Benjamin Allgaier

Embedded Inscriptions in Herodotus and Thucydides

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1 Introduction: Inscriptions and Classical Greek Historiography

1.1 The Pseudo-Herodotean Inscription in Beazley's *Herodotus at the Zoo*

Given the opportunity, would Herodotus have visited the London Zoo?[1] That he made such a visit and recorded it in writing is the conceit of a text for which John Beazley, later Professor of Classical Archaeology at Oxford, was awarded the Gaisford Prize for Greek Prose in 1907.[2] In the course of the description of the zoo, where sacred animals are housed in temples, Beazley's Herodotus mentions, among various other animals, the camels that can be seen there. He says:[3]

> τῶν πέρι ἐπισταμένοισί κου ἄλλο μὲν ἐρέω οὐδέν, τόδε δὲ μοῦνον, ὅτι παλαιόν τι λόγιον ἐπὶ τῷ νηῷ σφι γέγραπται, ὅ ἐστι κατὰ τὴν τῶν Ἑλλήνων γλῶσσαν·
> μὴ κινεῖτε κάμηλον· ἀκίνητος γὰρ ἀμείνων.
>
> Since you surely know about them [i.e. the camels], I will say nothing except that an old oracle is inscribed on their temple, which is in Greek: "Do not disturb the camel, for it is better left undisturbed."

It is not too difficult to identify the passage from the *Histories* on which Beazley's pseudo-Herodotean inscription is in all likelihood modelled.[4] In the Babylonian *logos*, Herodotus credits the Babylonian queen Nitocris with the execution of various large-scale building projects – including her tomb (1.187.1–3):[5]

---

1 In this fanciful question, 'Herodotus' refers to the historical person. For convenience, 'Herodotus' will also be used in the present study to refer to the narrator of the *Histories* (for this common practice, see e.g. Christ 1994, 167 n. 1); the same applies to 'Thucydides' and the other names of the authors of the narrative texts to be discussed. For different views on the relationship between author and narrator in ancient historiography, see e.g. de Jong 2014, esp. 171, and Tilg 2019, esp. 74.

2 On Beazley's career, see Robertson 1971.

3 The Greek text is from Beazley 1907, 13; the translation is my own.

4 I use 'inscription' to refer to writing on a durable surface. For a brief discussion of terminological issues, see Ch. 1.2, p. 5.

5 For a discussion of this passage, see Ch. 4.4.

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> ὑπὲρ τῶν μάλιστα λεωφόρων πυλέων τοῦ ἄστεος τάφον ἑωυτῇ κατεσκευάσατο μετέωρον ἐπιπολῆς αὐτέων τῶν πυλέων, ἐνεκόλαψε δὲ ἐς τὸν τάφον γράμματα λέγοντα τάδε· Τῶν τις ἐμεῦ ὕστερον γινομένων Βαβυλῶνος βασιλέων ἢν σπανίσῃ χρημάτων, ἀνοίξας τὸν τάφον λαβέτω ὁκόσα βούλεται χρήματα· μὴ μέντοι γε μὴ σπανίσας γε ἄλλως ἀνοίξῃ· οὐ γὰρ ἄμεινον. οὗτος ὁ τάφος ἦν ἀκίνητος μέχρις οὗ ἐς Δαρεῖον περιῆλθε ἡ βασιληίη.
>
> She built a tomb for herself over the most frequented gate of the city, in mid-air above the actual gate, and carved an inscription on the tomb that said the following: "If any king of Babylon who comes after me needs money, let him open the tomb and take as much money as he wants. Let him not, however, open it unless he is truly in need, for that would be for the worse." This tomb remained undisturbed until the kingship fell to Darius.

To be sure, camels do not feature in Herodotus' description of Nitocris' tomb. Moreover, this passage is not the only one that arguably served as a model for the quoted passage from Beazley's text; when Beazley's Herodotus refrains from giving a detailed description of the camels on the grounds that he assumes his audience to be familiar with these animals, this arguably recalls the following statement from Book 3: τὸ μὲν δὴ εἶδος ὁκοῖόν τι ἔχει ἡ κάμηλος, ἐπισταμένοισι τοῖσι Ἕλλησι οὐ συγγράφω ("What kind of shape the camel has I shall not describe to the Greeks, as they are acquainted with it", 3.103). We may still have the impression, though, that Beazley's ἀκίνητος γὰρ ἀμείνων is reminiscent of the co-occurrence of the words ἀκίνητος and ἄμεινον in Nitocris' inscription as it is quoted by Herodotus.

It could be objected that Beazley's use of material from the *Histories* does not tell us much about Herodotus' work itself. Naturally, reading Beazley's *jeu d'esprit* is not the same as pondering the intricacies of Herodotus' narrative universe. Still, it may be worthwhile to reflect for a moment on the fact that *Herodotus at the Zoo* features the quotation of an inscription. The inclusion of this detail in Beazley's ironical homage indicates, I submit, that embedded inscriptions are a recognisable feature of Herodotean narrative. Admittedly, references to specific inscribed texts (in the form of mentions and quotations) make up only a tiny proportion of the text of the *Histories*.[6] However, what Beazley's pseudo-Herodotean *logos* suggests is that in spite of the limited number of instances in the *Histories*, the practice of embedding epigraphic texts is characteristic of Herodotus.

As it turns out, Herodotus' *Histories* are the first Greek prose text in which we can 'directly' observe an engagement with the epigraphic sphere.[7] To be sure, this status might

6 For a list of passages, see Appendix 1.

7 That is, as directly as the manuscript tradition allows us to access any ancient text. On the transmission of the *Histories*, see Wilson 2015b, xi–xxvi. An engagement with the epigraphic sphere in Greek literature is not confined to prose texts; on (potential) inscriptions in Archaic and Classical poetry, see e.g. Strauss Clay 2016 (on the *Iliad*); Day 2010, 60–62 (on epinician poetry); Lougovaya 2013 (on Attic drama).

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simply be due to the fact that pre-Herodotean prose literature has come down to us in a very fragmentary state.[8] At the same time, Herodotus' embedding of inscriptions may well have set a precedent.[9] Consider, for instance, Thucydides' *History*, which contains at least some passages featuring embedded inscriptions.[10]

From our perspective, Herodotus' *Histories* may mark a beginning, but this work did not come into being in a vacuum. Instead, the rise of (what we call) Greek historiography is to be seen in the context of the existence of "the crowded field of memory".[11] Greeks in the second half of the fifth century could encounter the past in a wide range of forms apart from narrative prose accounts such as the *Histories*.[12] One such form is the epigraphic record, and it is the relationship between the works of Herodotus and Thucydides and this aspect of Greek commemorative culture that will be the focus of the present study. I submit that the way in which Herodotus and Thucydides stage inscriptions can be seen as an engagement with the epigraphic culture of the Greeks and – in the case of Herodotus – of various non-Greek peoples. Sometimes, specific inscriptions as they are presented by Herodotus and Thucydides may appear to be fairly straightforward reflections of the extratextual epigraphic reality. As we shall see, however, the relationship between Classical Greek historiography and inscriptions is much more complex. On the one hand, there is evidence to suggest that both Herodotus and Thucydides draw on epigraphically recorded information without making this explicit; on the other, the instances where they do link a certain piece of information to a certain inscribed monument should not be assumed to be the equivalent of modern source citations.

So far, I have mentioned only Herodotus and Thucydides as representatives of Classical Greek historiography, and I shall be primarily concerned with these two authors. It is clear, however, that their works represent only the tip of the iceberg of historiographical production in the fifth and fourth centuries.[13] At the same time, we have to make do with what we have, and Herodotus' *Histories* and Thucydides' *History* are the earliest fully transmitted – though, in the case of the *History*, unfinished[14] – Greek historiographical works.

8 For a survey of early prose writers who may have drawn on epigraphic material, see Higbie 1999, 54–56. The problem with these writers is that even in the case of those who are more than just names to us, our information about their works stems from intermediate authors. Consider, for instance, the example of Acusilaus of Argos. The *Suda* reports a story according to which Acusilaus' *Genealogies* were based on bronze tablets his father had dug up in the garden (test. 1 *EGM*). However, it is controversial whether the *Suda* reflects here a claim that was made in the proem of the *Genealogies* (see *EGM* II 4 and 624–625; Pàmias 2015, 56) or a later tradition (see Andolfi 2019, 14).

9 For the thesis that the presence of inscriptions in Herodotus' *Histories* shaped the historiographical tradition, see Canfora 1990, 195.

10 For a list of passages, see Appendix 2.

11 Grethlein 2010, 4. On the rise of historiography against the backdrop of fifth-century commemorative culture, see e.g. 2010, 147–280; 2011b.

12 See Grethlein 2010 (dealing with epinician poetry, elegy, tragedy, and oratory).

13 For the fifth century, see e.g. Fowler 1996; 2006; for the fourth century, see e.g. Will 1991; Parmeggiani 2014. On the great proportion of lost works from Classical and Hellenistic times, see Strasburger 1977, 11–15.

14 See e.g. *CT* III 45; Rengakos 2011b, 383; for a different view, see Konishi 1987.

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Of course, we should be wary of generalising the observations about the staging of inscriptions that can be made in Herodotus' and Thucydides' works. Just consider the fact that the only fourth-century work in the Herodotean and Thucydidean tradition that has survived in its entirety, Xenophon's *Hellenica*, does not contain a single explicit reference to an inscribed object.[15]

Conversely, there are some intriguing indications that inscriptions featured in 'fragmentary' Classical Greek historiography.[16] Consider, for instance, the mention of the famous Bisitun inscription in Ctesias' *Persica* (F 1b § 13.1–2 Lenfant = Diod. Sic. 2.13.1–2).[17] Ctesias (according to Diodorus) does not ascribe the Bisitun inscription to Darius; instead, he narrates that the Assyrian queen Semiramis, on coming to Mount Bisitun, puts an inscription on the cliff. Unfortunately, the impression we can form of Ctesias' *Persica* rests almost exclusively on the works of later authors (especially Nicolaus of Damascus, Diodorus, Plutarch, and Photius), so the resulting picture is, as Stronk has emphasised, "marred and incomplete".[18] A treatment of the traces of the epigraphic dimension of Ctesias' work that would do justice to the specific challenges posed by the way it is transmitted is beyond the scope of the present study.[19]

The same applies to the case of Theopompus' *Philippica*. According to the lexicographer Harpocration (probably working in the second century AD), "Theopompus says in the twenty-fifth book of the *Philippica* that the treaty with the barbarian [i.e. the Persian king] was fabricated since it was not inscribed on the stele in Attic letters but in Ionian ones" (Θεόπομπος δ' ἐν τῇι κε′ τῶν Φιλιππικῶν ἐσκευωρῆσθαι τὰς πρὸς τὸν βάρβαρον συνθήκας, <ὡς> οὐ τοῖς Ἀττικοῖς γράμμασιν ἐστηλίτευνται, ἀλλὰ τοῖς τῶν Ἰώνων, 115 F 154 *BNJ*).[20] This 'fragment' seems to have been part of a digression on fifth-century

15 On Xenophon's relationship to Herodotus and Thucydides, see e.g. Tamiolaki 2008. I shall briefly consider the lack of references to the epigraphic sphere in the *Hellenica* in the Epilogue.

16 The problem is that "[t]he word 'fragment' is clearly a hangover from a time when scholars felt they were rediscovering within extant works texts which, until then, had been considered lost. Its use suggests an analogy with material papyrus fragments, and it erases the difference between direct and indirect tradition" (Lenfant 2013, 289).

17 Phillips notes that "this definite mention of an inscription and reliefs at Bagistanos is the only that has come down from Greek antiquity" (1968, 163). On the Bisitun inscription, see Ch. 3, p. 39. The βασιλικαὶ ἀναγραφαί to which, according to Diodorus, Ctesias refers in the context of information about Memnon (F 1b § 22.5 Lenfant = Diod. Sic. 2.22.5) are arguably not to be imagined as inscriptions; usually, they are identified with the βασιλικαὶ διφθέραι ("royal parchments") Ctesias adduces as his source of information for the history of Media (F 5 § 32.4 Lenfant = Diod. Sic. 2.32.4; see e.g. Jacoby 1922, 2048; Llewellyn-Jones/Robson 2010, 58; Stronk 2010, 15). For a balanced treatment of the vexed question of whether official Achaemenid annals of a narrative character existed and were used by Ctesias, see Llewellyn-Jones/Robson 2010, 58–65. For a discussion of various aspects of Ctesias' elusive work, see Wiesehöfer/Rollinger/Lanfranchi 2011.

18 Stronk 2010, 149; see also Llewellyn-Jones/Robson 2010, 35–45.

19 On the importance of a diligent study of intermediate authors, see e.g. Brunt 1980; Schepens 1997; Lenfant 2013.

20 The translation is adapted from the one given in 115 F 154 *BNJ* (where συνθήκας is rendered as "treaties"); like e.g. Connor 1968, 91, and Pownall 2008, 122, I assume that συνθήκας refers to one treaty

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Athens (F 153–156) – a digression that marks, according to Pownall, the introduction of "a critical examination of Athenian inscriptions as imperialistic documents [...] into the realm of historiography".[21] Unfortunately, however, many aspects of this digression – such as the identity of the συνθῆκαι referred to in the passage quoted above (and in F 153) or the implications of the rare word ἐσκευωρῆσθαι – remain obscure.[22]

Intriguing as later reports about the epigraphic interests of 'fragmentary' historiographers like Ctesias and Theopompus may be,[23] the completely preserved texts of Herodotus and Thucydides offer a particularly promising opportunity to investigate the epigraphic dimension of Classical Greek historiography. After all, it is only in these two specimens of Classical Greek historiography that we are in a position to study the narrative device of embedding inscriptions in context.

1.2 The Epigraphic Dimension of Herodotus' *Histories* and Thucydides' *History*

In this chapter, I will first discuss the key terms 'inscription' and 'historiography' and then outline my approach to (what may be called) the epigraphic dimension of the works of Herodotus and Thucydides.

What is an inscription? This is less obvious than one might expect; in fact, the issue of defining its object of study (and, in connection with that, itself) is a persistent concern of epigraphy.[24] As it turns out, it is difficult to produce a theoretically consistent definition of 'inscription' (and 'epigraphy') that at the same time corresponds to the realities of research.[25] In the present study, 'inscription' refers to a text written on a durable surface (as well as to the text-bearing object as a whole).[26]

Before turning to some introductory reflections on the status of the works of Herodotus and Thucydides as texts about inscriptions, however, let us first consider the common practice of designating Herodotus and Thucydides as 'historiographers'

(for this usage, see LSJ *s.v.* συνθήκη II.2). On the textual problems of the passage, see Connor 1968, 89–92.

21 Pownall 2008, 125.

22 On the problems surrounding the identification of the document(s) referred to, see the commentary on 115 F 153 *BNJ* (with further literature). The problem with ἐσκευωρῆσθαι is that it "could mean that the whole treaty was a complete fabrication or that it was falsified in some important detail" (Connor 1968, 91).

23 There is also evidence to suggest that Ephorus and Androtion had epigraphic interests (see Pownall 2008, 120).

24 See e.g. Larfeld 1907, 1–4; Klaffenbach 1966, 7–8; Wachter 2010, 47–48; Panciera 2012; see also Robert 2007 [1953], 78–79 (focusing on the question of what the task of an epigraphist is).

25 See Bodel 2001, 2.

26 On the importance of the notion of durability, see Larfeld 1907, 3; Bodel 2001, 2.

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or 'historians' (and their works as specimens of 'historiography' or simply 'history').[27] The potential problem with this practice is that it may easily tempt us to approach these ancient texts with the same expectations as modern studies of the periods in question. At first glance, the fact that the texts of Herodotus and Thucydides contain references to inscriptions – e.g. the list of cities on the Plataean tripod mentioned at Hdt. 8.82.1 and Thuc. 1.132.3 – may encourage such an approach: after all, inscriptions such as this epigraphic list play an important role in modern historical studies of the periods covered by Herodotus and Thucydides.[28] In fact, both Herodotus and Thucydides have been credited with sharing considerable common ground with modern historians who reconstruct the past on the basis of epigraphic evidence.[29] However, we shall repeatedly have occasion to observe aspects of Herodotus' and Thucydides' employment of inscriptions that cannot readily be paralleled with the use of inscriptions in modern historical research.

It may be worthwhile to reflect for a moment on the ambiguous position of the works of Herodotus and Thucydides in the history of European historiography. Let us begin with Herodotus. Arguably the most famous explicit ancient reference to him occurs in Cicero's *De legibus*, where he is called *pater historiae* (1.5) – a pithy description of Herodotus' status that seems to encourage us to think of Herodotus as the first Greek historian.[30] However, there is also a tradition of calling the seemingly obvious designation of Herodotus' work as historical into question. About one and a half centuries ago, de Quincey addressed this issue with particular emphasis:

> But whence arose [...] the fancy that his great work was exclusively (or even chiefly) a history? It arose simply from a mistranslation, which subsists every where [*sic*] to this day.[31]

27 See e.g. Marincola 2001 (entitled *Greek Historians*); Scanlon 2015 (entitled *Greek Historiography*). Needless to say, the question of the nature of ancient historiography has been much debated (see e.g. Wiseman 1979; Woodman 1988; Momigliano 1990; Moles 1993; Marincola 1999; Lendon 2009; Ruffell/Hau 2017).

28 On the Plataean tripod as a key historical source, see Meister 1997, 119. On the importance of epigraphic evidence for the study of antiquity, see Klaffenbach 1966, 8–10; Robert 1970 [1961], esp. 18–31; Millar 1983, esp. 80; Petzl 1997, 76; McLean 2002, 1–2.

29 Volkmann claims that Herodotus, by applying autopsy to inscriptions, meets a crucial requirement of modern epigraphy (see 1954, 43; followed by Schepens 1980, 72). Fabiani credits Herodotus with a full awareness of the documentary value and probative power of inscriptions (see 2003, 182). With reference to Thucydides, such an appraisal is even more widespread (see e.g. Zizza 1999, 22; Bearzot 2003, 295); Hornblower claims that Thucydides adduces some inscriptions "as a modern historian might adduce them, that is, *in support of propositions extrinsic to themselves*" (*CT* III 447).

30 See Branscome 2013, 11. However, it should be noted that the expression *pater historiae* does not necessarily imply the notion of Herodotus as a historiographical pioneer (see Dunsch 2013). For the conceptual and terminological developments of 'history' in antiquity, see e.g. Press 1982; Fornara 1983, 91–141.

31 De Quincey 2001 [1842], 86.

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Similar sentiments continue to be expressed.[32] Such criticisms of the conventional way of referring to Herodotus' work may serve to warn us against the danger of reading our own concepts into the *Histories* without being aware of it.

