eight books seems to have been a Hellenistic innovation (attributed to Asclepiades); divisions into nine and thirteen books were also known: cf. Marcellin. *Vit. Thuc.* 58; Diod. 12.37.

story that Herodotus rewrote his work to spite Corinth; the tentant gratuity). Given the imaginative element in ancient biographies, there is little reason to trust the whole any more than the parts.

Secondly, in almost all these tales Herodotus' supposed activities strikingly resemble those of the sophists, including public lectures for a fee and exhibition lectures (ἐπιδείξεις) at the Olympic games ([*Hp. Mi.*] 383c; *Luc. Pseudolog.* 5). The sophists aimed not at "oral publication"³³ but at self-promotion as wise men able to give profitable instruction. Recitations for edification of the public must be carefully distinguished from recitations as a marketing tool to enhance the educators' reputations and thereby their standard of living. The emphasis on paid lectures and exhibitions at Olympia arouses the suspicion that the details of the stories are importations from traditions surrounding the sophists.³⁴

What to do then with the common belief that Herodotus traveled about lecturing? The supposed proof in Thucydides and Plato does not stand scrutiny; and the late biographical traditions, never a secure base of support, are suspect on any number of grounds. Is there in fact any credible external evidence for this belief? Two final arguments should be examined.

The first is the correlation between *Hdt.* 3.119 and *Soph. Ant.* 905–12. Both passages argue that a brother is dearer to a woman than her husband or children: she can remarry or have other children, but (with her parents dead) her brother cannot be replaced. The phrasing is close enough and the use in *Ant.* sufficiently awkward to justify the inference that Sophocles drew on the passage in Herodotus.³⁵ Given the traditional dating of *Ant.* to 442, the allusion seems to prove that Sophocles heard or

³³ Thus E. A. Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1963) 54. There is no reason to doubt that the sophists distributed written copies of their works: see E. G. Turner, *Athenian Books in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C.* (London 1952) 19f.

³⁴ The parallel did not escape Lucian (*Hdt.* 3), who predictably makes Herodotus the innovator and his success at Olympia then the *source* of the exhibitions by the sophists.

³⁵ D. L. Page, *Actors' Interpolations in Greek Tragedy* (New York 1987) 86f. To value a brother over a husband or a child was a folktale motif widespread in Persia and India (Schmid-Stählin³ [Munich 1934] I.2 318 n.3 with references). The possibility of a common source cannot be ruled out, but the closely parallel sentence structure (as Page demonstrates) seems to point to a direct relationship.

read part of the *Histories* before it was complete, and some have concluded that Sophocles became acquainted with this section through a lecture or public reading.³⁶ But problems abound. Aside from the possible interpolation of the passage and a recent challenge to the early date of the play,³⁷ even if one supposes an acquaintance with Herodotus' work in an unfinished state, the conclusion of a public performance does not follow. In Athens, as in any close-knit intellectual community, surely it may have been common practice to circulate drafts or to read ongoing work in private groups. Thucydides, Polybius, and Tacitus would have done the same. If Sophocles did read or hear part of the *Histories* while it was being written, that need have no more import than Pliny the Younger's comments on Tacitus' drafts (*Epp.* 7.20, 8.7). Activity of this kind does not differentiate Herodotus, nor does it make his work fundamentally 'oral' in some way that the works of Thucydides and Tacitus are not.

Similarly, allusions to Herodotus in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* have been taken as evidence for public lectures: the parodies of Herodotus imply widespread knowledge of Herodotus' work; as it is unlikely that the general populace could read such a work, Herodotus must have given public recitations. It is hard to imagine under what conditions Herodotus would have recited to 15,000 Athenians a prose work that would require twenty-four hours of recitation,³⁸ but the argument has more fundamental problems in any case. There is no reason to suppose that Aristophanes required or expected his entire audience to understand every joke. The most secure parody, that of the origins of the Peloponnesian War (*Ach.* 523–28 parodying Hdt.