Especially if one endorses a dynamic view of genre, ancient and modern practices of referring to Herodotus' work certainly deserve our attention; after all, these practices constitute an important aspect of the reception of this work, and the phenomenon of reception is at the heart of a dynamic conception of genre.[33] At the same time, such processes of reception are very complex. Incidentally, it could be objected to de Quincey's radical criticism that it does not do justice to the not always clear-cut paths of reception and the concomitant terminological developments.[34] In any case, the position of Herodotus' work in the history of historiography is difficult to determine.[35]

This consideration applies to Thucydides as well. For a long time, Thucydides was regarded as the founder of scientific history,[36] but by now, many would probably agree with the statement with which Loraux entitled her famous 1980 article: "Thucydide n'est pas un collègue".[37] Woodman's emphasis on the rhetorical dimension of Thucydides' narrative, controversial as it may be,[38] can at the very least serve as a warning that we should not expect the *History* to conform to modern ideals of historiographical objectivity.

For want of a viable alternative, I shall follow the established practice of referring to the works of Herodotus and Thucydides as specimens of ancient historiography, but we should not be surprised to find notable differences between the Herodotean and Thucydidean practice of embedding inscriptions and the use of epigraphic evidence in modern historical research.

The relationship between Classical Greek historiography and inscriptions is a complex and, in many respects, elusive issue that can be explored from different angles. Passages where specific inscribed objects are explicitly referred to raise with particular urgency the question of the relevance of inscriptions to the historiographical works of which they are part, and such passages are, in fact, the focus of the present study. However, we should also allow for further possible connections between inscriptions and Classical Greek historiography – such as the tacit use of epigraphically recorded information and general allusions to the epigraphic sphere. By devoting at least some attention to these issues (in

32 See Hose 2004, 163; 171.

33 For a dynamic view of the generic character of the *Histories*, see Boedeker 2000, esp. 98.

34 See Evans 1968, 12; see also Fowler 2006, 32–33.

35 For differing assessments of Herodotus' position in the historiographical tradition, see, on the one hand, Momigliano 1990, 46, and, on the other, Murray 1972 (with further literature on the issue at 202 n. 1).

36 On this tendency of older scholarship, see Stahl 1966, 12–15. A case in point is Cochrane's monograph *Thucydides and the Science of History* (see 1929). On Thucydides as a particularly objective and discriminating historian, see also Lesky 1971, 514, and Hartmann 2010, 473, respectively.

37 See Loraux 1980. The alterity of Thucydides is also emphasised by Wallace, who complains that Thucydides "never tells us his sources" and "never justifies his opinions" (1964, 258).

38 See Woodman 1988, 1–69. For critical assessments of Woodman's approach, see e.g. Moles 1990; Lendon 2009, 49–56; Grethlein 2010, 212.

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addition to the phenomenon of embedding inscriptions), the study envisages what may be called the epigraphic dimension of Classical Greek historiography.

Naturally, we should allow for the possibility that the treatment of inscriptions in an individual literary text such as Herodotus' *Histories* or Thucydides' *History* does not represent a general tendency. As we have seen, other early prose texts that were possibly based on (and/or presented themselves as being based on) epigraphic material are not at all well preserved. As a result, it is virtually impossible to determine to what extent certain aspects of the concept of inscriptions that emerges from the two texts under scrutiny in the following chapters could also be found in other early prose texts. At the same time, the loss of so many early Greek prose texts makes Herodotus' *Histories* and Thucydides' *History* all the more precious.

The present study focuses on one specific facet of the relationship between the epigraphic sphere and the works of Herodotus and Thucydides, namely explicit references to inscriptions.[39] The observation that these two texts are (among other things) texts about inscriptions is a simple one, but it is the premise of the present study that the constellation in question – i.e. the embeddedness of an inscription in a historiographical text – merits further exploration.[40]

39 Arguably the most influential study of Herodotus' practice of referring to inscriptions is West's 1985 article "Herodotus' Epigraphical Interests" (for a critical reaction, see Pritchett 1993, 144–191; for a recent re-exploration of Herodotus' use of inscriptions, see Lougovaya-Ast 2017 [especially on Darius' inscribed equestrian relief]). Volkmann 1954 and Fabiani 2003 likewise survey inscriptions in the whole of the *Histories* (see also Smith 1987, 74–107 and 213–251; a very brief survey is offered by Osborne 2002, 510–513). Haywood 2021 (on Herodotus' use of inscriptions) and Tyrell 2020 (a comparative study of inscribed objects and other material remains in the *Histories* and in the Hebrew Bible) appeared too late to be taken into account. Explicit references to inscriptions in Thucydides are surveyed by Hornblower 1987, 88–91; Zizza 1999; Bearzot 2003, 291–295; Smarczyk 2006. Further contributions on specific (groups of) Herodotean and Thucydidean inscriptions will be cited in the case studies. See also the next note.

40 As tangible remains of the ancient world, inscriptions that have come down to us on stone may be the most spectacular expression of ancient epigraphic culture, but our understanding of this culture can only profit from the consideration of further aspects – such as the presence of embedded inscriptions in Herodotus and Thucydides. In the introductory chapter of *Inscriptions and Their Uses in Greek and Latin Literature*, Liddel/Low 2013 make a strong case for the potential of "literary epigraphy" (e.g. 5 and 6) in the sense of (the study of) "the testimonia on inscriptions offered by literary texts" (4); see also Zadorojnyi 2013, esp. 366–367, and (more generally on texts about text-bearing artefacts) Gertz et al. 2015; Focken/Ott 2016. For surveys of the reception of inscriptions in ancient historiography and scholarship, see Shrimpton 1997, 124–134; Higbie 1999; Rhodes 2007; Stott 2008, 19–51; Hartmann 2010, 468–492; 2013, 35–39; Sheppard 2018. For discussions of the relationship between documents (including texts published on stone) and ancient historiography, see e.g. *HCT* I 30–35; Raubitschek 1961; Finley 1983; Kallet-Marx 1993, esp. 155–170; *CT* II 93–107; Sickinger 1999, 176–185; Hornblower 2002, 374–375; Smarczyk 2006, 515–522; Faraguna 2017. On the reception of inscribed epigram in pre-Hellenistic literature, see Petrovic 2007b (with further references). On ancient attitudes to inscribed epigram, see e.g. Svenbro 1993 [1988], esp. 44–63; Bing 2002; Day 2010, 26–84; Livingstone 2011.

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As has been observed above, the relationship between Classical Greek historiography and inscriptions can be explored from different angles, and this is also true of the specific facet of this relationship that is at the heart of this study, i.e. passages featuring explicit references to inscriptions. It may be asked, for instance, to what extent certain statements about a given inscription (e.g. the location or the content of the inscribed text) reflect the extratextual epigraphic reality. In the present study, this issue will be addressed, but assessing the reliability of historiographical statements about inscriptions will not be the primary concern.[41] Rather, the focus will be on Herodotean and Thucydidean inscriptions as textual phenomena.[42] The aim is to elucidate how embedded inscriptions contribute to the constitution of meaning in the two texts under consideration.

In engaging with this overarching question, it does not seem advisable to impose too rigid a framework when approaching the individual passages: in principle, many ways in which embedded inscriptions contribute to their historiographical host-texts are conceivable, and every passage deserves to be considered on its own terms. That having been said, the case studies aim to contribute to the ongoing discussion about the role of inscriptions in Herodotus and Thucydides by paying particular attention to the light embedded inscriptions shed both on characters and on the historiographical narrator.[43]

It may be helpful to illustrate this focus of interest with an example (taken from Herodotus).[44] Having narrated how Darius assumes the Persian throne, Herodotus states (3.88.3):

41 The assessment of Herodotean and Thucydidean inscriptions against the backdrop of the extratextual epigraphic reality is complicated by the patchiness of the information about this reality and the difficulty of defining non-anachronistic standards of accuracy. In general, it is exceedingly difficult to specify the way in which the presence of an embedded inscription in Herodotus or Thucydides is linked to the existence of an inscription in the extratextual world (for example, to determine whether the information given about an inscription is based on autopsy), but it seems to me that a complete avoidance of the issue would be even more problematic than an inconclusive discussion.

42 From an intermedial point of view, it bears underlining that the 'inscriptionality' of the passages in question is, in the end, a textual effect; even in those cases where we can establish a link between a passage in a historiographical text and an extant inscription, this inscription (*qua* material object) is, strictly speaking, not part of the historiographical text (see Spielberg 2019, 73).

43 The present investigation is thus concerned with implications of the narrator's activity, which includes – among many other things, of course – embedding inscriptions. On the Herodotean narrator, see e.g. Dewald 1987; 1999; 2002; Marincola 1987; Lateiner 1989, esp. 55–108; Rösler 1991; 2002; Fowler 1996, esp. 69–80; Thomas 2000, esp. 168–248; Luraghi 2001; 2006; Munson 2001, esp. 20–44; Bakker 2002; Brock 2003; de Jong 2004; 2013 [1999], 256–267; Marincola 2013 [2007]; Wood 2016. On the Thucydidean narrator, see e.g. Connor 1985; Loraux 1986a; Edmunds 1993; Gribble 1998; Dewald 1999; Morrison 2004; Rood 2004a; 2006; Bakker 2006; Gray 2011; Hornblower 2011 [1994]; de Bakker 2017. See also Marincola 1997 on the construction of narratorial authority in ancient historiography.

44 For a more detailed discussion of this Herodotean inscription, see Ch. 3.1.

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> πρῶτον μέν νυν τύπον ποιησάμενος λίθινον ἔστησε· ζῷον δέ οἱ ἐνῆν ἀνὴρ ἱππεύς, ἐπέγραψε δὲ γράμματα λέγοντα τάδε· Δαρεῖος ὁ Ὑστάσπεος σύν τε τοῦ ἵππου τῇ ἀρετῇ (τὸ οὔνομα λέγων) καὶ Οἰβάρεος τοῦ ἱπποκόμου ἐκτήσατο τὴν Περσέων βασιληίην.
>
> First, he set up a stone relief featuring a man on horseback, with an inscription that said the following: "Darius, son of Hystaspes, gained the kingship of the Persians with the help of the excellence of his horse" – here mentioning the name – "and that of his groom Oebares."

Before quoting the text of the inscription (with the exception of the name of Darius' horse), Herodotus makes it clear that this statement about Darius, his horse, and his groom is to be imagined as being written on a specific artefact, namely a stone relief.

Instead of simply noting that the relief bears an inscription (and then quoting it), Herodotus actually narrates an epigraphic act: Darius sets up an inscribed relief. To be sure, Herodotus' wording does not imply that we are to imagine the Persian king with chisel in hand. Here and in similar passages, the active forms of verbs of inscribing are arguably best understood as causative.[45] Nevertheless, it clearly emerges from the passage quoted above that the inscribed relief is produced on Darius' initiative. To put it in more abstract terms, a link is established between an inscription and a character.

The textual establishment of a link between a character (such as Darius) and an inscribed artefact (such as the equestrian relief) facilitates the interpretation of the latter as a means of characterisation. In other words, the embedding of an inscription in a historiographical text can be seen as one of the "ways in which traits (of all kinds) are ascribed to a character in a text".[46] In the case of Darius' equestrian relief, the content of the text

45 On the causative use of transitive verbs in the active, see KG § 373.6. LSJ *s.v.* ἐπιγράφω II distinguishes between the use of the verb in the active ("*write upon*, *inscribe*") and in the middle ("*have inscribed*"). Sider has objected that this "misleadingly suggests that the subject of the verb in the active is the stone carver" (2007, 123 n. 32). I agree that in instances such as Hdt. 3.88.3, we should not picture the Persian king as personally doing the inscribing; see also Petrovic 2007a, 77, who suggests that active forms of ἐπιγράφω always have a causative sense in Herodotus. However, since Herodotus does not take care to clarify the merely indirect involvement of the subjects of these forms of ἐπιγράφω, there is something to be said for adopting the 'simple' translation offered in LSJ (and Powell 1938) and relying on the context or common sense (see KG § 373.6) to rule out an inapproriate notion of the way in which Darius and other 'epigraphic subjects' are involved in the production of inscriptions. Incidentally, when Herodotus refers to an anonymous Delphian at 1.51.4 (ἐπέγραψε δὲ τῶν τις Δελφῶν), it is not excluded that this individual is to be imagined as the actual writer of the inscription Herodotus ascribes to him.

46 This is (part of) the definition of 'characterisation' proposed by De Temmerman/van Emde Boas (see 2018, 2); they add that the term can also refer to "the interpretative processes by which readers of a text form an idea of that character". As De Temmerman/van Emde Boas note, the concept of character, which is of key importance for the analysis of narrative, is "notoriously slippery" (1); they suggest a provisional and rough definition as "the *relatively stable* moral, mental, social and personal traits which pertain to an individual" (2). For a discussion of techniques of characterisation in narrative literature and their grounding in ancient rhetoric, see De Temmerman 2010; 2014,

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inscribed on it – and the very fact that Darius sets up this memorial to his acquisition of the Persian throne – sheds light on his character. As we shall see in the case studies, the narration of epigraphic acts (i.e. statements to the effect that a certain utterance, which can be either quoted or paraphrased in a more or less detailed way, is recorded in writing on a durable surface) is a powerful strategy of characterisation.

A further point to be made about the constellation exemplified by the episode about Darius' relief is that the embedding of an inscription in a historiographical text invites reflection on the relationship between this text and the inscription, i.e. two different commemorative media. Highlighting the coexistence of various commemorative media in fifth-century Greece, Grethlein has pointed out that Herodotus and Thucydides can be seen as "intruding into the crowded field of memory"[47] and as being faced with the challenge of defining their approaches to the past against this backdrop.[48] This may occur not only in the form of explicit declarations but also in an implicit way. Embedded speeches featuring references to the past are a case in point for the latter: such speeches mirror their host-text and can fruitfully be read, as Grethlein has shown, "as an implicit commentary on how (not) to use the past"[49] – that is, as "implicit meta-history".[50]

As we shall see, Herodotean and Thucydidean inscriptions may also serve as a metahistorical device and contribute to Herodotus' and Thucydides' implicit presentation of their historiographical projects. This general idea leaves room for different (and not necessarily easily compatible) forms such a contribution might take. On the one hand, the evocation of the existence of an inscribed text by a historiographical narrator may, for instance, bolster the authority of a statement about the past, which is thus presented as being founded on information that has been preserved from the past. In our example, the fact that certain elements of Herodotus' account of how Darius manages to accede to the Persian throne (3.84–87) reappear in the text of Darius' inscription may make this account appear particularly authoritative. On the other hand, the evocation in a historiographical text of an inscription as a separate entity may also be seen in terms of an antagonistic relationship. In the case of Darius' relief, a reading of the brief and selective

26–41. For overviews of characterisation in Herodotus, see e.g. Waters 1985, 136–151; Marincola 2001, 43–48; Bichler/Rollinger 2011, 88–111; Baragwanath 2015; de Bakker 2018; on Thucydides, see e.g. Marincola 2001, 91–98; Gribble 2006; de Bakker 2013; Stadter 2017; Rood 2018.

47 Grethlein 2010, 4. On the variety of ways of engaging with the past in Classical (and Archaic) Greece, see also Marincola 2012.

48 See Grethlein 2010, 149.

49 Grethlein 2010, 239.

50 Grethlein 2010, 149. Grethlein distinguishes this concept (in the sense of an "implicit self-reflection") from an understanding (which he sees exemplified in particular in White 1973) in terms of "theoretical reflections on memory and history" (159). On White's notion of 'metahistory' and the history of the term, see Paul 2015. The focus on implicit commentary that is characteristic of Grethlein's metahistorical approach to ancient historiography is also in evidence, for instance, in Christ 1994 (on Herodotus' representation of inquiring kings); for a brief survey of metahistorical readings of Herodotus' *Histories*, see Zali 2015, 310–311. For suggestive remarks about the metahistorical potential (in the form of a negative foil) of some Herodotean and Thucydidean inscriptions, see Grethlein 2013, 187–190 (expanding on 2009, 208–209; see also 2011a, 113); 2012, 71–74.

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inscription against the backdrop of Herodotus' preceding account may, for example, serve to highlight the comprehensiveness of the *Histories*.

1.3 Outline of the Study

The first main part of the study is devoted to Herodotean inscriptions. I begin with an introduction to the epigraphic dimension of the *Histories*. After discussing the possibility that the proem implicitly likens this work to a monumental inscription and considering possible links between the epigraphic record and passages without explicit references to inscriptions, I give an overview of the corpus of Herodotean inscriptions (Chapter 2). I then offer two case studies of embedded inscriptions in their narrative contexts.[51] The first case study is devoted to the epigraphic activities of the Persian king Darius (Chapter 3). To this king, Herodotus ascribes three inscribed monuments,[52] which makes him the character in Herodotus' world who is most often presented as being engaged in epigraphic acts. Furthermore, Darius' inscriptions are, as we shall see, linked to crucial moments in his career and play an important role in Herodotus' portrayal of him. In the second case study, I investigate Herodotus' staging of inscribed funerary monuments both in Greece and in the non-Greek world (Chapter 4). In view of the memorialising purpose of the *Histories* as it is stated in the proem, funerary inscriptions (which can be expected to be aimed at ensuring that the memory of a deceased individual or group lives on) are a particularly promising sub-corpus.

In the second main part of the study, I investigate Thucydidean inscriptions. After discussing the possibility that the *History* is implicitly cast as a monumental inscription and considering possible indications for the tacit implementation of epigraphically recorded information, I survey embedded inscriptions in the *History* (Chapter 5). I then turn to the first Thucydidean case study, which deals with Thucydides' presentation of the Plataean tripod and of Pericles' remarks on different forms of commemoration in the Funeral Oration (Chapter 6). In Thucydides' account of the last years of the Spartan regent Pausanias, the Plataean tripod features as the carrier medium for two very different inscriptions: a boastful epigram inscribed at Pausanias' instigation is replaced by a list of the Greek cities that contributed to the defeat of the Persians. Later in the *History*, this epigraphic list is referred to by the Plataeans, who evoke it in a desperate attempt to prevent the Spartans from destroying their city. While the Plataeans rely on the authority of an

51 This entails that not all Herodotean inscriptions receive equal attention in the present study. I will, however, complement the discussion of my 'main inscriptions' in Chapters 3 and 4 with references to other Herodotean inscriptions. Moreover, Chapter 2 is based on the corpus of Herodotean inscriptions as a whole.

52 The relevant passages are 3.88, 4.87, and 4.91; in the second of these passages, mention is made of *two* stelai inscribed in different scripts, but the setting-up of these stelai is presented as one single epigraphic act.

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inscription, Pericles makes a (not unproblematic) case for the superior power of commemoration that does not depend on monumental writing. The second Thucydidean case study is devoted to the inscriptions in the Pisistratid excursus (Chapter 7), with a focus on the presentation of two dedicatory inscriptions by Pisistratus the Younger. A particularly problematic group of embedded texts in the *History* are the quotations of interstate treaties in Books 4, 5, and 8 (Chapter 8). As opposed to the passages discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, these texts are not introduced as being inscribed on certain durable objects; at least in some cases, however, the quoted terms include the stipulation that the treaty is to be published in epigraphic form.