³⁶ Thus e.g. J. Cobet, "Wann wurde Herodots Darstellung der Perserkriege publiziert?" *Hermes* 105 (1977) 25.

³⁷ Interpolation: Page (*supra* n.35) 86–90; date: Lefkowitz (*supra* n.30) 81ff.

³⁸ Flory (13ff) points out the problems of recitation for a work of this size. His calculation of fifty hours of recitation is based on an impossibly slow rate. My estimate is based on a count of 185,424 words at a rate of 130 words per minute; cf. n.49 *infra*. For the size of Aristophanes' audience see A. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*² (Oxford 1968) 263. Suetonius' report (*Claud.* 42.2) of yearly recitations for the twenty books of Claudius' Etruscan history and the eight books of his Carthaginian history is surely to be taken as an example of imperial excess rather than standard practice.

1.4),³⁹ makes sense and is humorous without any knowledge of Herodotus. This is not necessarily an argument against the passage as a parody of Herodotus,⁴⁰ but it does remind us that Aristophanes, like any literary artist, can be understood and appreciated on many different levels. Flory is certainly right in emphasizing that the *Histories* was unlikely to have been a 'best-seller'; allusions to the *Histories* in Aristophanes and elsewhere aimed at only the most educated of the audience. Such references in any case prove nothing about public recitations of Herodotus' work.

Like any author in any period, Herodotus may well have given lectures based on his work, or on which his work is based, or which had nothing to do with his work. Yet we must be clear about what is fact, what has at least some evidence to support it, and what is pure supposition. A public performance by Herodotus based on his *Histories* simply cannot be demonstrated. In reflecting on this, one must be careful not to confound traditions attached to different types of literary production. For some literary genres oral performance is elemental: poets continued to perform their works publicly; sophists for economic reasons gave public lectures; and local memorializers may have continued to work within an oral tradition.⁴¹ But earlier writers in the historiographical tradition

³⁹ This parody (like others from the *Ach.*) has been questioned (C. W. Fornara, "Evidence for the Date of Herodotus' Publication," *JHS* 91 [1977] 28) and defended (Cobet [*supra* n.36] 9–12), but the defense in turn has been attacked: see n.40 *infra*.

⁴⁰ Thus Flory (25f), who also goes astray in other arguments against Cobet. Aristophanes certainly *would* "have created a parody which had only 'a great likelihood' of being understood"; cf. K. J. Dover's shrewd observation (*Aristophanic Comedy* [London 1972] 188f, quoted at Flory 25 n.49): "A majority in an audience can be surprisingly tolerant of a parody which only a few can really appreciate." Flory also errs in thinking that greater familiarity with the beginning of a work rests upon a "suspiciously modern analogy." It hardly needs to be documented how much more often passages toward the beginning of works or books are quoted in later authors. C. W. Fornara, "Herodotus' Knowledge of the Archidamian War," *Hermes* 109 (1981) 153ff, presents a more cogent, if not quite compelling, counterattack against the probability of allusion in the *Ach.*

⁴¹ Cf. the cross-cultural evidence collected by J. A. S. EVANS, *Herodotus, Explorer of the Past* (Princeton 1991: hereafter 'Evans') 89–146, esp. 96f, 113–22. Such evidence reveals little about the habits of Herodotus who, like Thucydides, clearly sets himself in the tradition of earlier Ionian writers (cf. 2.15, 17). Evans' survey in fact makes quite plain how different were the

explicitly emphasize the written aspect of their work (see Part II below). There is no evidence of a tradition of public readings for either these writers or Thucydides, writing only a few years after Herodotus. The only evidence for Herodotus amounts to a few late stories that range from the dubious to the absurd. In the common view "the normal mode of publication [in the fifth century] was by reading aloud, or reciting, in public."⁴² Such a broad-based assumption is both without evidential support and is overly simplistic—a homogeneous model imposed upon a heterogeneous and changing literary culture. The possibility should be considered that beside the oral culture, still strong for certain literary traditions, a culture of readers existed and that certain types of literature may have been oriented towards this literate culture. Surveys of evidence for literacy in the fifth century have uniformly found strong indications of literacy, at least among the upper classes in Athens, and a substantial class of educated, literate Greeks in this period cannot be doubted.⁴³ Whether 'reading public' denotes solitary readers or (more typically) participants in small groups where the text was read aloud, Herodotus found an adequate reading public among intellectuals at Athens and elsewhere to motivate his enterprise. In any event, no external evidence supports speculation about oral performance and such speculation will therefore have to rest on evaluation of the work itself.