In the Epilogue, I shall complement the investigation of embedded inscriptions in Herodotus and Thucydides by discussing the absence of inscriptions from Xenophon's *Hellenica* (i.e. the only other fully transmitted historiographical text of the Classical period) and the presence of inscriptions in Lucian's *True Stories* (i.e. a text from the Imperial period engaging, as I shall argue, with the Herodotean and Thucydidean practice of embedding inscriptions).

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Part I:
Herodotus

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2 The Epigraphic Dimension of the *Histories*

In the course of the *Histories*, Herodotus refers to some twenty-four (groups of) inscriptions on nineteen occasions.[1] The highest 'inscriptional density' can be observed in Book 2 (five references), but every book contains at least one reference to an inscribed object.[2] Certainly, the book division – probably of Alexandrian provenance; first attested at Diod. Sic. 11.37.6[3] – does not tell us a lot about the compositional principles of the *Histories*. Still, the fact remains that there is no major stretch of Herodotus' narrative from which references to inscriptions are conspicuously absent.

Before I offer some general observations about the Herodotean practice of embedding inscriptions, I would like to consider two further aspects of the epigraphic dimension of this work, namely the possibility that the proem implicitly likens the *Histories* to a monumental inscription and possible links between the epigraphic record and passages without explicit references to inscriptions.

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1 See Appendix 1. When Asheri states that the *Histories* feature "twenty-four *or so* inscriptions" (2007, 18; my italics), this suggests that counting Herodotean inscriptions involves certain difficulties, and determining their exact number is indeed less obvious than one might expect. Consider, for instance, the inscriptions on and within Nitocris' tomb (1.187), which are listed as one single item by West 1985, 280, and as two items by Fabiani 2003, 164 n. 7. While West and Fabiani provide lists of *inscriptions*, Rhodes approaches the issue from a different direction, stating that „[t]here are nineteen *occasions* when he [i.e. Herodotus] explicitly mentions an inscription" (2007, 57; my italics; see also Osborne 2002, 511). Moreover, it should be noted that it is not always clear whether an expression qualifies as a reference to an inscription. When Herodotus refers to a statue as ἀνδριὰς ἐπωνυμίην ἔχων Ἀριστέω (4.15.4), this could be read as a reference to the statue as an inscribed object (see Higbie 1999, 57 n. 38), but the expression could also mean that the statue was generally known to represent Aristeas (see West 1985, 280 n. 8, noting that Volkmann 1954 did not include it in his corpus of Herodotean inscriptions). Regarding Herodotus' mention of the bronze dolphin dedicated by Arion (Ἀρίονος ἔστι ἀνάθημα χάλκεον οὐ μέγα ἐπὶ Ταινάρῳ, ἐπὶ δελφῖνος ἐπεὼν ἄνθρωπος, 1.24.8), Gray argues that "[t]he genitive case of the dedication suggests that Arion dedicated it and inscribed it with his name" (2001, 12); by contrast, Higbie states that Herodotus "neither mentions any inscription nor says anything to show he has seen it" (1999, 57). Another ambiguous expression occurs at 1.164.3: should we take the word γραφή, which is here part of list of objects the Phocaeans leave behind in their sanctuaries (χαλκὸς ἢ λίθος ἢ γραφή), as referring to inscriptions, as Purvis 2007 does? The word is usually translated as 'paintings' (e.g. by Powell 1938, *s.v.*; Waterfield 1998; Mensch 2014; van Groningen does not commit himself to one of the alternatives [see 1946–1955 III, 81]), and a reference to paintings or pictures is fairly clear in the other seven instances of the word in the *Histories* (3.24.2; 4.36.2; 2.78; 2.86.2; 2.182.1; 2.73.1; 2.73.2). It has to be admitted, though, that the word is attested in the sense of 'inscription' elsewhere (e.g. Thuc. 1.134).

2 That is, if one counts the mention of the Plataean tripod at 9.81.1 as an epigraphic reference. Strictly speaking, no mention is made of an inscription in this passage, but the Plataean tripod is introduced as an inscribed monument when it is first mentioned at 8.82.1.

3 See Rengakos 2011a, 377.

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Let us first consider the proem:

> Ἡροδότου Ἁλικαρνησσέος ἱστορίης ἀπόδεξις ἥδε, ὡς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται, μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, τὰ μὲν Ἕλλησι, τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα, ἀκλεᾶ γένηται, τά τε ἄλλα καὶ <δὴ καὶ> δι' ἣν αἰτίην ἐπολέμησαν ἀλλήλοισι.
>
> Here is the presentation of the inquiry of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, so that the things brought about by mankind do not become faded with time, and great and marvellous achievements, some presented by Greeks, some by barbarians, do not become deprived of glory, and in particular the reason why they went to war with each other.

The structure and meaning of this famous sentence have been much debated.[4] In the present chapter, I would like to focus on one specific question – which is, however, of considerable interest both for the cultural contextualisation of the *Histories* and for the understanding of Herodotus' narratorial agenda: does the proem implicitly fashion Herodotus' work as a monumental inscription?

The thesis that the proem does indeed evoke the epigraphic sphere has been advocated especially by Moles.[5] Having listed several (potential) arguments for an inscriptional reading, he draws special attention to the following features of the proem: its general format (in particular, the occurrence of a third-person self-reference that is later [1.5.3] followed by a first-person self-reference), the explicit statement of a commemorative purpose, the use of deictic ἥδε without a verb, and the use of ἐξίτηλος.[6]

With reference to ἐξίτηλος, Moles discusses two possible inscriptional readings: as a reference to the fading of an inscription and as a genealogical term (in the sense of 'extinct', suggesting an alignment with funerary inscriptions).[7] The latter interpretation rests (at least in part) on the fact that ἐξίτηλος clearly has a 'genealogical' meaning in the only other passage where it occurs in the *Histories*: at 5.39.2, it denotes the extinction of a

4 For surveys of older scholarship, see Barth 1968, 93–94; Erbse 1992, 123–125. More recent treatments include Oswald 1995; Węcowski 2004; Rood 2010.

5 Moles notes that the claim that Hecataeus, Herodotus, and Thucydides represent their works as monumental inscriptions has variously been made since the beginnings of the modern study of Greek historiography (see 1999a, 28; see also the bibliography at 46 n. 32) but claims that he is the first to offer a cumulative case (see 46 n. 32). In the context of the present chapter, Moles' Chapter 8 ("Do Hecataeus and Herodotus represent their works as 'inscriptions'?") is of particular relevance (see 44–53). For more recent statements of the thesis that Herodotus' proem alludes to the epigraphic sphere, see e.g. Bakker 2002, 29–32; Porter 2010, 472; Grethlein 2011a, 113; 2013, 222.

6 See Moles 1999a, 52, and the list at 45–46.

7 See Moles 1999a, 49.

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family (γένος τὸ Εὐρυσθένεος γενέσθαι ἐξίτηλον).[8] However, it seems doubtful to me that such a notion of extinction is evoked in the proem.[9]

As for the idea that ἐξίτηλος is inscriptional in that it refers to the fading of the colour of an inscription,[10] it should be noted that it appears to be based on one single late source, namely Pollux' *Onomasticon* (5.149–150), a lexicon from the second century AD that has come down to us in epitomised form.[11] A notable feature of Pollux' work is the fact that it presents the material not alphabetically but thematically; what Pollux offers are lists of words subsumed under broad rubrics.[12] The relevant entry is headed by the rubric Γράμματα ἐν στήλαις ("Letters on stelai"); it comprises a list of passive participles (e.g. ἐγγεγραμμένα), a list of active participles (e.g. ἐγγράψας), and a list of adjectives.[13] The latter list consists of three sub-groups (structured by τὰ μὲν [...] τὰ δ' [...] τὰ δέ). The former two, which are introduced by the antonyms ὑπέργεια ("above ground") and ὑπόγεια ("subterraneous"), feature descriptions of good visibility (e.g. ἐπιφανῆ) and invisibility (e.g. ἀφανῆ), respectively.

The crucial section for our purposes is the third group of words (introduced by χρόνια ["aged"]); this group is not only more extensive than the preceding two but also more varied in terms of the meaning of the words it comprises: ἐξίτηλα is followed both by ἀθέατα ("invisible") and by δυσθέατα ("hard to see"), i.e. descriptions of two rather different degrees of visibility. Because of this broad semantic range, the occurrence of a form of ἐξίτηλος in Pollux' entry cannot serve to demonstrate that this adjective refers *specifically* to the *fading of the paint* of inscriptional letters.[14] Nevertheless, it is striking that Pollux includes ἐξίτηλος in an entry about epigraphic writing. While the entry does not help us grasp the semantic niceties of the individual words listed under its heading, it

8 See Pelliccia 1992, 75; Moles 1999a, 50.

9 Moles suggests that the expression τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων in the proem is to be understood in the sense of "things born from men" (1999a, 50), which would tie in nicely with a 'genealogical' understanding of ἐξίτηλα. However, it should be noted that γενέσθαι need not evoke the notion of birth, and ἐκ + genitive is a common way of expressing the agent in passive constructions in Herodotus (e.g. 3.62.2 [προδεδόσθαι ἐκ Πρηξάσπεος, "to have been betrayed by Prexaspes"]; see also 3.62.1; 7.95.2; 7.175.1; for this use of ἐκ, see KG § 430.2c). Pelliccia thinks that "Herodotus chose γενόμενα in the first μήτε clause – balanced by ἔργα in the second – as something to replace what the subsequent ἐξίτηλα will bring to mind, namely, γένος/γένεα" (1992, 75); like Porciani (see 1997, 59–60 n. 167), I am sceptical about this.

10 See Moles 1999a, 50–51; see also Grethlein 2011a, 113 n. 42.

11 Pollux is cited from Bethe 1900. For a recent introduction to the *Onomasticon*, see König 2016, 298–304 (with further literature).

12 For a close reading of one such entry that brings out the underlying structure and its cultural implications, see König/Whitmarsh 2007, 32–34.

13 For a reading of this entry in the context of the discourse about epigraphic writing in the Imperial period, see Zadorojnyi 2019, esp. 50–53.

14 Since there are considerable semantic differences between at least some of the words in this group, the fact that it includes, among other things, the word ἀμυδρός – identified by Moles (on the basis of Thuc. 6.54.7) as "the *mot juste* for such 'fading' of inscriptional letters" (1999a, 51) – cannot be adduced to determine the meaning of ἐξίτηλος. What is more, the precise meaning of ἀμυδρός at Thuc. 6.54.7 is elusive (see Ch. 7.1, pp. 127–129).

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is valuable evidence that, at least in the second century AD, ἐξίτηλος was perceived to be applicable to inscriptions.

Whatever its precise meaning, ἐξίτηλος expresses some notion of impermanence. As Bassi argues, "the metaphor of fading with time [...] implicitly equates τὰ γενόμενα with visible evidence and acknowledges or establishes the corrosive effect of time on that evidence".[15] Since becoming ἐξίτηλος is precisely what Herodotus sets out to *prevent*, an inscriptional reading of this term would mean that Herodotus *contrasts* his project with an inscription, i.e. that he fashions it as *not* being inscription-like. We should differentiate, then, between the idea that the epigraphic sphere plays some role in Herodotus' introductory delineation of his project and the more specific idea that he actually fashions it *as an inscription*. If ἐξίτηλος evokes the epigraphic sphere, it draws our attention to the fact that inscriptions, in spite of their solid material basis, are not immune to the detrimental effects of time. On such a reading, the proem reminds us of the dangers of relying on inscriptions for the preservation of renown and implicitly presents the *Histories* as a superior alternative.

Throughout the *Histories*, both Greeks and non-Greeks are shown to be motivated by the desire to leave behind μνημόσυνα, and this desire is, as Bakker points out, "mirrored and answered by Herodotus' wish to record them as *erga megala apodekhthenta*".[16] The term μνημόσυνον is sometimes used in an abstract sense,[17] but in most of the cases, it "denotes a concrete monument or dedication left by someone who wishes to be remembered through it; it is a memorial, as we understand the word".[18] For our purposes, it is important to note that at least some of the material objects referred to as μνημόσυνον bear inscriptions.[19] As "guarantors of fame",[20] inscriptions would serve the very function Herodotus claims for his work in the proem.

However, whereas the first few words of the proem – with their third-person self-reference, the explicit statement of a commemorative purpose, and the use of deictic ἥδε without a verb[21] – may be seen to suggest a *parallel* between the *Histories* and inscriptions, the negative final clause (ὡς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται) may

15 Bassi 2016, 115.

16 Bakker 2002, 26–27. Moles states that "[t]heme and work are parallel and interdependent" (1993, 94).

17 At 7.226.2, for instance, Dieneces' quip about the shadow caused by the arrows of the Persian archers is mentioned as an example of the μνημόσυνα he left behind.

18 Immerwahr 1960, 266. Immerwahr states that it is this function of "guarantee[ing] the fame of their author" (267) that buildings and dedications share with sayings like the one by Dieneces (7.226.2).

19 The Egyptian king Asychis, for instance, "left as a memorial a pyramid" (μνημόσυνον πυραμίδα λιπέσθαι, 2.136.4); on this monument, see Ch. 4.3. The other examples are 1.185.1; 1.186.1; 2.101.2; 2.110.1; 2.121.α.1; 2.135.3 (del. Stein [see Wilson 2015a]); 2.136.3; 2.148.1; 4.81.6; 4.88.2 (*bis*); 7.24. Strangely, Powell 1938, *s.v.*, also lists 7.226.2 (Dieneces' sayings) as an instance of the concrete use of μνημόσυνον. Conversely, 4.166.1 (Darius' gold coinage), which Powell 1938, *s.v.*, categorises as metaphorical, arguably belongs in the concrete category – though, as Immerwahr points out, Darius' gold coinage "is considered not under its practical aspect" (1960, 266).

20 Immerwahr 1960, 274.

21 See Moles 1999a, 52. On the inscriptional quality of the deictic orientation of the proem, see also Bakker 2002, 29–31.

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draw our attention to a decisive *shortcoming* of inscriptions regarding their memorialising power, i.e. their being liable to becoming ἐξίτηλος (as discussed above). The image of inscriptions that can be extracted from the potential allusions to the epigraphic sphere in the proem is, thus, an ambiguous one.

Let us now turn to a brief consideration of some cases where scholars have suspected that information presented by Herodotus without an explicit reference to an inscription can be traced back to an epigraphic source.

To begin with a rather curious case, there is a contribution by Verrall entitled "Two Unpublished Inscriptions from Herodotus".[22] As it turns out, these alleged inscriptions are the products of a transformation of two Herodotean passages into hexameters. According to Verrall, the speech addressed by a woman from Cos to the victorious Spartan general Pausanias (9.76.2) "has been copied closely and carefully, word after word, from a version in five hexameters"[23] – a version Verrall then confidently presents in the "original".[24] The other instance comes from the speech delivered by a Spartan herald to Xerxes after the battle of Salamis (8.114.2). Again, Verrall volunteers a hexametric version, adding some comments about facultative and necessary changes Herodotus allegedly made when he put the (hypothesised) verse inscription into prose.[25] Verrall's reconstructed inscriptions have made it into a well-known commentary on the *Histories*.[26] In more recent scholarship, however, they are usually firmly rejected or altogether ignored.[27]

Sometimes, Herodotus does not mention inscribed monuments when giving information that can actually be linked to monuments known to us from other sources. This is true, for instance, of two responses of the Delphic oracle. In the fifteenth century, Cyriacus of Ancona made drawings of two inscriptions (now lost) that correspond (with minor differences, which may well be due to errors in the Byzantine transmission of the text of the *Histories*) to the oracular responses Herodotus quotes at 1.47.3 and 1.65.3.[28] To take a different example, it has been argued that the information Herodotus gives about various athletes suggests a consultation of victors' dedications.[29]

To turn to a different type of tacit use of epigraphic material, it has been speculated that the extensive description of the cities and peoples that took part in the Persian invasion of Greece (7.60–99) is indebted to inscriptions Herodotus refers to in two passages (4.87 and 4.88) without explicitly exploiting them for this information.[30] By a similar token, it has

22 See Verrall 1903.
23 Verrall 1903, 100.
24 Verrall 1903, 100.
25 See Verrall 1903, 102.
26 See HW II 273 and 319–320.
27 Verrall's dubitable method is criticised e.g. by Flower/Marincola 2002, 241. For a critical assessment of the second example mentioned above, see also Asheri 1998, 68 (but contrast Boedeker 1996, 228).
28 See Hemmerdinger 1981, 180–181. The correspondence between these two quoted responses and the epigraphic record (insofar as it is reflected in Cyriacus' work) is also emphasised by Nenci 1994, 243.
29 See Virgilio 1972. On the whole, though, Virgilio stresses the supreme importance of oral tradition (see esp. 467–468).
30 See O'Toole 1991–1992, 157–158.

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been argued (with reference to votive offerings in Delphi) that when Herodotus informs us about the physical appearance and value of objects without mentioning any inscriptions, we are, in fact, dealing with implicit references to the inscribed texts.[31]

A particularly intriguing opportunity to connect an 'unmarked' stretch of Herodotus' narrative to an epigraphic document is offered by a recently published verse dedication from the temple of Apollo Ismenius in Thebes.[32] Part of the account of the last years of the reign of the Lydian king Croesus is his testing of all the major oracles of the Greek world (1.46–54). Apart from the Delphic oracle, only the one of Amphiaraus passes the test; as a result, Amphiaraus receives a precious votive offering that, according to Herodotus, can still be seen in the temple of Apollo Ismenius in Thebes (1.52):

> τῷ δὲ Ἀμφιάρεῳ, πυθόμενος αὐτὸν τήν τε ἀρετὴν καὶ τὴν πάθην, ἀνέθηκε σάκος τε χρύσεον πᾶν {ὁμοίως} καὶ αἰχμὴν στερεὴν πᾶσαν χρυσέην, τὸ ξυστὸν τῇ λόγχῃ ἐὸν ὁμοίως χρύσεον· τὰ ἀμφότερα ἐς ἐμὲ ἦν ἔτι καὶ κείμενα ἐν Θήβῃσι καὶ Θηβέων ἐν τῷ νηῷ τοῦ Ἰσμηνίου Ἀπόλλωνος.
>
> To Amphiaraus, having found out about his courage and his misfortune, he [i.e. Croesus] dedicated a shield all of gold and a spear all of solid gold, the shaft as well as the head being of gold. Both these items were still lying in Thebes in my day – in the temple of Ismenian Apollo, to be precise.