activities and aims of local memorializers from the collecting, analyzing, and recording of historiographers like Hecataeus, Herodotus, and Thucydides.

⁴² Waters (*supra* n.29) 14. The assumption is remarkably widespread: e.g. J. Welles, *Studies in Herodotus* (Oxford 1923) 203; Lattimore (*supra* n.4) 9; Havelock (*supra* n.33) 54; Knox (*supra* n.22) 421; J. A. S. Evans, "Herodotus' Publication Date," *Athenaeum* 57 (1979) 148; Flory 12, but no evidence is cited beyond that reviewed here.

⁴³ The most exhaustive and cautious assessment of the evidence (with references to earlier studies) is W. V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1989) 65–115. Harris' argument against mass literacy in classical Athens presents impressive evidence for literacy among the upper classes ("among the well-to-do, practically all males must have been literate," 103). It perhaps needs to be said that I believe Herodotus was wealthy (how else could he have afforded the expense of his travels and writings?) and that his intended audience was primarily, if not entirely, the social and intellectual elite at Athens and other Greek cities.

II. What Does Herodotus Say?

Ἡροδότου Ἀλικαρνησέος ἱστορίας ἀπόδεξις ἦδε, ὡς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται, μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, τὰ μὲν Ἑλλησι, τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα, ἀκλέα γένηται, τὰ τε ἄλλα καὶ δι' ἣν αἰτίην ἐπολέμησαν ἀλλήλοισι.

Those who think that Herodotus' *logoi* reflect a series of lectures⁴⁴ would, I suppose, imagine that Herodotus stands before the crowd and begins with the words, Ἡροδότου Ἀλικαρνησέος ἱστορίας ἀπόδεξις ἦδε.... But this will not do. Herodotus standing before the crowd would hardly refer to himself in the third person; and besides, a lecture would be a poor means to insure that "the events not be forgotten." Obviously the opening sentence has been added as a suitable proem for the work as a whole. The lecture must have started then at 1.1: Περσέων μὲν νυν οἱ λόγοι Φοίνικας αἰτίους φασὶ γενέσθαι τῆς διαφορῆς. But what *διαφορῆ*? We see at once that this cannot be the beginning of the lecture, for it depends upon the opening sentence to make clear to what quarrel it refers.⁴⁵ Perhaps the entire prologue (1.1–5) is an addition? The lecture would begin at 1.6: Κροῖσος ἦν Λυδὸς μὲν γένος, παῖς δὲ Ἀλυάττειω, τύραννος δὲ ἐθνέων τῶν ἐντὸς Ἄλως ποταμοῦ.... This is much more satisfactory: the sentence easily detaches itself from what comes before, and the opening words announce the topic, Croesus and Lydia. In fact the Croesus *logos* (1.6–94) is generally considered a well-defined unit in the *Histories*.⁴⁶ Yet defining an end to this

⁴⁴ That the *Histories* is essentially a series of lectures is basic to many studies: cf. *supra* nn.2, 4, 7, 29 and n.51 *infra*. It may seem only common sense to assume a more shifting relationship between oral and written text than is allowed in what follows, but these are not the terms in which the discussion has been framed. Even a seemingly sophisticated treatment such as Munson's detailed analysis (*supra* n.3) assumes the identity of written and oral text—typical for studies of 'oral' elements of style and structure in the *Histories*.

⁴⁵ T. Krischer, "Herodots Prooimion," *Hermes* 92 (1965) 160f, argues that the repetition of αἰτίη from the opening sentence is a formal aspect of the epic proem. If so, the two sentences are not easily separated.

⁴⁶ Several analyses delineate the main divisions or *logoi* of the *Histories*: Jacoby (*supra* n.2) 283–326; Myres 118–34; Immerwahr 329–62; S. CAGNAZZI, "Tavola dei 28 Logoi di Erodoto," *Hermes* 103 (1975: hereafter 'Cagnazzi') 421ff, and all agree on the boundaries of the Croesus *logos* except Cagnazzi, who includes 1.1–5 with 1.6–94. Herodotus called the end of this section "the first of the *logoi*" (ὡς δεδήλωται μοι ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ τῶν λόγων, 5.36., referring to 1.92.2).

logos is troublesome. The sentence that clearly intends to close the Croesus logos contains μέν, by which Herodotus looks forward to the opening of the next logos: Λυδοὶ μὲν δὴ ὑπὸ Πέρσῃσι ἐδεδούλωντο (1.94.7). Now the point may seem over-precise, or even tendentious, for in oral performance μέν could be replaced with e.g. οὕτω. More generally, oral presentation would by nature have a more fluid relation to the written text. But this trifling example yields a basic point: the effort to avoid seams between sections, to present all his evidence as a continuous and connected stream, is a fundamental characteristic of Herodotean style.⁴⁷ Even if rewriting can be assumed, we must ask why, if he had oral presentation in mind, Herodotus so consistently does this.⁴⁸

What about the length of the logoi? The Croesus logos, as it stands, is about 12,400 words and would require about one hour and thirty-five minutes to recite—a plausible lecture.⁴⁹ Cagnazzi (esp. 421ff) has attempted to divide the *Histories* into sections manageable for recitation, although her divisions are at times debatable. The Egyptian logos, for instance, clearly intended as a unit (2.1–3.38, almost four hours), she divides into four discrete logoi. Certainly the Egyptian material is organized into subsections and it is reasonable to posit a series of lectures. But how successful are these divisions? The Egyptian logoi range from thirty-five minutes (2.1–34) to an hour (2.35–98) to an hour and

⁴⁷ Cf. H. Fränkel, "Eine Stileigenheit der frühgriechischen Literatur," *Wege und Formen frühgriechischen Denkens*² (Munich 1960) 83ff.

⁴⁸ Any rewriting flies squarely in the face of Lattimore's theory that the *Histories* constitutes a first draft (*supra* n.4). The seamless nature of the narrative makes uncomfortable bedfellows of Lattimore's two assumptions that (1) the text was written for oral recitation, and (2) the text was unrevised.

⁴⁹ Word counts are generated by computer from the TLG CD ROM "D" (1992). My time estimates follow the "average" rate of 130 words per minute calculated by A. Rome, "La vitesse de parole des orateurs attiques," *BulAc-RoyBelg* 38 (1952) 596–609. Many of Rome's arguments derive from dubious assumptions, most notably that preserved speeches are accurate reflections of the speeches as delivered. Rome's calculation of differing rates for specific orators in particular is very dubious; the fast rate calculated for Demosthenes (150 words per minute) surely reflects no more than Demosthenes' habit of adding substantially to a speech as he edited it for distribution. Yet Rome's basic rate is not likely to be far wrong. He rightfully stresses how awkwardly we read ancient Greek and insists on the evidence of rates for modern European languages. To be convinced that the Greeks recited as quickly as 130 words per minute, one need do no more than set up (as I did) a series of tests on texts in one's native language.

thirty-five minutes (2.99–182), then back down to forty minutes (3.1–38). There is a similar diversity in the logoi as a whole: five of Cagnazzi's 28 logoi run to twenty-five minutes or less (3.39–60; 5.1–27, 97–126; 9.90–113, 114–22); four run to an hour and a half or more (1.1–94, 2.99–182, 3.61–160, 7.138–239). The remainder fall at all points in between. The longest logos is five times the length of the shortest (by comparison, the longest books of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are 2 and 2.5 times the size of the shortest). One would expect more consistency if the logoi were based on lectures or if they were composed with lectures in mind.⁵⁰

The Croesus logos exhibits certain model characteristics for a lecture: a well-defined subject, complete in itself, and an abundance of colorful stories (Gyges, Arion and the dolphin, Solon the wise adviser, the 'tragedy' of Atys, Croesus on the pyre) that might be associated with oral performance. Proponents of Herodotus' lectures should be satisfied if we choose this as a test case rather than, say, the ethnography of Libya.