Working from the assumption that Herodotus did indeed see the golden shield and spear at the temple and noting the narrative inconsistency between the statement that the oracle in Delphi is the only true one (1.48.1) and the addition of the oracle of Amphiaraus in a slightly later passage (1.53.2), Thonemann argues that the inscription on Croesus' dedication convinced Herodotus that Amphiaraus had passed Croesus' test as well. On this view, the inconsistency is the result of an unsuccessful attempt to incorporate this piece of information into the account of Croesus' special relationship to Delphi.[33] But how exactly did Herodotus arrive at the conclusion that the dedication in Thebes had to do with Croesus' testing of the oracles? Even if we do not follow Thonemann's identification of the Croesus mentioned in the inscription with a certain homonymous Athenian warrior of whom we happen to know thanks to an Attic funerary epigram,[34] we may well be dealing with a misinterpretation of the inscribed text on the part of Herodotus or his Theban guides.[35] Herodotus may have regarded a private dedication that stood out for its lavishness as evidence for Croesus' consultations of Greek oracles.[36]

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31 See Mari 2013, 128.

32 See Papazarkadas 2014, 233–247; further discussions of the inscription include Porciani 2016; Thonemann 2016; Tentori Montalto 2017.

33 See Thonemann 2016, 153–154.

34 See Thonemann 2016, 164, referring to *IG* I^{3} 1240 (= *CEG* no. 27).

35 See Thonemann 2016, 164.

36 See Thonemann 2016, 165.

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The tacit implementation of information recorded in epigraphic form is arguably not confined to Greek inscriptions. It has often been argued, for instance, that the account of Darius' accession in the *Histories* betrays Herodotus' familiarity with the content of the famous Bisitun inscription. There are, indeed, some striking correspondences (e.g. the false Smerdis and his illegitimate reign).[37] In particular, the fairly close correspondence between the names of the conspirators given in the *Histories* (3.70) and the names that can be read in the Bisitun inscription (§ 68) have been taken to indicate that Herodotus consulted an inscribed text.[38] It has to be admitted that the flow of information remains difficult to reconstruct in detail, but Darius' presentation of his accession, for which the Bisitun inscription is our most important piece of evidence, seems to have left its mark on Herodotus' narrative.[39]

In short, a tacit use of epigraphic sources of information on Herodotus' part has to be reckoned with, even if its extent cannot be determined with any certainty.

It might be argued that this lack of transparency is relativised by the fact that Herodotus sometimes does establish an explicit link between certain pieces of information and specific inscriptions. Consider, for instance, the following description of the funerary monument of the Lydian king Alyattes (1.93.2–3):

> ἔστι αὐτόθι Ἀλυάττεω τοῦ Κροίσου πατρὸς σῆμα, τοῦ ἡ κρηπὶς μέν ἐστι λίθων μεγάλων, τὸ δὲ ἄλλο σῆμα χῶμα γῆς. ἐξεργάσαντο δέ μιν οἱ ἀγοραῖοι ἄνθρωποι καὶ οἱ χειρώνακτες καὶ αἱ ἐνεργαζόμεναι παιδίσκαι. οὖροι δὲ πέντε ἐόντες ἔτι καὶ ἐς ἐμὲ ἦσαν ἐπὶ τοῦ σήματος ἄνω, καί σφι γράμματα ἐνεκεκόλαπτο τὰ ἕκαστοι ἐξεργάσαντο. καὶ ἐφαίνετο μετρεόμενον τὸ τῶν παιδισκέων ἔργον ἐὸν μέγιστον.
>
> There is in that country the tomb of Alyattes, Croesus' father. Its base is made out of huge blocks of stone, and the rest of it is a mound of earth. It was built by traders, artisans, and prostitutes. Even in my day there were five pillars at the top of the tomb, and inscriptions carved on them said what each group had done. When measured, the contribution made by the prostitutes was found to be the greatest.

Here, inscribed pillars seem to be adduced as a source of information about the contribution of various groups to the building of a monument; instead of simply noting the greatness of the prostitutes' contribution, Herodotus apparently presents his knowledge

37 See Rollinger 2004, 265; see also Köhnken 1980, 40–41; Schmitt 2000, 304; Jacobs/Trampedach 2013, 74 n. 68.

38 See Kipp 2001, 244, speculating that Herodotus could have read a (lost) Greek version of the extant Bisitun inscription somewhere in Asia Minor. More cautiously, Rollinger holds that the *Histories* indicate that "seminal elements of the text [i.e. the Bisitun inscription] seem to have been still circulating one hundred years after Darius when Herodotus wrote his *Histories*" (2015, 125). For editions of the text of the Bisitun inscription, see Kent 1953; Schmitt 2009. For an English translation, see Kuhrt 2007.

39 For a reading of the accession narrative against the backdrop of the Bisitun inscription, see Ch. 3.1, pp. 43–45.

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concerning this matter as the result of his consideration of epigraphic evidence. Is this not an example of commendable historiographical transparency? At first glance, one might have such an impression. But how does Herodotus know what the inscriptions say? After all, we are dealing with a Lydian monument. One might account for Herodotus' (apparent) familiarity with the content of the inscriptions on the pillars by postulating that he could avail himself of the services of a translator,[40] but the crucial point is that Herodotus does not (at least with reference to the inscriptions on Alyattes' tomb) address the issue of linguistic barriers. From a modern perspective, this is a serious impairment of transparency in Herodotus' treatment of non-Greek inscriptions.

So far, I have been focusing on the lack of transparency in Herodotus' presentation of information presumably available to him in epigraphic form: allowance should be made for the possibility that Herodotus draws on the epigraphic record without making this explicit, and even when he explicitly adduces inscriptions, he usually does not account for his knowledge of their content. However, the presentation of inscriptions in the *Histories* has also been found problematic at an even more fundamental level: according to Fehling, "[m]onuments with inscriptions form a category of Proof with a particularly high number of obviously fictive examples".[41]

Now, even if one shares Fehling's impression that Herodotus does not give accurate descriptions of actual inscribed monuments, this need not lead to the conclusion of wholesale fabrication on Herodotus' part. One of the key drawbacks of Fehling's study is the fact that he does not make sufficient allowance for the dynamics of the transmission of information in oral cultures[42] and the likelihood of distortions of memory.[43] In fact, the differences between Herodotus' descriptions of inscribed monuments and the epigraphic record that are perceived by some modern scholars do not necessarily imply that embedded inscriptions in the *Histories* are not, in a more or less mediated way, informed by the epigraphic record. In this context, the three passages (2.106.2–5, 5.77.4, 8.82.1)[44] in which Herodotean inscriptions can be compared to extant inscriptions are of particular interest.

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40 There is one instance (2.125.6) where Herodotus mentions an interpreter in the context of a non-Greek inscription.

41 Fehling 1989 [1971], 133; he also characterises the readings Herodotus gives for non-Greek inscriptions as "imaginary" (134).

42 Fehling dismisses the idea of oral tradition as an invention of Romanticism (see 1989 [1971], 21). For a criticism of this stance, see Bowden 1992, 183.

43 This problem is pointed out by Fowler, who counters Fehling's criticism of Herodotus' account of the pyramids – "Could anyone who had ever seen the Pyramids get it all so wrong?" (1989 [1971], 243) – with a piece of anecdotal evidence: "I recently re-visited Kenilworth after seventeen years and was amazed to discover that someone had put up two 400-year-old buildings in my absence" (1996, 81 n. 125).

44 This is the number proposed by West (see 1985, 278). Rhodes adds the stelai of Sesostris mentioned at 2.106.1, which are "most commonly identified with the *stelai* of Ramses II at the mouth of the Nahr el-Kelb" (2007, 57); for other possible identifications, see Zwingmann 2013, 391. The two Delphic oracular responses Herodotus cites at 1.47.3 and 1.65.3 can be compared to drawings of now-lost Delphic inscriptions made by Cyriacus of Ancona in the fifteenth century (see Hemmerdinger 1981,

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At 5.77.4, Herodotus quotes the inscription on a bronze four-horse chariot dedicated by the Athenians after their victory over the Boeotians and Chalcidians in 506.[45] In the second half of the nineteenth century, fragments of two monument bases inscribed with two different versions of the epigram quoted by Herodotus were found on the Acropolis (*IG* I³ 501a and 501b).[46] As can be seen from the order of the four lines of the epigram, which is different in the two versions, it is the more recent one (dating from around the middle of the fifth century) that is reflected in the *Histories*.[47]

This correspondence seems encouraging, but there are two details of Herodotus' account of the inscribed monument at 5.77.4 that have been considered problematic by some scholars. First, it has been argued that none of the adjectives transmitted in the manuscript tradition of the *Histories* as modifying δεσμῷ in the third line (in Wilson's edition: δεσμῷ ἐν ἀχνυόεντι σιδηρέῳ ἔσβεσαν ὕβριν; in the extant inscription, only σαν can be read in this line), i.e. ἀχλυόεντι, ἀχνυνθέντι, and ἀχνυθέντι,[48] are acceptable on morphological and/or semantic grounds.[49] West endorses Hecker's conjecture ἀχνυόεντι, a hypothetical derivation from the rare noun ἀχνύς ('pain'),[50] but she then goes on to point out that neither this form nor the transmitted ones could have stood on the actual monument because they have more than the eight letters required by the stoichedon alignment of the inscription.[51] West assumes "the omission of iota adscript from one of the two datives which suffer correption", i.e. of a letter "which a reader would supply almost automatically",[52] but there is also the possibility that the epigram was inscribed "in a less regular stoichedon order, where e.g. a iota shared a stoichos with another letter".[53] At any rate, since we cannot be sure about what actually stood in line three on the monument, there is no solid basis for assessing the accuracy of Herodotus' quotation.

Secondly, there is the issue of the location of the monument. According to Herodotus, it "stands on the left just as one enters the Propylaea on the Acropolis" (ἀριστερῆς χειρὸς ἕστηκε πρῶτον ἐσιόντι ἐς τὰ προπύλαια τὰ ἐν τῇ ἀκροπόλι, 5.77.4). This, it has been argued, is difficult to reconcile with Pausanias' account of the monument (1.28.2).[54] The debate surrounding this issue is complex, and a detailed recapitulation would require a long

180–181); in contrast to the three passages mentioned above, however, Herodotus does not give any indication here that he is quoting inscriptions.

45 On this epigraphic reference, see Volkmann 1954, 58–59; West 1985, 283–285; Pritchett 1993, 150–159; Fabiani 2003, 168–169.

46 On these fragments, see Petrovic 2007a, 209–222; Kaczko 2016, 1–17 (both with further references).

47 See Kaczko 2009, 112–114; Livingstone/Nisbet 2010, 32–35; Liddel/Low 2013, 7–8.

48 Wilson, who prints Hecker's conjecture ἀχνυόεντι, does not include ἀχνυθέντι in his apparatus (transmitted, according to Nenci 1994, in codex C).

49 See West 1985, 283. On this issue, see also Kaczko 2016, 7–11 (with further references).

50 See also Hornblower 2013, 224.

51 See West 1985, 284.

52 West 1985, 284.

53 Kaczko 2016, 8. This possibility deserves consideration not least because the earlier inscription was non-stoichedon (see 9).

54 See e.g. West 1985, 284.

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excursus on the topography of the Acropolis through the ages.[55] It seems to me that, just like in the case of the inscription itself, we do not have enough evidence to pronounce a definitive judgement about Herodotus' accuracy regarding the location of the monument one way or the other.

Another rare case in which the literary evidence of the *Histories* can be linked to extant epigraphic evidence is the Plataean tripod (ML no. 27).[56] According to Herodotus, the Greek cities that contributed to the defeat of the Persians are inscribed on a tripod dedicated to Apollo (8.82.1; 9.81.1).[57] This piece of information can be linked to a list (comprising thirty-one cities) that has been preserved on the bronze column (now in Istanbul) that was part of the monument referred to by Herodotus.[58] The relevance of this inscribed monument for Herodotus' account seems obvious: "A historian of the Persian Wars might be expected to exploit to the full the testimony of this victory-inscription."[59] But this is not what Herodotus does.

In addition, there is the issue of the (allegedly) poor fit between the few details Herodotus does give and the monument as we have it. Comparing Herodotus' account with this precious piece of archaeological evidence, West identifies the following two points of mismatch.[60] First, the inscription we still have is on the column, whereas Herodotus states that it is on the tripod (ἐνεγράφησαν Τήνιοι ἐν Δελφοῖσι ἐς τὸν τρίποδα ἐν τοῖσι τὸν βάρβαρον κατελοῦσι, 8.82.1). Secondly, while Herodotus states that the tripod rests on a column representing one single serpent with three heads (ὁ τρίπους ὁ χρύσεος [...] ὁ ἐπὶ τοῦ τρικαρήνου ὄφιος τοῦ χαλκέου ἐπεστεώς, 9.81.1), the extant column has – according to West – the form of three intertwined serpents.[61] Pointing out that the Plataean tripod should be assumed to be of particular interest to Herodotus, West describes the "discrepancies" pointed out by her as "disconcerting".[62]

55 For two possible ways of explaining the apparent discrepancy between Herodotus and Pausanias, see Kaczko 2016, 5–6.

56 Studies of this monument, which is also known as the Serpent Column, and its history include Frick 1859; Dethier/Mordtmann 1864; Fabricius 1886; Gauer 1968, 75–96; Ridgway 1977; Laroche 1989; Steinhart 1997; Stichel 1997; Jung 2006, 242–255; Stephenson 2016.

57 On this epigraphic reference, see Volkmann 1954, 54; West 1985, 280–281; Pritchett 1993, 147–148; Corcella 2003, 127–130 and 144–145; Fabiani 2003, 169–170.

58 For a description and several photographs of the column, see Stephenson 2016, 2–8. The serpent heads have fallen off; the upper jaw of one of them is on display in the Istanbul Archaeology Museum (for more information on this part of the monument, see 15–17). The list of cities (inscribed on coils 2 to 11, according to the numbering in ML no. 27) is introduced by a statement on coil 1, which has been heavily damaged. Fabricius 1886, 180, reconstructed το[ίδε τὸν] | πόλεμον [ἐ]|πολ[έ]μεον; this reading has been accepted e.g. by Gauer 1968, 94; ML no. 27; Stephenson 2016, 10. For other suggestions, see Meister 1957; Hansen 1991.

59 West 1985, 281.

60 See West 1985, 280.

61 Meister expresses the same confidence regarding the correct number of serpents (see 1997, 120; see also Flower/Marincola 2002, 249).

62 West 1985, 280–281; at 302, she calls Herodotus' account of the monument "inaccurate and perfunctory". On Herodotus' alleged mistakes in describing the monument, see also Schlögl 1998, 117.

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However, Herodotus' description does not necessarily disagree with the archaeological evidence in the way West assumes. The word τρίπους may refer to the whole monument,[63] and the number of snakes is not as easy to ascertain as one might expect. In fact, the impression one has when looking at the column is that of a series of coils.[64]

The Plataean tripod was "dedicated at a sanctuary with which we are given every reason to believe he [i.e. Herodotus] was extremely familiar",[65] and while Herodotus' description is at least potentially misleading and arguably does not correspond to the magnificence of the monument and its importance for the key theme of the Greek resistance to the Persians, the statement about the inclusion of the Tenians ties in nicely with the epigraphic record: the name of the Tenians can be found on the seventh coil.[66] What is more, it has been suggested that the correspondence extends to a peculiarity in the distribution of the names on the column. While most coils feature only three names, the one with the Tenians features four; this has been interpreted as an indication that the Tenians were added later, which, in turn, has been said to correspond to Herodotus' account of how the Tenians are included on the list.[67] This is a possibility, but the assumption of an even distribution of names on the coils, on which such an interpretation rests, may not be justified. It could even be argued that the seventh coil would be somewhat empty without the name of the Tenians; this suggests that the inscription on this particular coil was laid out in such a way as to accommodate four entries.[68] As for Herodotus' text, a later addition of the Tenians is not necessarily implied when Herodotus states that the Tenians "were inscribed among those who had defeated the barbarian" (ἐνεγράφησαν [...] ἐν τοῖσι τὸν βάρβαρον κατελοῦσι, 8.82.1). Still, it remains a possibility.

Let us now turn to the third test-case for Herodotus' epigraphic accuracy, namely the mention of two triumphal reliefs set up (according to Herodotus) by the Egyptian king Sesostris in Ionia (2.106.2–5). In the context of his account of the conquests of the Egyptian king Sesostris, Herodotus describes two stone reliefs in Ionia and interprets them as victory monuments, stating that they are inscribed "from one shoulder to the other across the chest" (ἐκ δὲ τοῦ ὤμου ἐς τὸν ἕτερον ὦμον διὰ τῶν στηθέων, 2.106.4) with "sacred Egyptian letters" (γράμματα ἱρὰ Αἰγύπτια, 2.106.4) that say: "I took this land with

63 See Bowie 2007, 171. However, Bowie qualifies this (plausible) solution on the (problematic) grounds that Herodotus "is again inaccurate in 9.81.1, where he says the serpent had three heads".

64 Pritchett makes this point on the basis of facsimile sketches (see 1993, 147) and counters West's "nit-picking" (148) by citing various modern scholars (e.g. HW II 322) who adopt Herodotus' way of referring to the monument (see 147–148). Frazer states that "a very attentive examination is necessary to convince an observer that there are actually three serpents, not one" (1965 V, 299); the same point is made by Corcella 2003, 128. Having inspected the monument myself, I can only agree that it is not at all obvious that the column consists of three separate serpents.

65 West 1985, 281.

66 According to the numbering in ML no. 27.

67 See ML no. 27; Stephenson 2016, 9. On the issue of the composition of the inscribed list, see also HW II 321–324; *ATL* III 95–100; Gauer 1968, 94–96; Steinhart 1997, 61–69; Asheri 2006, 284–285; Jung 2006, 248–255.

68 See Steinhart 1997, 64.

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the power of my shoulders" (ἐγὼ τήνδε τὴν χώρην ὤμοισι τοῖσι ἐμοῖσι ἐκτησάμην, 2.106.4).[69] This description has been linked to two reliefs that were discovered at the Karabel pass (located east of Smyrna) in the nineteenth century.[70] One of them, called Karabel A, depicts a male figure carrying a bow, a lance, and a sword.[71] The other one, called Karabel B, was destroyed around 1980 when a road was built; but even before that, it had faded away to a large degree.[72]

How does Herodotus' account relate to this material? On the one hand, there are general correspondences.[73] On the other, it is not obvious how several details Herodotus gives can be reconciled with the archeological and epigraphic evidence. An admittedly striking discrepancy concerns the position of the inscription: while Herodotus states that the inscription runs across the chest of the figure, it is actually placed beside it.[74] With respect to other details, however, the discrepancies may well be less serious than is sometimes assumed. Consider, for instance, the issue of the script.[75] Herodotus describes it as Egyptian, but it is actually Luwian.[76] Some modern scholars have emphasised the differences between Egyptian and Luwian hieroglyphs.[77] However, the challenges of distinguishing between the two scripts should not be underestimated (especially when they are not directly juxtaposed).[78]

In conclusion, the rare cases in which Herodotean inscriptions can be compared to extant inscribed monuments are less revelatory than one might hope. As we have seen, certain discrepancies can be detected in all three examples. But how are they to be assessed? On the one hand, they suggest that Herodotus' concerns are not those of a present-day epigraphist or historian. On the other, this does not exclude some form of link to the actual monuments.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will first offer an overview of the types of information Herodotus gives about the inscriptions he refers to. As a second step, I will consider two selected aspects of the presentation of inscribed objects in Herodotus' work, namely the

69 On this epigraphic reference, see Cook 1956; Armayor 1980, 67–73; West 1985, 300–302; 1992, 118–120; Lloyd III 26–27; Fehling 1989 [1971], 134–136; Obsomer 1989, 130–139; Pritchett 1993, 106–112; Ivantchik 1999, 402–404; Dalley 2003, 172–176; Vasilescu 2003, esp. 229–236; Bichler 2007 [2000], 94–95; Zwingmann 2013; Sergueenkova/Rojas 2016, esp. 143–155; Lougovaya-Ast 2017, 105–106 and 112–113.

70 See West 1985, 301. For an overview of early scholarship on the reliefs, see Zwingmann 2013, 393–398.

71 For a photograph and a drawing, see Zwingmann 2013, 385.

72 For a photograph and a drawing, see Zwingmann 2013, 386.

73 See Zwingmann 2013, 388.

74 This discrepancy is emphasised by West 1985, 301.

75 Further discrepancies that need not be given too much weight include the location of the monument and the position of the two weapons (see Zwingmann 2013, 387–389).

76 The inscription was deciphered as recently as 1997 (see Hawkins 1998).

77 According to West, "no-one familiar with the one script could mistake it for the other" (1985, 301; but see 1992, 119); see also Fehling 1989 [1971], 135; Schlögl 1998, 114–116.

78 See Zwingmann 2013, 390 n. 51, adding that the modern representations of the inscription collected by Kohlmeyer (see 1983, 17 [Fig. 3]) show considerable differences.

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scarcity of pronounced claims of autopsy with reference to inscriptions and the tendency to establish a link between inscriptions and characters, in somewhat greater detail.

Herodotus usually mentions the object on which an inscription is carved[79] (such as stelai,[80] reliefs,[81] and monumental tombs[82]). As for the exact position of an inscription on the object in question, however, specific information is often lacking.[83] Consider, for instance, the case of the Plataean tripod. At first glance, the expression "on the tripod" (ἐς τὸν τρίποδα, 8.82.1) might be taken as a reference to a specific part of the composite monument, namely the (lost) tripod that is usually assumed to have been placed on top of the (extant) column.[84] As it turns out, however, the list is extant on the column. As we have seen, this seeming discrepancy between Herodotus' description and the epigraphic record disappears if it is assumed that Herodotus uses τρίπους to refer to the whole monument. On such an interpretation, the information about the position of the text on the monument is as vague as can be.

79 When Herodotus quotes the first two of the Thermopylae epigrams (7.228.1–2), he does not immediately mention the objects on which they are inscribed. However, having quoted another epigram (7.228.3), he speaks of stelai in the plural (στήλῃσι, 7.228.4). For the series of the Thermopylae epigrams as a whole, then, the type of object on which they are inscribed is clearly stated. In the case of the second written message Herodotus quotes in his story of Darius' encounter with the tomb of the Babylonian queen Nitocris, by contrast, it is difficult to form a clear notion of the carrier medium. On the one hand, the expression γράμματα λέγοντα τάδε (1.187.5) is not very specific and does not necessarily evoke an inscription – one might also think of a piece of writing placed within the queen's tomb (see Volkmann 1954, 43 n. 7). On the other hand, the word γράμματα clearly designates an inscription on the queen's tomb at 1.187.1 (where it is the object of the verb ἐγκολάπτειν), and the repetition of the noun may encourage us to apply the (meaning of the) verb to the second instance as well.

80 Sometimes, mention is made of one (4.91.1; 6.14.3; 7.30.2), two (4.87.1) or – as the context suggests – three (7.228.4) individual στήλη/στῆλαι, but we also find references to an unspecified number of stelai set up by Sesostris in different lands (2.102.4–5; see also 2.103.1 and 2.106.1). The material of which Darius' stelai at the Bosporus are made is specified as white stone (στήλας [...] λίθου λευκοῦ 4.87.1). The five inscribed οὖροι on Alyattes' tomb (1.93.3) are probably to be imagined as stone pillars (see Wade-Gery 1932, 881). Themistocles' inscription is cut on rocks (λίθοισι, 8.22.1).

81 Herodotus refers to two τύποι of an armed male figure carved on rocks (δύο τύποι ἐν πέτρῃσι ἐγκεκολαμμένοι, 2.106.2; the inscription is described at 2.106.4) and to the τύπος of a man on horseback, which is likewise specified as being made of stone (3.88.3). It should be noted, though, that "[i]t is not entirely clear what kind of monument τύπος λίθινος [at 3.88.3] refers to (statue or relief)" (Rollinger 2018, 128 n. 21). Finally, in one passage, mention is made of a stone statue of the Egyptian king Sethos (βασιλεὺς [...] λίθινος, 2.141.6).

82 The tombs of two Egyptian kings are identified as πυραμίς; Cheops' pyramid is a huge stone construction (2.125), while the inscription on Asychis' pyramid draws attention to the latter's being made of bricks (2.136.4; the inscription itself, however, is stated to have been inscribed on stone [2.136.3]). The inscribed tomb of the Babylonian queen Nitocris is simply called τάφος (1.187.1).

83 When Herodotus states that the inscription on Sesostris' relief runs "from one shoulder to the other across the chest" (ἐκ δὲ τοῦ ὤμου ἐς τὸν ἕτερον ὦμον διὰ τῶν στηθέων, 2.106.4), this is exceptionally detailed.

84 What exactly the monument originally looked like is a matter of debate; for a review of the archaeological discussion, see Jung 2006, 243–244.

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In the course of the *Histories*, Herodotus refers to inscriptions from different places both in Greece and elsewhere, with Greek and non-Greek inscriptions being referred to in equal numbers.[85] Sometimes, Herodotus specifies where an inscribed object can be found (the inscribed vessel for lustral water mentioned at 1.51.3–4, for instance, is referred to as one of Croesus' dedications to Delphi). In the case of Darius' inscribed equestrian relief (3.88.3), by contrast, Herodotus leaves us completely in the dark as to the place where it is set up. Even where Herodotus does mention the location of a monument, some ambiguity often remains. When he states, for instance, that Darius, having inspected the Bosporus, "set up two stelai of white stone by it" (στήλας ἔστησε δύο ἐπ' αὐτῷ λίθου λευκοῦ, 4.87.1), it is not entirely clear to which side of the strait he refers.[86]

It may be tempting to connect the lack of any information concerning the whereabouts of Darius' relief (3.88.3) with the implausibility of Herodotus' description of its inscription as it has been emphasised by some scholars.[87] Does the lack of topographical detail testify to the unreality of the monument with which Darius allegedly commemorated his accession? Arguably not. After all, details are as easily made up as reported, and – at least in the case of non-Greek inscriptions from far-flung parts of the world – unlikely to be checked against the epigraphic record by Herodotus' audience.

Even in those cases in which a Herodotean inscription shows considerable correspondence to an extant inscription and therefore lends itself to being seen as a reflection of the extratextual epigraphic reality, its incorporation into the *Histories* involves selectivity. One might try, for instance, to account for the difference in topographical detail between the account of the stelai at the Bosporus and that of Darius' relief by pointing out that in the case of the stelai, the mention of a more or less specific location resonates with the content of their epigraphic message: the information that the stelai recording the force Darius is leading into Scythia are set up at the Bosporus, i.e. at the strait that separates Asia from Europe, illustrates his expansionist desires.[88] As for the equestrian relief, by contrast, it seems significant that the epigraphic declaration that Darius has become king with the help of his horse and his groom follows a detailed account of the trickery involved in the accession; *where* this relief is located does not seem particularly relevant in this context.

It could be objected that if one tries hard enough, it will always be possible to imagine reasons for the presence or absence of information about the location of a monument. In view of the complicated relationship between the *Histories* and the epigraphic record, we should not expect to find a simple principle that determines the type of information Herodotus gives about a monument. That having been said, thinking about possible ways in which the presentation of an inscribed object resonates with its narrative context means confronting a key aspect of Herodotean inscriptions.

85 Depending on the system of counting employed (see p. 17 n. 1), there are slight imbalances.

86 West comments that "[t]he location of these stelae is not made as clear as it might be", though she adds that "their re-use by the Byzantines probably implies that both were erected on the European side of the strait" (1985, 281).

87 See e.g. West 1985, 297; Schmitt 1988, 30–32. The relief will be discussed in Ch. 3.1.

88 See Ch. 3.2, p. 46.

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The broad geographic scope of the *Histories* entails the inclusion of inscriptions written in different scripts: Herodotus mentions Greek (4.87.1), Assyrian (4.87.1; 4.87.2), Egyptian (2.106.4; 2.125.6), Phoenician (5.58.2), Cadmean (5.59), and Ionian (5.59) letters. References to Greek inscriptions usually come without an explicit statement to the effect that they are written in Greek letters. While foreign scripts are identified in one third of the cases in which non-Greek inscriptions are referred to, the expression "Greek letters" (γράμματα [...] Ἑλληνικά, 4.87.1) occurs only once, in the account of the stelai set up by Darius at the Bosporus, where it is juxtaposed with the expression "Assyrian letters" (γράμματα [...] Ἀσσύρια, 4.87.1). This pattern is not surprising. After all, it is hardly worth mentioning that, to take an example, the inscription on the monument honouring the eleven valiant Samian trierarchs, which is erected with the approval of the local authorities (6.14.3), is written in Greek, but it is more remarkable that a Persian king would set up a Greek inscription.

When Herodotus distinguishes, with reference to Egyptian writing, between "sacred" (ἱρά, i.e. hieroglyphic) and "public" (δημοτικά, i.e. demotic) γράμματα (2.36.4),[89] this may create the impression of a certain expertise. Intriguingly, though, it is in the context of a paraphrase of a hieroglyphic text, namely the inscription on Cheops' pyramid (2.125.6), that we find the only reference to an interpreter of an inscription.[90] In all the other passages where Herodotus ventures a paraphrase or a quotation of a non-Greek inscription,[91] the challenge of dealing with texts in foreign scripts and languages is not addressed at all. For West, the way in which non-Greek inscriptions are treated creates the impression that Herodotus "was evidently just as happy with texts whose meaning he had to take on trust as with those which he might himself verify".[92] Such a reading implies a gap between the way in which the historical Herodotus conducted his inquiries and the text of the *Histories*, for different degrees of accessibility of different inscriptions are not reflected in the text as we have it.[93] This may well be the case, but the acknowledgement of this gap is best

89 See *CH* 264.

90 See Hartog 1988 [1980], 239.

91 There is no significant correlation between the language/script of an inscription and the way in which it is rendered. Herodotus paraphrases two Greek (6.14.3; 8.82.1) and four (groups of) non-Greek inscriptions (1.93.3; 2.102.4–5 [and 2.103.1; 2.106.1]; 2.125.6; 7.30.2); the paraphrase given at 4.87.1 refers to both a Greek and a non-Greek text. Of the seventeen inscriptions that are quoted, ten are Greek (1.51.3; 4.88.2; 5.59; 5.60; 5.61; 5.77.4; 7.228.1; 7.228.2; 7.228.3; 8.22.1–2) and seven non-Greek (1.187.2; 1.187.5; 2.106.4; 2.136.4; 2.141.6; 3.88.3; 4.91.2). There are more quotations of Greek texts than of non-Greek texts, but this small difference (ten vs. seven instances) hardly reflects the presence or absence of linguistic barriers (*pace* Volkmann 1954, 44). Kirk suggests that "Herodotus typically quotes the text of an inscription only when it can be spoken aloud in a separate performance context" (2019, 35).

92 West 1985, 302.

93 It is usually assumed that Greek was the only language Herodotus could read and speak. Mandell's thesis that Herodotus must have known Aramaic (see 1990) is not convincing (see Harrison 1998, 4 n. 12; Munson 2005, 29 n. 51). For a discussion of Herodotus' linguistic competence and further bibliography on this issue, see Harrison 1998, 3–9.

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combined with an appreciation of the *impression* of linguistic competence that is created in the *Histories* as part of the construction of a narratorial *persona*: this Herodotus is

> a multilingual character, familiar with the principal languages, at ease with languages, and interested in the world's heteroglossia in the linguistic, as in the cultural, sphere.[94]

The inscriptions Herodotus mentions and quotes are invariably presented as having been produced in the past; in some cases (e.g. the inscription on Cheops' pyramid), they are clearly staged as relics from the distant past. In view of the crucial importance of such epigraphic traces of the past for modern attempts to reconstruct ancient history,[95] it may seem natural to assume that they played a similar role for Herodotus' wide-ranging forays into the past. In fact, it has been argued that inscriptions – just like archaeological remains in general – allow Herodotus to apply autopsy to the past.[96] Building on Verdin's and Schepens' view of the importance of material remains of the past for Herodotus' project, Fabiani has argued that there is a close link between autopsy, inscriptions, and the reconstruction of the past.[97]

It should be noted, however, that there are only two instances where Herodotus unmistakably claims to have seen inscriptions.[98] When Herodotus traces the military exploits of the Egyptian king Sesostris on the basis of the inscribed stelai he left behind, he explicitly states that he saw those in Palestinian Syria with his own eyes (αὐτὸς ὥρων, 2.106.1),[99] and the discussion of what Herodotus calls "Cadmean letters" also features a clear claim of autopsy (εἶδον δὲ καὶ αὐτός, 5.59).[100]

94 Munson 2005, 29.

95 See Ch. 1.2, p. 6.

96 See Verdin 1971, 110; see also Schepens 1980, 52 and 70–83.

97 See Fabiani 2003, 180.

98 See Smith 1987, 114–115. Possible implications of autopsy are a different matter. According to Smith, information about the precise location and/or the measurements of an inscribed object, expressions like ἔτι καὶ ἐς ἐμέ or φαίνομαι ἐών, and the use of a present tense can all indicate autopsy (see 214 and 127). By contrast, Higbie emphasises the scarcity of remarks about the lettering or condition of inscriptions that would suggest autopsy (see 1999, 56–57). On the exceptionality of explicit claims of autopsy in Herodotus in general, see Jacoby 1913, 248.

99 On Herodotus' discussion of Sesostris' stelai (2.102–106), see Volkmann 1954, 45; Armayor 1980, 65–67; West 1985, 298–300; 1992; Lloyd III 20–21 and 26; Obsomer 1989, 115–126; Pritchett 1993, 181–182; Steiner 1994, 128–129; Fabiani 2003, 177–178; Vasilescu 2003, esp. 227–229 and 234–235; Bichler 2007 [2000], 94.

100 On Herodotus' discussion of three Theban tripods inscribed, as he states, with Cadmean letters (5.59–61), see Preger 1889, 13–17; Volkmann 1954, 59–62; Schachter 1981, 82; Fehling 1989 [1971], 138–140; Pritchett 1993, 116–121 and 162; Day 1994, 40; Higbie 1999, 58–59; Mavrojannis 2007, 295–296; Papalexandrou 2008, 256–259; Livingstone/Nisbet 2010, 31–32; Hornblower 2013, 179–180; Papazarkadas 2014, 247; Lougovaya-Ast 2017, 112; Larson 2018, 36–37.

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We may link these Herodotean claims to have seen specific inscriptions with a number of more general statements where autopsy (ὄψις) is named as one of the research methods employed by Herodotus. A prominent example is the following passage (2.99.1):[101]

> Μέχρι μὲν τούτου ὄψις τε ἐμὴ καὶ γνώμη καὶ ἱστορίη ταῦτα λέγουσά ἐστι, τὸ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦδε Αἰγυπτίους ἔρχομαι λόγους ἐρέων κατὰ τὰ ἤκουον· προσέσται δέ τι αὐτοῖσι καὶ τῆς ἐμῆς ὄψιος.
>
> Up to this point my statements have been based on my own observation, judgement, and investigation, but from now on I will be relating Egyptian accounts according to what I heard; these will be supplemented in some measure also by what I myself saw.

Seen against the backdrop of the scarcity of methodological discussions in the *Histories*, this is a remarkably explicit statement. However, its implications are difficult to pin down. To begin with, there is the issue of hierarchy: does Herodotus express here a preference for and/or the prevalence of autopsy in (parts of) the *Histories*?[102] Claims of autopsy do indeed occur repeatedly in the first half of Book 2, where they figure, among other things, in geographical descriptions (e.g. 2.10.1).[103] Given that the geography of Egypt is a key concern in this part of the *Histories*, an emphasis on the importance of autopsy at 2.99.1 would seem very apt. However, this does not amount to a general privileging of autopsy.[104]

As for the role played by autopsy in the interactions of the characters as they are related in the *Histories*, there are various instances where characters do not believe what others tell them until they see it with their own eyes – such as Zopyrus when he learns that one of his mules has given birth (3.153.1).[105] Candaules even voices the general observation that "people trust their ears less than their eyes" (ὦτα γὰρ τυγχάνει ἀνθρώποισι ἐόντα ἀπιστότερα ὀφθαλμῶν, 1.8.2), and the topic of visual perception is very prominent in the story of how the Lydian kingship passes from Candaules to Gyges (1.8–13). At first glance, this might seem to reinforce the notion of the supreme importance of sight as a means of narratorial inquiry, and Candaules' statement in particular has been taken to illustrate

101 As Schepens points out, the fact that ὄψις, γνώμη, and ἱστορίη "constitute the subject of the periphrastic and emphatic λέγουσά ἐστι" suggests that these terms denote not types of objective data but "*active* faculties deployed by the historian in his inquiry" (1975, 104; see also 1980, 54–56).

102 Marincola claims that Herodotus regarded autopsy as "the most certain way to knowledge" (1997, 67); the importance of autopsy is also stressed by Nenci 1955, esp. 30; Verdin 1971, esp. 111–116; Schepens 1980, esp. 83–84; Fabiani 2003, 179.