Here as everywhere in the *Histories* many links join the individual logos to the work as a whole. Some links are formal. Thus at 1.56.2–68 Herodotus describes the early history of the Athenians and Spartans. This early history is resumed several books and many logoi later at 5.39–48, 55–96. The Spartan section in the Croesus logos ends with events in the reign of Anaxandrides (1.67.1). The comment that the king Anaxandrides was no longer alive (5.39.1) demonstrates that the later section is meant to continue the history left off in the earlier section.⁵¹ Four other places similarly refer to events in the first logos (1.103.2 referring to 1.74; 1.169.2 to 1.92.1, 3.47.1 to 1.70, 5.39.1 to 1.67.1). Further, some places in the first logos explicitly refer to another logos: 1.75.1 (referring to 1.107ff), "This man Astyages was subdued and held prisoner by Cyrus even though he was

⁵⁰ Counts do not confirm Cagnazzi's claim (388) that the logoi are generally 25 to 30 Teubner pages in length. If I seem to attack a point of view that died with Jacoby, and to which Cagnazzi is an aberrant adherent, recent books warm to Jacoby's idea that the logoi were originally lectures: cf. Waters (*supra* n.29: 70): "it seems probable enough that the general plan of Herodotus' work was modified, if not totally controlled, by the consideration of the appropriate length of a lecture"; and J. Hart's comment (*Herodotus and Greek History* [London 1982] 205 n.17) on the composition that "the most authoritative contribution, the starting point of most recent debate on the subject, is that of Jacoby." The idea of oral publication (cf. *supra* n.42) also implies units manageable for recitation.

⁵¹ The lack of an exact continuation argues against Jacoby's theory that the two originally constituted a single logos. An excellent discussion of these passages in Immerwahr 35ff.

his mother's father for the reason which I will declare in a subsequent part of my history" (δι' αἰτίην τὴν ἐγὼ ἐν τοῖσι ὀπίσω λόγοισι σημανέω). Two later logoi have similar explicit references back to the Croesus logos (1.130 to 1.77ff, 5.36.4 to 1.92.2). Readers of Herodotus know that the work is crisscrossed with such implicit and explicit references.⁵² Parke, arguing for oral publication of the *Histories*, tries to dismiss the cross-references: "There is nothing inconsistent in a lecturer saying, 'They took Ninus, but how they took it I shall show in another lecture'."⁵³ We might agree that this seems unexceptional behavior. Yet to do this in a series of lectures over fifty times is, I think, quite exceptional indeed. The cross-references are both ubiquitous, occurring in almost all logoi, and frequently far apart, often spanning several logoi, at times spanning several books.⁵⁴ Implied is a degree of concentration from the audience that is hardly to be expected at the Olympic Games. An unprejudiced observer might reasonably say that such cross-references imply the ability to recall the earlier passage or to reread. Such a complex and wide-ranging web of cross-references is in any case not at all expected in oral style when no tradition exists of large-scale and repeated performance.

Besides cross-references, Herodotus links other logoi through thematic ties, e.g. in the Croesus logos, the wise adviser, the misinterpretation of oracles, the inherited and inescapable downfall, the king with unlimited wealth who insists on the conquest of poor neighbors, and the violation of the natural boundaries of one's domain—themes repeated through the reigns of Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius but most significantly in Xerxes' disastrous campaign against Greece. There are more subtle ties as well. The story of Gyges recalls the prologue, where dis-

⁵² For a complete list of explicit and implicit cross-references see Powell 89f, to which add 1.148 to 1.139 (which Powell may have considered an interpolation) and 1.125.4 to 3.40 (discussed by Powell 49); correct his reference at 8.92.2 to 6.49 (not 6.50). Some of his implicit references are possible but not compelling: 4.165.2 to 3.13.3f, 4.168.1 to 2.77ff, 4.181.1 to 2.32.4 (all three of which Powell admits to be ambiguous, 6), 6.104.1 to 6.41, 7.194.2 to 1.137.1. Two are in my opinion far-fetched: 1.16.2 to 1.103, 1.91.5 to 1.107.

⁵³ Parke (*supra* n.25) 87 *contra* Powell 32.

⁵⁴ To take Cagnazzi's 28 divisions as a sample, cross-references are absent only in her logoi 15 and 16 (5.65–96, 97–126), 23 (8.1–39), 27 and 28 (9.90–113, 114–22). Examples of far-apart references are not hard to find. The following lists only explicit references to another part of the work two or more books away: 2.161.3f referring to 4.159.4f, 4.1.2 to 1.106.1, 4.181.2 to 2.43.4, 5.22.1 to 8.136, 5.36.4 to 1.92.2, 7.93 to 1.171.2.

honoring a woman motivates a cycle of revenge that culminates in the siege and sack of Troy. Gyges' murder of Candaules is of course avenged in the fifth generation of his successors, *i.e.*, by the siege and sack of Sardis and Croesus' downfall. Or the ties can be more subtle yet. As an example of the Persian custom of burying people alive, Xerxes' wife Amestris buried alive "twice seven" (δὶς ἑπτὰ) sons of Persian nobles (7.114.2), a number recalling the "twice seven" Lydian boys assigned by Cyrus to burn on the pyre with Croesus (1.86.2). The repetition of detail reinforces the idea that the Persians were both exotic (the magical number seven) and cruel (burying and burning people alive).⁵⁵ These are only a few of the most salient, points with which any careful reader might agree. All students of Herodotus are aware that the number of links seems limited only by the industry of their own investigations.

The Croesus logos then has many links, both implicit and explicit, to other logoi. To suggest that Herodotus aimed at creating a unity, with many echoes and relations among the diverse strands of his material, is hardly a revolutionary position. Such in fact is today's *communis opinio*. This unity has, however, important consequences for the suggestion that the work was originally or prospectively oral. If the material originated in lectures, was Herodotus fortunate enough to have happened upon lecture topics that happily interrelate in such a detailed way? Or is the complex weaving of associations among the topics the result of later revision? If later revision, what relationship remains between the original lectures and the finished written work? On the other hand, if the *Histories* was used as a text for recitations ('oral publication'), did Herodotus care so little for the unity he had labored to construct that he was eager to present the *Histories* in part? If he read excerpts, does this not imply rather an eagerness to entice the audience to read the written whole? Or perhaps the work was recited *in toto*? Yet the work is simply too large for this to be likely. Homer is not a good parallel. The Homeric poems became the common property of a group of people, the rhapsodes, whose function was to present and preserve the poems. Poetic performances had become part of the religious festivals and provided a traditional context for epic performance. The repetition

⁵⁵ To a Greek audience δὶς ἑπτὰ may well have recalled the seven youths and seven maidens who accompanied Theseus as human sacrifices to the Minotaur. Plato (*Phd.* 58A) refers to them as τοὺς "δὶς ἑπτὰ" ἐκείνους; *cf.* Bacchyl. 17.2, Sappho 206, Eur. *HF* 1327, Isoc. *Hel.* 27.

of the performances gave adequate opportunity for an audience to grasp the unities of the poems piecemeal and over time. Herodotus' *Histories*, on the other hand, was written in prose and is nearly twice the length of either the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*. In what context would such a work be performed? Even if Cagnazzi's ungainly divisions are accepted, are we to assume twenty-eight straight days of recitation? Or perhaps two sessions a day for fourteen days? Or four sessions for seven days? But where?⁵⁶ Without a traditional context for the performance, what audience would attend a recitation of such length? The elaborately constructed attempt at unity implies that the author intended the work to be presented as a whole. Yet the size of the work seems to preclude oral performance as a suitable means for such a presentation.