103 For statements of autopsy in Book 2, see Marincola 1987; see also Lloyd 2007, 229.

104 See Schepens 1980, 54; Marincola 1987, 131–132.

105 See Miltsios 2016, 4.

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"the superiority of autopsy over hearsay"[106] in the *Histories*. This amounts to understanding Candaules as a mouthpiece of Herodotus.[107]

However, the role seeing plays here is not unproblematic. In fact, the tale of Gyges has been regarded as initiating a pattern of stories in which the difficulty of interpreting visual evidence correctly is emphasised.[108] As far as the Gyges story itself is concerned, this particular emphasis is, to my mind, hard to discern. After all, it is not stated how looking at Candaules' wife affects Gyges. Remarkably, Gyges immediately counters Candaules' general statement about the persuasiveness of autopsy by declaring (1.8.4): ἐγὼ δὲ πείθομαι ἐκείνην εἶναι πασέων γυναικῶν καλλίστην ("But I am persuaded that she is the most beautiful of all women"). The act of seeing certainly plays a pivotal role in the episode, but the focus seems to be not so much on how this act leads Gyges to form mistaken and detrimental convictions but rather on the exceptional perceptiveness of Candaules' wife, who not only manages to detect the hidden Gyges but also – correctly – infers from this her husband's involvement.[109] Still, we may make the general observation that the value of autopsy is compromised insofar as Candaules' conviction of its supreme importance makes him dig his own grave.

In any case, misinterpretations of visual evidence do indeed feature prominently in the stories of Pisistratus' deception of the Athenians (1.59–60), the Paeonian brothers' deception of Darius (5.12–13), and the trick with which Artemisia manages to escape from a dangerous situation in the battle of Salamis (8.87–88).[110] These stories illustrate that "visual evidence is not in and of itself sufficient for accurate knowledge".[111]

In this context, it may be worth noting that there are some statements about inscribed objects where Herodotus complements visual information with information that cannot, in principle, result from autopsy alone. Darius' stelai at the Bosporus are a case in point. Nothing stops us from imagining Herodotean autopsy when we read that part of one of them "was left beside the temple of Dionysus in Byzantium" (κατελείφθη παρὰ τοῦ Διονύσου τὸν νηὸν ἐν Βυζαντίῳ, 4.87.2). However, the account of the setting-up of the two stelai at the Bosporus (4.87.1) depends on the complementation of the potential visual datum from Byzantium by means of a theoretical reconstruction and/or on the basis of reports about Darius' epigraphic act. Even more obviously, an exclusive reliance on autopsy is ruled out in the account of the forged inscription on the vessel for lustral water in Delphi (1.51.3–4): while the inscription identifying this object as a dedication by the

106 Marincola 1997, 67. Similarly, Hartog parallels Candaules as "apologist for 'seeing is believing'" with narratorial claims of autopsy (see 1988 [1980], 262–263). By contrast, Purves suggests that "Candaules' simplistic statement about eyes versus ears" is implicitly problematised in the subsequent unfolding of the story (see 2013, 40).

107 Cairns adduces Candaules' pronouncement to illustrate the point that "Greek authors [...] regularly tell us how important the eyes are" (2005, 127); see also Schepens 1980, 90–91; Müller 1989, 313.

108 See Anhalt 2008.

109 See Miltsios 2016, 7.

110 For the problematisation of visual perception in these stories, see Anhalt 2008.

111 Anhalt 2008, 277.

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Spartans is revealed to be a forgery, no epigraphic evidence is given for the information that it was in fact dedicated by Croesus.

To summarise, Herodotus only rarely claims autopsy of the inscriptions he refers to. This speaks against the notion that Herodotus values inscriptions as a means of extending autopsy to past events. In the remainder of this chapter, I will focus on a feature of Herodotus' presentation of inscriptions that is, as opposed to the rare claims of autopsy, characteristic of the whole corpus of Herodotean inscriptions, namely the fact that Herodotus regularly establishes a link between inscriptions and characters.

Herodotean inscriptions are presented as resulting from the initiative of both individuals and groups. All non-Greek inscriptions are linked to monarchs.[112] Greek inscriptions, by contrast, are linked both to (non-royal) individuals and to groups. As for the former, Herodotus ascribes inscriptions to the Samian Mandrocles (4.88) and to Themistocles (8.22), and he states that the forged inscription on a vessel for lustral water that was actually dedicated by Croesus is the work of a Delphian whose name, which is known to him, he conceals (1.51.3–4). Fabiani labels these three cases as inscriptions authorised by "privati",[113] but there is a marked difference between Themistocles' use of an inscription (which does not contain his name) as a war stratagem and Mandrocles' personalised dedicatory epigram. The three inscriptions in Cadmean letters (5.59–61) are likewise dedicatory epigrams on the part of named individuals (Amphitryo, Scaeus, and Laodamas). As many as half of the Greek inscriptions are linked to collectives. Arguably the most straightforward case is the dedicatory epigram on the chariot on the Acropolis (5.77.4). Before quoting the epigram, Herodotus states that the chariot is dedicated by the Athenians, and the epigram is a clear case of self-memorialisation of this collective as a whole. The stele in Samos mentioned at 6.14.3 is authorised by the Samian government; as opposed to the chariot on the Acropolis, which emphasises the power of the Athenians as a collective, it honours a comparatively small group, namely eleven trierarchs, whose names are inscribed in recognition of their services to the community. However, it could be argued that the purpose goes beyond honouring only those eleven individuals, for the erection of the monument can be seen as an attempt on the part of the Samians to enhance their reputation in view of the embarrassing performance of the majority of their contingent in the battle of Lade.[114] At 9.81.1, the Plataean tripod is described as a dedication on the part of the Greeks as a whole. However, when the monument is first mentioned (8.82.1), the focus is on the Tenians, i.e. the citizens of one single city, who are honoured with an inscription because one Tenian ship deserted the Persian fleet and confirmed the news that the entire Greek camp was encircled by Xerxes' ships. With the first two of the

112 This pattern is the basis of Steiner's thesis that writing in the *Histories* is strongly linked to the notion of Eastern despotism (see 1994). As we shall see, there are different ways in which Herodotus' monarchs are linked to inscriptions. A monarch may simply be named in an inscription (e.g. in the case of the inscription quoted at 3.88.3), but there are also less direct ways; in the case of 1.93, for instance, Herodotus refers to pillars recording the contributions of various parts of the Lydian population to the building of a monument he identifies as the tomb of Alyattes.

113 Fabiani 2003, 166.

114 See West 1985, 283.

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epigrams at Thermopylae quoted at 7.228, the Amphictyons (the members of Delphi's supreme governing council) honour relatively large groups of people (four thousand Peloponnesian fighters and the three hundred Spartans led by Leonidas); by contrast, the third epigram is described as a personal memorial by Simonides for his friend Megistias.

In general, Herodotus conveys the impression that the individuals or groups stated or implied to be responsible for inscribing a text on a specific object are entitled to do so. However, the very first inscription Herodotus refers to constitutes a noteworthy exception.[115] As part of an extensive list of offerings made by Croesus, Herodotus mentions two vessels for lustral water, one of gold and one of silver (περιρραντήρια δύο ἀνέθηκε, χρύσεόν τε καὶ ἀργύρεον, 1.51.3), adding (1.51.3–4):[116]

> τῶν τῷ χρυσέῳ ἐπιγέγραπται Λακεδαιμονίων φάμενον εἶναι ἀνάθημα, οὐκ ὀρθῶς λέγον· ἔστι γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο Κροίσου, ἐπέγραψε δὲ τῶν τις Δελφῶν Λακεδαιμονίοισι βουλόμενος χαρίζεσθαι, τοῦ ἐπιστάμενος τὸ οὔνομα οὐκ ἐπιμνήσομαι.
>
> On the gold one, it is inscribed saying that it is a dedication of the Lacedaemonians, but this does not state the truth. For this is also a dedication of Croesus', and one of the Delphians – whose name I know but will not mention – inscribed this out of a desire to please the Lacedaemonians.[117]

As has been noted above, Herodotus' explicit identification of the inscription as deceptive is exceptional. It could be argued that the absence of parallel cases conveys the impression that the issue of the potential unreliability of epigraphically transmitted information is no major concern. At the same time, the case of the epigraphic appropriation of one of Croesus' dedications may be enough to undermine any general belief in the reliability of inscriptions,[118] and the fact that this problematic inscription is the first one explicitly

115 With reference to Herodotus' quotation of the inscriptions on three Theban tripods (5.59–61), Lougovaya-Ast argues that the fact that Herodotus does not explicitly name the dedicator before quoting the inscription indicates doubts about the reliability of the inscribed message (see 2017, 112). At least in the case of the second and the third tripod, however, the dedicator is referred to in the statement that follows the quotation of the epigram containing his name. When Herodotus cautiously speculates about the identity of the individual named in the second inscription (Scaeus), this may illustrate a 'weakness' of this inscription, which does not sufficiently identify this individual. However, such a speculation does not, to my mind, imply that the tripod was not dedicated by (someone named) Scaeus, as Lougovaya-Ast seems to suggest (see 112).

116 On this epigraphic reference, see Volkmann 1954, 62; Verdin 1971, 55–57; Drexler 1972, 62–64; Prontera 1981; West 1985, 280; Pritchett 1993, 144–146; Fabiani 2003, 167–168; Kosmetatou 2013, 73; Bassi 2016, 122–123 n. 65; Marincola 2016, 221; Lougovaya-Ast 2017, 110–111.

117 The passage presents considerable textual problems. The translation is adapted from Kirk 2019, 34. I follow Kirk in adopting Madvig's emendations φάμενον (for transmitted φαμένων) and λέγον (for transmitted λέγοντες), for which see the apparatus in Hude's edition. Instead of the transmitted φαμένων εἶναι ἀνάθημα, οὐκ ὀρθῶς λέγοντες (printed by Hude), Wilson prints φασὶ μὲν ὧν <ἐκείνων> εἶναι ἀνάθημα, οὐκ ὀρθῶς λέγοντες.

118 West reads the episode as "a warning against undue confidence in epigraphic evidence" (1985, 280).

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referred to by Herodotus may encourage us to ascribe a programmatic thrust to it. At any rate, the episode suggests, at least 'locally', the superiority of Herodotus' account over the epigraphic record: Herodotus incorporates the inscription into his text, but he frames the representation of the inscriptional message in a way that highlights the problematic nature of this message (which is linked to the self-interest of its producer).

To conclude, a key feature of inscriptions in the *Histories* is their presentation as artefacts, i.e. as the products of human activities. In Herodotus' world, inscriptions are not simply there; rather, they are presented as the results of epigraphic acts on the part of certain characters. In the next chapter, I will turn to a particularly prominent and prolific producer of inscriptions in the *Histories*, namely the Persian king Darius.

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3 Darius' Epigraphic Activities: Royal Self-Presentation and Its Limitations

King Darius is a key figure in the history of Persian epigraphy: his monumental Bisitun inscription contains evidence to suggest that he gave orders to create a new writing system for this purpose, namely Old Persian cuneiform.[1] The Bisitun inscription stands out not only for being the longest Persian royal inscription; it is "the only text in old-Persian that is usually understood as a historiographical text".[2] Other Persian royal inscriptions may have a notably different character, but at the very least we can see that both Darius and his successors were in the habit of setting up monumental inscriptions.[3]

In Herodotus' account, inscriptions are referred to in the context of two important stages in Darius' career: his accession (3.88.3) and his Scythian expedition (4.87 and 4.91).[4] As we shall see, Darius' epigraphic acts shed light on the character of this important figure and provide a comparative foil for Herodotus' narrative project.

3.1 A Display of a Remarkable Achievement (3.88)

Having given an account of how Darius wins the Persian throne thanks to a ruse devised by his groom Oebares, Herodotus presents the new king as being engaged in the following epigraphic act (3.88.3):[5]

1 See e.g. Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1999, 92; Schmitt 2000, 302; but see also Tuplin 2005, 224–226.

2 Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1999, 93, pointing out that the historiographical character of this text derives from the fact that it "gives causes, motives, events, names of people involved, places and times when and where things happened, as well as the final situation resulting from the one year of turmoil" (93). The reliability of the Bisitun inscription as a historical source has been much debated (see e.g. Dandamaev 1976 [1963]; Wiesehöfer 1978; Balcer 1987; Rollinger 1998; Schmitt 2000; Jacobs 2011). The inscription has been described as a propagandistic text (see e.g. Ahn 1992, 175–179; *CH* 393); for reservations against the use of the term 'propaganda' (in the sense of a strategy to influence the population at large) with reference to Achaemenid art and inscriptions, see Jacobs 2010.

3 For the texts, see Kent 1953; Schmitt 2009. For a survey of the development of their content, see Jacobs 2014.

4 On Herodotus' portrayal of Darius, see e.g. Immerwahr 1966, 169–176; Waters 1971, 57–65; 1985, 144–145; Gammie 1986, 182–183; Lateiner 1989, 275–276 n. 31; Evans 1991, 56–60; Georges 1994, 195–199; Dewald 2003, 56–57 n. 58.

5 On this epigraphic reference, see Weißbach 1924, 378–379; Friedrich 1936; Volkmann 1954, 49–50; West 1985, 296–297; Schmitt 1988, 30–32; Fehling 1989 [1971], 137; Köhnken 1990, 124 and 132–135; Erbse 1992, 60; Pritchett 1993, 173–179; Steiner 1994, 133; Kipp 2001, 241–246; Fabiani

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> πρῶτον μέν νυν τύπον ποιησάμενος λίθινον ἔστησε· ζῷον δέ οἱ ἐνῆν ἀνὴρ ἱππεύς, ἐπέγραψε δὲ γράμματα λέγοντα τάδε· Δαρεῖος ὁ Ὑστάσπεος σύν τε τοῦ ἵππου τῇ ἀρετῇ (τὸ οὔνομα λέγων) καὶ Οἰβάρεος τοῦ ἱπποκόμου ἐκτήσατο τὴν Περσέων βασιληίην.
>
> First, he set up a stone relief featuring a man on horseback, with an inscription that said the following: "Darius, son of Hystaspes, gained the kingship of the Persians with the help of the excellence of his horse" – here mentioning the name – "and that of his groom Oebares."

How exactly Darius manages to acquire the throne is the subject of the preceding narrative (3.84–87). The conspirators (except Otanes, who withdraws himself from running for king) agree that the man whose horse neighs first when they ride out together the next morning will be king. Darius calls on his groom Oebares to make sure that he, Darius, will win the throne. That night, Oebares mates Darius' stallion with a mare on the outskirts of the town, and when Darius and his rivals for the throne ride past that spot the next morning, Darius' horse springs forward and neighs. According to an alternative version, Oebares, having rubbed the mare's genitals, holds his hand under the nostrils of Darius' horse when the men are about to ride out in the morning and thus causes it to neigh.

It is this accession to the throne by means of a manipulated selection process that Darius chooses, according to Herodotus, to commemorate in epigraphic form. It has been claimed that the information provided by the inscribed monument does not add anything to the preceding story of Darius' accession.[6] To the extent that Oebares and the horse do indeed play a crucial role in the preceding narrative of how Darius acquires the Persian throne, this is correct. At the same time, the setting-up of the inscription can in itself be seen as a noteworthy act on Darius' part.

Admittedly, the narrative about Darius' accession seems to come to a conclusion before Herodotus mentions the monument. Having recounted the two different versions of Oebares' ruse, Herodotus states (3.88.1): Δαρεῖός τε δὴ ὁ Ὑστάσπεος βασιλεὺς ἀπεδέδεκτο ("So Darius, son of Hystaspes, had been declared king"). There follows a description of Darius' sphere of power (3.88.1) and of his marriages (3.88.2–3). In a way, then, the mention of the monument may indeed seem to be a confirmatory addition to the narrative proper.[7]

At the same time, the mention of the relief marks the beginning of a new narrative section devoted to Darius' activities as Persian king (3.88.3): πρῶτον μέν νυν τύπον ποιησάμενος λίθινον ἔστησε ("First, he set up a stone relief"). Presented as the first act of the newly established king, the erection of the inscribed monument comes across as

2003, 178; Tuplin 2005, 236; Vasilescu 2006, 287; Bichler 2007 [2000], 98; Lougovaya-Ast 2017, 105–106 and 116–121; Rollinger 2017; 2018.

6 See Lougovaya-Ast 2017, 116.

7 See Köhnken 1990, 133–134. According to Fabiani, the relief belongs to the group of non-Greek monuments mentioned to confirm accounts for which Herodotus does not assume full responsibility (see 2003, 178).

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particularly significant.[8] The fact that the information given by the inscription corresponds to the preceding narrative may be seen as a strategy to enhance the plausibility of the former, but the narrative role of the mention of the relief should not be reduced to this aspect. After all, the information that Darius' very first act as Persian king is an act of memorialisation also contributes to the characterisation of the new Persian monarch in that it suggests that he is interested in establishing a lasting memory of his kingship – a concern that can also be seen from the other two epigraphic acts Herodotus ascribes to him. Darius is not just keen to become king; he is very much concerned with memorialising his success.

So far, the relationship between the content of the inscription as it is presented by Herodotus and the preceding narrative of Darius' way to the throne has been described as one of correspondence. But while the inscription does not contradict the narrative, we may note that it focuses exclusively on the last step of Darius' endeavour to become king, namely the episode about the horse oracle. In particular, there is no mention whatsoever of the conspiracy of the Persian noblemen, which is described at some length at 3.70–84. However, precisely in that the inscription glosses over the conspiracy (i.e. a collective endeavour) as the basis for Darius' accession, it reinforces a character trait of Darius that is already in evidence in Herodotus' account of the conspiracy, namely his self-centredness.[9] On the one hand, Darius collaborates with the other conspirators and contributes to the successful overthrow of the false Smerdis, but on the other, he manages to have his way in crucial moments. After all, it is Darius' plan for the assassination that carries the day (3.76.3), and it is the form of government advocated by him, i.e. monarchy, that is opted for at the end of the Constitutional Debate (3.83.1). Seen against this backdrop, the lack of any reference to his fellow conspirators on the inscribed monument set up right at the beginning of his reign seems only logical.

While the inscription does not mention the other conspirators, it declares that Darius has won the kingship "with the help of the excellence of his horse and that of his groom Oebares" (σύν τε τοῦ ἵππου τῇ ἀρετῇ [...] καὶ Οἰβάρεος τοῦ ἱπποκόμου, 3.88.3). In Herodotus' account of Darius' way to the throne, Oebares and the horse play a crucial role, and the inscription acknowledges their contribution.[10] However, Oebares devises his ruse at Darius' behest,[11] and it is Darius who is the subject of the inscribed statement.

8 See Lougovaya-Ast 2017, 117.

9 According to Lougovaya-Ast, the inscription is at odds with its narrative context (see 2017, 117). While she is right to point out that the inscription covers only the last step of Darius' accession, I do not agree that there is a contradiction between Darius' solipsistic monument and the solidarity among the conspirators (see 117–118). As we shall see, Darius does not come across as very loyal in his dealings with his fellow conspirators.

10 The fact that the inscription mentions Darius' groom by name is emphasised by Köhnken 1990, 133; Rollinger even speaks of "the monument with an inscription built *for Oebares*" (2004, 266; my italics).

11 Lougovaya-Ast underlines Darius' initiative and points out that Oebares and the horse are his property (see 2017, 120).