In the introduction to the *Histories*, Herodotus makes it clear that he is setting his work in writing. The purpose of the presentation of his inquiry is so that events will not be forgotten and the great deeds of men will not go without fame. The opening words ('Ηροδότου Ἀλικαρνησέος ἱστορίας ἀπόδεξις ἤδε) parallel those of Hecataeus (Ἐκαταῖος Μιλήσιος ὧδε μυθεῖται· τάδε γράφω, ὡς μοι δοκεῖ ἀληθέα εἶναι, *FGrHist* 1 F1), Antiochus (Ἀντίοχος Ξενοφάνεος τάδε συνέγραψε περὶ Ἰταλίας ἐκ τῶν ἀρχαίων λόγων τὰ πιστότατα καὶ σαφέστατα, *FGrHist* 555 F2), and Thucydides (Θουκυδίδης Ἀθηναῖος ξυνέγραψε τὸν πόλεμον τῶν Πελοποννησίων καὶ Ἀθηναίων), all of whom refer explicitly to writing. Herodotus several times refers to his own activity as "writing." He uses γράφω to emphasize what he will or will not include in his history. The translation "I record" or "I am making a record" has the proper nuance (differently, Immerwahr 6f n.14). Thus he says that he is including only one variant of a tale: "Various stories are told by people who wish to glorify Cyrus, but I will make my record according to those people who tell the truth" (1.95.1; cf. 2.70.1, 6.53.1, 7.214.3). Or he says that he is including things whose truth he doubts: "I do not know whether these things are true; but I make a record of what people say" (4.195.2; cf. 2.123.1). Or he says what he is not including: "Some Greeks have used this doctrine as their own; I know their names but do not record them" (2.123.3; cf. 3.103.1). This last example in particular should make clear that Herodotus thinks of his work as lasting and with the power to memorialize

⁵⁶ None of the major festivals was long enough to accommodate a full recitation of the *Histories*: Flory 14.

(*pace* Evans 101). He is very careful about what he does or does not include in his record. He refuses to mention philosophers who have stolen their ideas from others, in order to relegate them to the oblivion they deserve. When Hecataeus writes *τάδε γράφω, ὡς μοι δοκεῖ ἀληθέα εἶναι*, the use of *γράφω* is emphatic, self-confident: he is making a record of what he thinks is the truth. He expects the record to circulate in places and times beyond those he can personally address. That is why he puts his name at the beginning, why he proclaims that he is creating a written record. By opening the *Histories* with his name, Herodotus—like Thucydides—proclaims his alliance with the tradition of such earlier historians as Hecataeus.⁵⁷ This tradition was explicitly and self-consciously a *written* tradition.⁵⁸

A thorough review of supposedly 'oral' elements in Herodotean style is beyond the bounds of the task set here. A brief treatment of one well-known study will, however, serve to suggest the fundamental problems that bedevil such analysis. Pohlenz (208ff), who thought it probable that Herodotus gave recitations, tries to isolate traces of oral performance in his style. Now, as noted earlier, the prologue (1.1–5) does not begin in a reasonable way for a lecture and there is a clean break between the prologue and the following Croesus *logos*. The prologue can be taken then as a brief section deliberately written to introduce the work as a whole. This section at least was not written with recitation in mind. Yet the prologue contains most of the 'oral' elements isolated by Pohlenz: (1) close repetition of nouns and avoidance of the pronoun: *ἔσαπικνέεσθαι καὶ δὴ καὶ ἐς Ἄργος· τὸ δὲ Ἄργος τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον προεῖχε ἅπασι τῶν ἐν τῇ νῦν Ἑλλάδι καλεομένη χώρῃ. Ἀπικομένους δὲ τοὺς Φοίνικας ἐς δὴ τὸ Ἄργος* (1.1.1); (2) use of deictic pronouns: *ἀπὸ τῆς Ἐρυθρῆς καλεομένης θαλάσσης ἀπικομένους ἐπὶ τήνδε τὴν θάλασσαν* (1.1.1); (3) use of an introductory participle that repeats the main verb of the previous sentence (here with a short clause

⁵⁷ Herodotus refers several times to Hecataeus' work: 2.143; 5.36, 125f; 6.55, 137.

⁵⁸ Pearson (*supra* n.26) 8; Turner (*supra* n.33) 17f; W. C. Greene, "The Spoken and Written Word," *HSCP* 60 (1951) 41; Nagy (*supra* n.5: 181) puts Herodotus within a different, oral tradition of *logioi*, though it is possible that he means to include writers like Hecataeus among his *logioi*. Cf. *supra* n.41.

Herodotus' many references to customs or monuments that were still present "in my day" (*ἔτι καὶ ἐς ἐμέ vel sim.*) likewise seem to imply that he orients his record towards an audience well past his lifetime: thus e.g. 1.66.4, 93.3, 181.2; 2.122.2, 130.1, 131.3, 181.5; 3.97.4.

intervening): [φασὶ τοὺς Φοίνικας] ἔσαπικνέεσθαι καὶ δὴ καὶ ἐς Ἄργος· ... Ἀπικομένους δὲ τοὺς Φοίνικας ἐς δὴ τὸ Ἄργος (1.1.2); (4) loose association of thought between the clauses of a sentence: τὸν δὲ οἶδα αὐτὸς πρῶτον ὑπάρξαντα ἀδίκων ἔργων ἐς τοὺς Ἕλληνας, τοῦτον σημήνας προβήσομαι ἐς τὸ πρόσω τοῦ λόγου, ὁμοίως μικρὰ καὶ μεγάλα ἄστεα ἀνθρώπων ἐπεξιών (1.5.3; but how exactly is the fate of small and great cities related to the story of the man who first perpetrated wrongs against the Greeks?). The inclusion of 'oral' elements of style in the prologue makes it doubtful that these elements imply oral performance. Pohlenz was careful to note that such elements of style are reflected in archaic writing generally. It may be, as Pohlenz asserts (210), that the archaic style develops from oral performance. Once established, though, the archaic style need no longer be restricted to oral performance. Nor is it clear that oral performance is the only profitable model for explaining the many peculiarities of archaic style. In any case, an argument for oral performance on the basis of an author's use of a style developed from oral performance is circular. Elements of oral style, even if they do exist, are not conclusive evidence for oral performance.

I do not deny the possibility that Herodotus read parts of his work orally. Nor should this possibility be denied for Thucydides or Xenophon. The abrupt change in style between Herodotus and Thucydides is often attributed to the influence of Gorgias. If so, Thucydides' model of style is more 'oral' in an immediate sense than Herodotus' models. Oral influences on early Greek authors are, I believe, neither so clear nor so simple as generally supposed. In trying to define the differences between the 'archaic' style of Herodotus and the 'classical' style of Thucydides, we may properly speak of the oral traditions in which the archaic style is grounded, but to relate Herodotus' style and method of composition to actual oral performance lacks foundation.

Epideixis at Olympia is one thing, a monumental history is another. The very idea is different. What Herodotus tried to accomplish, like Thucydides later, was fundamentally new. Prejudicial reaction to Herodotus' style should not induce scholars to view the text as a conglomerate or as a work proffered piecemeal to an adoring public. Only a few will have read Herodotus' monumental history in his own time and a full reading with the requisite concentration could only have been sustained in a private setting. But that the reading of the

Histories caused a stir among the leading intellectuals of the day need not be questioned. Moreover, the intelligentsia's acceptance of a work of this type and size will have opened the door to further innovation; for an intellect like Thucydides, it will have demanded it. These innovations of style and method, finally, will be what distinguishes Thucydides from Herodotus. There is no need to resort to facile and misleading arguments based on the determinative influence of oral performance.⁵⁹

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