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Most modern readers will probably have the impression that Herodotus' story of how Darius manages to become the king of Persia and commemorates his acquisition of the throne in epigraphic form is, to put it mildly, rather strange.[12] However, such an initial reaction may tell us more about modern preconceptions than about Herodotus' text. Therefore, I would like to contextualise Herodotus' presentation of the episode about Darius' accession in two respects. First, I will consider Darius' readiness to fall back on a ruse within the *Histories* against the backdrop of two passages concerned with honesty and deceit in a Persian context. Secondly, I will confront Herodotus' presentation of Darius' accession and its monumental commemoration with the epigraphic self-presentation of this Persian king in the Bisitun inscription.

In Herodotus' account of how Darius replaces the usurper Smerdis as king of Persia, the manipulation of the process by which the conspirators agree to determine who among them will be king is not the only situation that reveals Darius' deceitfulness. When Otanes points out that it will be difficult for the conspirators to gain access to the palace, Darius replies (3.72.3): ἔχω αὐτὸς σκῆψιν εὐπρεπεστάτην τῇ πάριμεν, φὰς ἄρτι τε ἥκειν ἐκ Περσέων καὶ βούλεσθαί τι ἔπος παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς σημῆναι τῷ βασιλέϊ ("I myself can provide us with a very plausible excuse for getting in, since I can claim that I have just come from Persia and want to give a message from my father to the king"). Darius goes on to declare that he has no compunction about resorting to such a tactical lie (3.72.4): ἔνθα γάρ τι δεῖ ψεῦδος λέγεσθαι, λεγέσθω ("For where a lie must be told, let it be told").

This defence of lying starkly contrasts with the commitment to truth identified by Herodotus as a central tenet of Persian culture. Herodotus notes that Persian boys are educated "in only three things: horsemanship, archery, and honesty" (τρία μοῦνα, ἱππεύειν καὶ τοξεύειν καὶ ἀληθίζεσθαι, 1.136.2). Conversely, "the most disgraceful thing, in their view, is telling lies" (αἴσχιστον δὲ αὐτοῖσι τὸ ψεύδεσθαι νενόμισται, 1.138.1).[13] What are we to make of the contrast between this emphasis on the paramount importance of truthfulness in Persia and Darius' declaration that the use of lies is acceptable?

It could be argued that Darius' reflections on truth and lies reveal, above all, his moral indifference.[14] As Herodotus' account of the conspiracy illustrates, Darius is above all interested in securing power for himself. In the first meeting of the conspirators, Darius – the last one to have joined the group (3.70.3) – claims (3.71.2):

> Ἐγὼ ταῦτα ἐδόκεον μὲν αὐτὸς μοῦνος ἐπίστασθαι, ὅτι τε ὁ μάγος εἴη ὁ βασιλεύων καὶ Σμέρδις ὁ Κύρου τετελεύτηκε· καὶ αὐτοῦ τούτου εἵνεκεν ἥκω σπουδῇ ὡς συστήσων ἐπὶ τῷ μάγῳ θάνατον. ἐπείτε δὲ συνήνεικε ὥστε καὶ ὑμέας εἰδέναι καὶ μὴ μοῦνον ἐμέ, ποιέειν αὐτίκα μοι δοκέει καὶ μὴ ὑπερβάλλεσθαι· οὐ γὰρ ἄμεινον.

12 See e.g. West 1985, 296–297; Köhnken 1990, 132.

13 On Herodotus' presentation of the Persian concern with truth, see *CH* 391–393; Munson 2013 [2009], 331–332.

14 See Bringmann 1976, 278.

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> I thought I was the only one who knew that it was the magus who was ruling over us and that Smerdis, son of Cyrus, was dead. In fact, that is exactly why I was eager to come here – to bring about the magus' death. But since, as it turns out, you know too and not only I, it seems to me that we should act immediately and not put it off, for that would be for the worse.

Herodotus does not give a reason for Darius' coming to Susa, so the explanation Darius himself gives in the conversation is all we have. However, the way in which he behaves in the remainder of the meeting may raise suspicions about the reason he gives for his voyage: everything he does seems to be aimed at making him the head of the conspiracy.[15] When Otanes, on whose initiative the conspiracy is formed (3.70.1), does not agree with Darius' suggestion to strike at once, Darius threatens to denounce his fellow conspirators to the usurper unless they act immediately (3.71.5). Admittedly, Darius may have a point when he says that someone might denounce the conspirators in the hope of gaining personal profit (3.71.4), but the mention of greed as a motive of a hypothetical traitor may also draw attention to Darius' own greed.[16]

In any case, we may also note that in the course of the first meeting, Darius advances from the position of an outsider to the leader of the conspiracy. The first meeting can thus be seen as the first step on Darius' way to the throne. At least in view of the lengths to which he goes to come out on top in the selection process, his advocating monarchy in the Constitutional Debate hardly appears disinterested.[17] On the whole, Darius comes across as an ambitious man who would do anything to become king.[18] Following the account of how Darius manipulated his way to the throne, the inscribed relief arguably draws our attention to the dubious basis of Darius' kingship.[19]

It has long been recognised that the inscribed statement Herodotus attributes to Darius has no direct counterpart in the Persian epigraphic record.[20] Insofar as the monument is described as displaying Darius' accession, however, it is reminiscent of the most famous extant inscription from the reign of Darius, namely the Bisitun inscription.[21]

---

15 Bringmann even suggests that the reason Darius gives for coming to Susa is nothing but a pretext (see 1976, 277); see also Erbse 1992, 56.

16 See Erbse 1992, 56. On various examples that can be seen to illustrate Darius' greed (5.12.14; 1.187; 1.183), see 62–64. That interest in money is a defining characteristic of this king is also suggested by Herodotus' note that the Persians called Darius a "retailer" (κάπηλος, 3.89.3; but see p. 69 n. 76).

17 See Bringmann 1976, 278.

18 See Erbse 1992, 62.

19 See Bichler 2007 [2000], 98; see also Kipp 2001, 241–263.

20 See Schmitt 1988, 30–32.

21 Recently, Rollinger has underlined the similarities between the Herodotean monument and the description of a Urartian statue (ascribed to King Rusa) that can be found in two Assyrian inscriptions by King Sargon II (see 2017; for diverse assessments of the relationship between Rusa's monument and the relief mentioned by Herodotus, see e.g. Lehmann-Haupt 1923; Friedrich 1936; Volkmann 1954, 49–50; Köhnken 1990, 132–134; Kipp 2001, 242–243 n. 247). However, Rusa's monument itself is not extant, and we know of its inscription only because it is quoted in one of the Assyrian inscriptions mentioned above. In fact, it is not even clear in which language Rusa's

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There are indeed some striking correspondences between Herodotus' narrative of Darius' accession and the inscription carved into the rock of a hill near the village of Bisitun.[22] At the same time, some differences between the two accounts open up the possibility of reading the accession narrative in the *Histories* as a critical reaction to Darius' use of an inscription to legitimise his kingship.[23]

In the Bisitun inscription, Darius presents his accession to the throne as a divine gift (DB § 9):[24] "Auramazda bestowed this kingship on me; Auramazda gave me his help until I gained this kingship; by the favour of Auramazda, I possess this kingship." By contrast, the notion of Darius' divine right to the throne is completely absent from the Herodotean inscription.[25] This is not the only significant difference between Darius' self-portrayal in the Bisitun inscription and Herodotus' account. In the Bisitun inscription, Darius legitimises his acquisition of the Persian throne not least by presenting it as having been directed against the power of the Lie (§ 10):[26] "When Cambyses had gone to Egypt, then the people became disloyal; and the Lie grew among the people, both in Persia and Media and among the other peoples." As for the (alleged) impostor, the magus Gaumata, Darius claims (§ 11): "He lied thus to the people: 'I am Bardiya, son of Cyrus, brother of Cambyses.'" In a later section of the inscription, various kings who revolted against Darius are likewise presented as liars (§ 52). In an explicit exhortation to future kings, the power of the Lie takes centre stage (§ 55): "You, who shall be king hereafter, be firmly on your guard against the Lie; the man who shall be a follower of the Lie – punish him well, if you think: 'May my country be secure!'" Darius repeatedly emphasises that what he says in his inscription is *not* a lie (§ 56): "You, who shall read this inscription hereafter, let what (has been) done by me convince you; do not think it a lie."[27] This self-portrayal as a staunch opponent of the Lie is in sharp contrast with the words and deeds of the Herodotean Darius, who, as we have seen, does not hesitate to manipulate his way to the throne.

At first glance, Herodotus' brief reference to Darius' relief with its short inscription may not appear particularly significant. Once we consider the accession episode against the backdrop of the Bisitun inscription, however, the fact that Herodotus embeds, in a marked position, Darius' epigraphic commemoration of his accession seems noteworthy:

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inscription was written; the quotation by Sargon may well be an Assyrian translation of a Urartian text (see Rollinger 2017, 25). What is more, there is a debate about the meaning of the logogram referring to the role of the man who is, according to the Assyrian description, depicted together with the king (see 20–22). In view of these uncertainties, it seems to be more profitable to confront Herodotus' description of Darius' monument with the extant Bisitun inscription.

22 See e.g. Köhnken 1980, 40–41; Rollinger 1998, 189–196; Jacobs/Trampedach 2013, 73–74.

23 See Kipp 2001, 244; Rollinger 2004, 265; 2018, 147; Jacobs/Trampedach 2013, 73–74.

24 For editions of the text, see Kent 1953; Schmitt 2009. The translations are taken from Kuhrt 2007.

25 On Darius' acknowledgement in the Bisitun inscription that he owes his kingship to Auramazda, see Schmitt 2000, 304. Seen against this backdrop, the self-portrayal of the Herodotean Darius amounts to blasphemy (see 1988, 31).

26 The Old Persian *drauga* ('falsehood, lie') "has religious and cosmological undertones, hence it is 'The Lie' and, by implication, a threat to the political order, which the king defends with the help of Auramazda. It, therefore, also has, by extension, the meaning 'rebellion'" (Kuhrt 2007, 152 n. 15).

27 See also §§ 57 and 63.

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it is striking that the Herodotean version of Darius' accession, which differs in crucial respects from the Bisitun inscription, includes the epigraphic publication of Darius' achievement. When the inscription on the equestrian relief is linked with a version of Darius' accession that is at odds with the message of the Bisitun inscription, this may invite us to read Herodotus' narrative as a critical reaction to Darius' epigraphic self-presentation. Herodotus' account of how Darius assumes the Persian throne can even be seen as part of a more pervasive creative engagement with the Persian kings' epigraphic self-portrayal on Herodotus' part.[28]

At any rate, the inscription clearly contributes to the characterisation of Darius, one of the most prominent figures of the *Histories*. As for the relationship between Darius' epigraphic act and Herodotus' narrative, we may observe both similarities and differences. Darius' inscription can be paralleled with Herodotus' narrative not only in that it is a written text but also in that it concerns a momentous event of the past. By recording this event, Darius foreshadows Herodotus' historiographical project. At the same time, there is a metahistorical contrast between the selectivity and (despite the reference to the groom and the horse) fundamental self-centredness of Darius' display of his having assumed the Persian throne and Herodotus' much more comprehensive vision of the past.

As we have seen, Herodotus does not explicitly criticise the way in which Darius tries his hand at displaying his accession in epigraphic form. Nevertheless, Darius' epigraphic commemoration of this achievement may not only illustrate the fact that inscriptions can be used as instruments of autocratic self-representation but also shed an ironical light on this practice. While Herodotus does not comment on the content of the inscription, a reading of it in light of the preceding accession narrative may create the impression that Darius' 'PR coup' ultimately backfires: by monumentalising how he has achieved the kingship, Darius draws attention to his questionable legitimacy as a king.

3.2 A Fragile Monument to Military Might (4.87)

An important episode of Darius' reign as it is narrated in the *Histories* is the grand-scale expedition to Scythia (4.83–142).[29] On their way to Scythia, Darius and his army arrive at the Bosporus, where Darius performs the following epigraphic act (4.87.1):[30]

28 On the basis of similarities between the ideology of Persian kingship as it is expressed in royal inscriptions and Herodotus' account of Xerxes' decision to go to war against Greece, Schwab has observed a subtle play with these texts and their ideology (see 2017, 193).

29 On the historical problems raised by Herodotus' account, see e.g. Tuplin 2010.

30 On this epigraphic reference, see Weißbach 1924, 379; Friedrich 1950, 50–51; Volkmann 1954, 50–51; Benardete 1969, 109; West 1985, 281–282; 2013, 121–122; Schmitt 1988, 32–34; 1992, 24–26; Fehling 1989 [1971], 137–138; Pritchett 1993, 148–149; Christ 1994, 174; Steiner 1994, 134; Fabiani 2003, 174–175; Tuplin 2005, 239; Vasilescu 2006, 279–280; Bichler 2007 [2000], 99; Grethlein 2013, 187–188; Rollinger 2013, 97–99; Murray 2015, 55–56. The stelai referred to by Herodotus

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> θεησάμενος δὲ καὶ τὸν Βόσπορον στήλας ἔστησε δύο ἐπ' αὐτῷ λίθου λευκοῦ, ἐνταμὼν γράμματα ἐς μὲν τὴν Ἀσσύρια, ἐς δὲ τὴν Ἑλληνικά, ἔθνεα πάντα ὅσα περ ἦγε· ἦγε δὲ πάντα τῶν ἦρχε.
>
> Having inspected the Bosporus too, he set up two stelai of white stone by it and cut Assyrian letters on one of them and Greek on the other, recording all the peoples he was leading – and he was leading all he ruled.

Short as it may be, the epigraphic episode at 4.87.1 marks a significant stage of Darius' expedition.[31] The fact that Darius chooses the Bosporus, i.e. a natural boundary between Asia and Europe,[32] as the location for the stelai displaying the diverse composition of his army testifies to his pretensions to rule over both continents.[33] The explicit mention of the use of different scripts ties in well with the impression that the setting-up of the list is an imperialistic gesture: Darius' display is addressed to people from different parts of the world with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.[34] The choice of stone suggests that Darius regards the diverse composition of his army as noteworthy and that he wants subsequent generations to remember the large scale of the Scythian expedition and the multitude of peoples under his rule.

However, before the narration moves on to Darius' crossing of the Bosporus (4.89) and his activities in Scythia, there is a prolepsis detailing what will become of the stelai (4.87.2):

> τῇσι μέν νυν στήλῃσι ταύτῃσι Βυζάντιοι κομίσαντες ἐς τὴν πόλιν ὕστερον τούτων ἐχρήσαντο πρὸς τὸν βωμὸν τῆς Ὀρθωσίης Ἀρτέμιδος, χωρὶς ἑνὸς λίθου· οὗτος δὲ κατελείφθη παρὰ τοῦ Διονύσου τὸν νηὸν ἐν Βυζαντίῳ γραμμάτων Ἀσσυρίων πλέος.

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are not extant but, according to Weißbach and many later scholars, there is no need to doubt that Darius did set up inscribed stelai at the Bosporus.

31 See West 1985, 282.

32 The *Histories* contain multiple instances of boundaries constituted by bodies of water (see Immerwahr 1966, 372 [*s.v.* "River motif"]); for the significance of this motif, see Immerwahr 1966, 293; Lateiner 1985, 89–93; Flory 1987, 54–62.

33 See Bichler 2007 [2000], 99; Grethlein 2013, 188.

34 The expression γράμματα Ἀσσύρια is probably to be understood as a general reference to cuneiform writing, different forms of which were used to record different languages (see Schmitt 1988, 33; 1992, 25). In extant inscriptions set up by Darius in Egypt, we find texts in Egyptian hieroglyphs beside texts in three different forms of cuneiform (Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian) (see 1988, 33–34). Incidentally, it has been questioned whether the reference in our passage is exclusively to writing: Schmitt entertains the possibility that Herodotus is referring to a combination of a pictorial representation of the various peoples under Darius' command and an inscription (see 33). In fact, passages such as 5.49.1 and 5.49.5 show that the verb ἐντάμνειν (used at 4.87.1) is not restricted to the inscribing of letters. However, the addition of the adjectives Ἀσσύρια and Ἑλληνικά in our passage strongly suggests that Herodotus is referring to letters. As for Herodotus' presentation of the inscriptions as listing the peoples led by Darius, it has been noted that such lists are attested in the Persian epigraphic record (see e.g. Weißbach 1924, 379).

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> Later, the people of Byzantium took these stelai to their city and used them for their altar of Artemis Orthosia – with the exception of one stone. This stone, which was covered in Assyrian letters, was left by the temple of Dionysus in Byzantium.

The short but drastic account of the fate of Darius' stelai is a striking example of a sensitivity to the instability of monuments.[35] It is tempting to assume that the juxtaposition of the fall of Darius' monument and the re-use of its materials for an altar is underlined by the inclusion of the detail that this altar is dedicated to Artemis Orthosia, whose name is suggestive of the notion of raising something (ὀρθόω).[36] As for the single stone left by the temple of Dionysus in Byzantium, the detail that it ends up in this location has been taken to evoke the notion of Dionysiac dismemberment,[37] which would highlight the violence of the transformation. At any rate, even if we do not bring the associative potential of Artemis Orthosia and Dionysus into play, the account of the fate of the stelai contrasts with Darius' (presumable) concern for leaving behind a permanent memorial.

It has been argued that the mention of Darius' stelai (4.87) – like that of Mandrocles' dedication (4.88), to which I shall turn shortly – serves to highlight the admirable accomplishment of bridging the Bosporus.[38] While this may be true of Mandrocles' dedication, it should be noted that the crossing of the Bosporus is not the subject matter of Darius' inscription; here, the focus is not on the accomplishment of constructing the pontoon bridge but on the diverse composition of Darius' army. What is more, the mention of the stelai is, as we have seen, followed by an account of their later fate that showcases their impermanence. What does this tell us about the role of this episode within the narrative?

The impermanence of the inscribed stelai stands in metahistorical contrast with the memorialising purpose of the *Histories* as it is stated in the proem.[39] In this context, it is significant that it is the present that Darius attempts to memorialise – as opposed to Herodotus, who records the past.[40] This retrospective orientation is of great importance

35 Porter makes the general suggestion that "the marvel with which he [i.e. Herodotus] beholds the survival of historical monuments [...] is strictly commensurate with and contingent on their possible non-survival" (2010, 474). By contrast, Immerwahr has the impression that Herodotus "emphasizes the preservation of monuments more than he does their destruction" (1960, 271).

36 The verb itself does not occur in our passage, but Herodotus uses it in an 'architectural' sense at 7.176.5 (with reference to a wall). The etymological connection of Ὀρθωσία and ὀρθόω should not be taken for granted. Beekes 2010, *s.v.* (ϝ)ορθαία, problematises the connection of the epithet with ὀρθός both on morphological and on semantic grounds (see also Chantraine 2009, *s.v.* ὀρθός). Nevertheless, the following derivation ascribed to the scholar Apollodorus of Athens shows that it is certainly not inconceivable from an ancient perspective: Ὀρθωσία δὲ ὅτι ὀρθοῖ εἰς σωτηρίαν, ἢ ὀρθοῖ τοὺς γεννωμένους ("[Artemis is called] Orthosia [either] because she raises [suppliants] up to safety or because she raises up those who are born" [244 F 127 *FGrH*; the translation is from Braswell 2013, 143]).

37 See Steiner 1994, 133.

38 See Fabiani 2003, 174.

39 See Grethlein 2013, 188.

40 See Grethlein 2013, 198–199.

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for the *Histories*.[41] By contrast, Darius' inscriptional record of the composition of his army is a 'snapshot' taken in the middle of a military campaign.

On the one hand, the account of the later re-use of Darius' stelai can be seen to illustrate his failure to establish lasting memory.[42] On the other, we may also note that precisely by showcasing the impermanence of Darius' monument at the Bosporus, Herodotus actually endows it, as it were, with a new life. Thanks to Herodotus' text, a notion of the diverse composition of the army led by Darius into Scythia is saved from oblivion in spite of the translocation and transformation of the stelai recording it.

That the crossing of the Bosporus is a notable achievement is emphasised in the following passage, which features a reference to a picture and a dedicatory epigram (4.88):[43]

> Δαρεῖος δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα ἡσθεὶς τῇ σχεδίῃ τὸν ἀρχιτέκτονα αὐτῆς Μανδροκλέα τὸν Σάμιον ἐδωρήσατο πᾶσι δέκα. ἀπ' ὧν δὴ Μανδροκλέης ἀπαρχήν, ζῷα γραψάμενος πᾶσαν τὴν ζεῦξιν τοῦ Βοσπόρου καὶ βασιλέα τε Δαρεῖον ἐν προεδρίῃ κατήμενον καὶ τὸν στρατὸν αὐτοῦ διαβαίνοντα, ταῦτα γραψάμενος ἀνέθηκε ἔς τὸ Ἥραιον, ἐπιγράψας τάδε·
>
> Βόσπορον ἰχθυόεντα γεφυρώσας ἀνέθηκε
> Μανδροκλέης Ἥρῃ μνημόσυνον σχεδίης,
> αὐτῷ μὲν στέφανον περιθείς, Σαμίοισι δὲ κῦδος,
> Δαρείου βασιλέος ἐκτελέσας κατὰ νοῦν.
>
> After this Darius, delighted by the floating bridge, gave immensely generous gifts to the man who directed its construction, Mandrocles the Samian. With a portion of his reward Mandrocles commissioned a picture of the whole bridging of the Bosporus with King Darius sitting on a throne and his army crossing over; he dedicated this at the Heraeum, with the following inscription: "Mandrocles dedicated to Hera a memorial of his floating bridge over the Bosporus teeming with fish, having won honour for himself and glory for the Samians, fulfilling the wish of King Darius."[44]

41 See Grethlein 2013, 185–223.

42 This negative aspect is emphasised by Grethlein 2013, 188.

43 On Herodotus' quotation of this epigram, which is not extant in epigraphic form, see esp. Volkmann 1954, 59; Benardete 1969, 109; West 1985, 282; 2013; Fehling 1989 [1971], 184–185 n. 2; Erbse 1992, 151; 1998, 223; Pritchett 1993, 149; Steiner 1994, 134; Bing 1995, 117; Fabiani 2003, 174–175; Grethlein 2013, 189; Murray 2015, 56. Editions and further discussions of the epigram include *IGM* no. 109; *GE* no. 79; *HGE* no. 7; FH no. 146; Dunst 1972, 123–124; *EG* no. 4; *FGE* no. 4; Eckstein 1981–1983, 321; Petrovic 2007a, 223–230. On the question of how exactly the artwork referred to by Herodotus is to be conceived of, see esp. Schöne 1912, 191–192; Pfuhl 1923, 498 and 502; Fabricius 1928; Hölscher 1973, 35–37; Eckstein 1981–1983, 320–321; Stähler 1992, 73; Svenson-Evers 1996, 63–65; Petrovic 2007a, 224–226.

44 The translation is adapted from West 2013, 118.

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Both the stelai and Mandrocles' dedication attest to Darius' power. After all, the stelai record the diverse composition of his army, which comprises contingents from all the peoples ruled by him, and Mandrocles describes the success he has achieved as the result of obeying the Persian king. Steiner sees this parallel as a confirmation of her general claim that writing in the *Histories* is closely linked to despotism: "A subordinate, it seems, only receives written commemoration when he does service to the king."[45] This statement can easily be applied to Darius' successor, Xerxes, who has writers (γραμματισταί) put down the names of those who make an outstanding performance in the battle of Salamis (8.90.4).[46] By contrast, it is Mandrocles himself who takes care of his inscriptional legacy. In this respect, he may be compared with Darius. However, while Darius' focus on his own power is juxtaposed with his unwilling contribution to the building of an altar in Byzantium, Mandrocles shows the appropriate sense of modesty by acknowledging the importance of divine favour for his achievement.[47]

3.3 A Marker of Excellence (4.91)

In the course of his Scythian campaign, Darius comes to the River Tearus in Thrace. He reacts to the unusual nature of this river, which is described at some length (4.90), by setting up an inscription (4.91):[48]

> ἐπὶ τοῦτον ὦν τὸν ποταμὸν ἀπικόμενος ὁ Δαρεῖος ὡς ἐστρατοπεδεύσατο, ἡσθεὶς τῷ ποταμῷ στήλην ἔστησε καὶ ἐνθαῦτα, γράμματα ἐγγράψας λέγοντα τάδε· Τεάρου ποταμοῦ κεφαλαὶ ὕδωρ ἄριστόν τε καὶ κάλλιστον παρέχονται πάντων ποταμῶν· καὶ ἐπ' αὐτὰς ἀπίκετο ἐλαύνων ἐπὶ Σκύθας στρατὸν ἀνὴρ ἄριστός τε καὶ κάλλιστος πάντων ἀνθρώπων, Δαρεῖος ὁ Ὑστάσπεος, Περσέων τε καὶ πάσης τῆς ἠπείρου βασιλεύς. ταῦτα δὴ ἐνθαῦτα ἐνεγράφη.
>
> Having come to this river and pitched camp, Darius was delighted with the river and set up a stele there too, with an inscription that said the following: "The springs of the River Tearus produce the best and finest water of all rivers. To these springs came, leading his army against the Scythians, the best and finest of all men, Darius,

45 Steiner 1994, 134.

46 On Xerxes as recorder of his own deeds, see Grethlein 2013, 190–198.

47 As Romm notes, "at the moment of his greatest glory, the reverent Mandrocles subordinates himself to the gods, thereby avoiding the taint of *hybris*" (1998, 83–84).

48 On this epigraphic reference, see Jochmus 1854, 44; Unger 1915; Weißbach 1924, 379–380; Friedrich 1936, 108; Volkmann 1954, 50; West 1985, 296; Schmitt 1988, 34–36; Fehling 1989 [1971], 134; Erbse 1992, 71 and 150–151; Pritchett 1993, 180; Christ 1994, 178–179; Steiner 1994, 134; D. Müller 1997, 947; Fabiani 2003, 176; Vasilescu 2006; Bichler 2007 [2000], 99–100; Tuplin 2010, 295; Grethlein 2013, 188–189.

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> son of Hystaspes, king of Persia and the whole earth." That was what was inscribed there.[49]

This Herodotean inscription, which might reflect (at least to some extent) a monument that once existed in the region of Pınarhisar,[50] leaves no doubt that Darius extols the excellence of the river (ὕδωρ ἄριστόν τε καὶ κάλλιστον) in order to promote himself (ἀνὴρ ἄριστός τε καὶ κάλλιστος, 4.91.2): "his linking of the river's superb qualities to his own betrays the characteristic outlook of an egotistical autocrat".[51] It is precisely the directness of Darius' claim to be the best that indirectly characterises him as a self-assured monarch. This self-assuredness as it is expressed in the quoted inscription contrasts with the unsuccessful outcome of Darius' expedition.[52]

While the stele at the Tearus contains a reference to the recent past (ἀπίκετο, 4.91.2), the focus is on the present – or, rather, on the timeless excellence Darius ascribes both to the river and to himself. As opposed to the inscription on the relief commemorating Darius' accession, the one on the stele refers to the Persian king in the third person (and not in the first person). But since the quotation of the Tearus inscription follows a statement to the effect that it is produced on Darius' initiative, it still comes across as a clear case of self-display. We can thus observe a metahistorically significant difference between the self-centredness of Darius' inscription and Herodotus' project of recording the achievements of others.

The Tearus inscription is a piece of blatant self-promotion. Interestingly, it is the (apparently less extravagant) epigraphic record of the composition of Darius' army inscribed on the stelai at the Bosporus that is explicitly revealed as being liable to transformation. What is presumably meant to be a memorial for the Persian king's power to forge one single army out of groups of people from far-flung places of his immense empire ends

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49 On the meaning of ἤπειρος in this passage, see Vasilescu 2006, 284 n. 23.

50 On a journey into the Balkan, Jochmus, who located the springs of the Tearus near the locality of Pınarhisar, was told that a stone inscribed with letters "resembling 'nails'" (1854, 44) – a description that may indicate cuneiform writing – had stood there until fairly recently; he also notes, however, that "[t]he mysterious inscription [...] could not be found" (44). Unger, who travelled to the region of Pınarhisar in 1914, claimed to have identified the bedding for Darius' stele in the village of Jene (today Kaynarca) (see 1915, 10–14). As D. Müller reports, however, no traces of the monument could be seen in 1990 (see 1997, 947). As for the text of the inscription as given by Herodotus, Vasilescu argues that it reflects on the one hand the royal titulature actually inscribed on a stele set up by Darius at the Tearus and on the other an (epigraphically unfounded) local interpretation of this stele as a tribute to the curative qualities of the Tearus (see 2006, esp. 286).

51 Christ 1994, 178–179. At 1.138.2, the veneration of rivers is mentioned as a typical trait of the Persians. In that the excellence of the Tearus is praised in unambiguous terms in the inscription, Darius' epigraphic act can be seen as an expression of such a respectful attitude, but we may also note that by praising the river, Darius extols himself. On the notion of a special relationship between Persian kings and the water of rivers, see Gabba 1991.

52 See Erbse 1992, 151. As Steiner points out, Darius "will find himself no match for the geography of Scythia, a land characterized by its countless rivers whose constant motion mirrors the endless shifts of its nomadic population" (1994, 134).

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up being fragmented. By contrast, the unrestrained regal self-promotion in the Tearus inscription is not being destroyed, as it were, before our eyes.[53] These differences in terms of 'microscopic' embedding notwithstanding, the inscriptions both at the Bosporus and at the Tearus play a similar role in the wider context of the Scythian expedition and the *Histories* as a whole. The self-assuredness that emerges from Darius' inscriptions stands in sharp contrast to the further account of Darius' Scythian expedition, which will end disastrously.

3.4 Conclusion

It has been argued that "[t]he futile attempts of the Persian kings to memorialize their own *res gestae* demonstrate that history can only be told retrospectively – as in the *Histories*".[54] The monuments at the Bosporus and at the Tearus, which illustrate Darius' interest in "memorializ[ing] history in flux",[55] are indeed presented in a way that invites us to reflect on the limitations of Darius' epigraphic acts.

However, I am not sure whether it is the temporal structure of Darius' inscriptions that is implicitly presented as a serious defect. The stelai at the Bosporus display Darius' might at a certain stage of his Scythian campaign, but the stele at the Tearus contains a reference to the recent past, and the relief commemorating Darius' accession is exclusively concerned with the recent past. What all these inscriptions, which are presented as being produced at Darius' behest, have in common is that they come across as instances of royal self-display.

Admittedly, at least as far as the stelai at the Bosporus are concerned, Darius can hardly be accused of overreaching himself. But even if the information about his army recorded on these stelai is regarded as accurate, the decision to erect them at the Bosporus is a spectacular example of his royal self-assuredness. This interest in leaving behind memorials of his own reign stands in metahistorical contrast with Herodotus' much more comprehensive historiographical project.

The stelai illustrate another aspect of the metahistorical potential of Herodotean inscriptions in a striking way: as the drastic account of their translocation and fragmentation shows, the choice of stone stelai as a carrier medium cannot guarantee the stability of epigraphic texts. By embedding such an instance of epigraphic instability, Herodotus underlines the commemorative ambition of his historiographical project and implicitly highlights the importance of the *Histories* as an efficient antidote to oblivion.

53 Steiner suggests, however, that "[t]he combination of the inscribed column and the riverflow sounds a false note in Greek tradition; Simonides explicitly contrasts the two when he calls Cleobulus a fool for attempting to set his monument against the force of the perennial river waters (fr. 387 Page)" (1994, 134).

54 Grethlein 2013, 198.

55 Grethlein 2013, 199.

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4 Inscribed Funerary Monuments: A New Lease of Life?

All men must die – but memories may live on. One important way of facilitating such a second lease of life draws on the permanence afforded by (inscribed) tomb monuments. The practice of erecting such monuments is widely attested. The earliest Greek funerary epigrams date from c. 600.[1] Furthermore, it is Hector's fantasy of a funerary monument (*Il.* 7.86–91) that stands a good chance of being the first literary reflection of the practice of setting up inscribed monuments.[2] The bulk of the small corpus of extant Lydian texts consists of funerary inscriptions.[3] In Mesopotamia, inscriptions on royal tombs identified their occupants.[4] As for Egypt, individuals used monumental writing as a means of self-presentation that would persist after their death.[5]

One third of the embedded inscriptions in the *Histories* belong to funerary monuments. On the Greek side, Herodotus quotes three epigrams inscribed at Thermopylae (7.228). As for non-Greek cultures, Herodotus paraphrases an inscription on the tomb of the Lydian king Alyattes (1.93.3) and one on the tomb of the Egyptian king Cheops (2.125.6), and he quotes an inscription on the tomb of the Egyptian king Asychis (2.136.3–4) and inscriptions on and within the tomb of the Babylonian queen Nitocris (1.187).

An important stimulus for the following investigation of these inscribed funerary monuments in East and West is Steiner's suggestion that Herodotus aligns writing with Eastern despotism.[6] As we shall see, the tombs Herodotus ascribes to Eastern monarchs contribute to the characterisation of these figures and their way of ruling, but Herodotus' staging of the inscriptions linked to them turns out to be ambiguous. The same is true of the epigraphic commemoration of the Greeks who fought and died at Thermopylae: whereas Steiner emphasises the "muted role" played by writing on the Greek mainland,[7] I shall argue that Herodotus' treatment of the Thermopylae epigrams indicates both an acknowledgement of the power of commemorative inscriptions and a critical awareness of their potential tendentiousness.

1 See Trümpy 2010, 167 n. 1.
2 See Strauss Clay 2016.
3 See Melchert 2004, 601; Payne/Wintjes 2016, 80–81.
4 See Bayliss 1973, 124.
5 See Assmann 1983.
6 See Steiner 1994, esp. 127–128.
7 See Steiner 1994, 127.

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4.1 Alyattes' Monument and Lydian Prostitution (1.93)

The geographical part of the Lydian *logos* opens with the following statement (1.93.1): Θώματα δὲ γῆ <ἡ> Λυδίη ἐς συγγραφὴν οὐ μάλα ἔχει, οἷά τε καὶ ἄλλη χώρη, πάρεξ τοῦ ἐκ τοῦ Τμώλου καταφερομένου ψήγματος ("Lydia does not at all have marvels worth recording, compared with other countries, except for the gold-dust which is washed down from Mount Tmolus"). Instead of adding further information about this gold-dust, Herodotus goes on to draw attention to an exceptional architectural achievement (ἔργον, 1.93.2): the tomb of Alyattes, Croesus' father (1.93.2).

After describing the form of the tomb (a mound with stones at its base)[8] and noting that it is the work of three groups, namely traders, artisans, and prostitutes (1.93.2), Herodotus refers to an epigraphic record of their respective contribution (1.93.3):[9]

> οὖροι δὲ πέντε ἐόντες ἔτι καὶ ἐς ἐμὲ ἦσαν ἐπὶ τοῦ σήματος ἄνω, καί σφι γράμματα ἐνεκεκόλαπτο τὰ ἕκαστοι ἐξεργάσαντο. καὶ ἐφαίνετο μετρεόμενον τὸ τῶν παιδισκέων ἔργον ἐὸν μέγιστον.
>
> Even in my day there were five pillars at the top of the tomb, and inscriptions carved on them said what each group had done. When measured, the contribution made by the prostitutes was found to be the greatest.[10]

Herodotus' statements about the size and location of the tomb suggest that it is to be identified with the easternmost and largest of the three great mounds at Bin Tepe, the Lydian necropolis north of the River Hermus.[11] This is the earliest known Lydian tumulus;

8 This is the earliest secure literary reference to the tomb of Alyattes. A poem by Hipponax (F 7 Degani), which apparently describes landmarks along the east-west road through Lydia, is sometimes cited as a pre-Herodotean mention of the tomb of Alyattes. However, the transmitted name in line 2 is Ἀττάλεω (the name of Alyattes' brother); the reading Ἀλυάττεω – promoted especially by Hanfmann 1963, 52 n. 56 – can be regarded as an unnecessary conjecture (see Ratté 1994, 157 and 159).

9 On this epigraphic reference, see Volkmann 1954, 48–49; West 1985, 295–296; Greenewalt/Rautman/Meriç 1986, 20; Fehling 1989 [1971], 134; Pritchett 1993, 170–173; Steiner 1994, 137; Naiden 1999, 136 and 146–147; Fabiani 2003, 175–176; Bichler 2007 [2000], 100–101; Ratté 2011, 4; Naso 2016, 21.

10 On the translation of οὖρος in this passage, see Wade-Gery 1932, 881. The expression αἱ ἐνεργαζόμεναι παιδίσκαι is difficult: In LSJ, the verb is glossed as "*work for hire in*, of harlots" (ἐνεργάζομαι *s.v.* 2); but the Herodotean expression does not feature a noun referring to a place in which the prostitutes work. Powell 1938, *s.v.*, offers "to ply one's trade anywhere"; I do not see how the preverb can express such a notion of indefinite locality. Stein suggests that τοῖσι σώμασι (signifying the means by which the παιδίσκαι make a living) is to be supplied mentally and that ἐνεργαζόμεναι is equivalent to πορνευόμεναι (see 1901, 116).

11 See Ratté 2011, 3–5. This identification can be corroborated by datable objects found in a tomb-chamber inside the mound (see 5). For the (unconvincing) identification of the *central* mound as the tomb of Alyattes, see Browne 2000 (refuted by Ratté 2011, 6 n. 13).

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nearly equalling the largest of the Egyptian pyramids in volume, it remains an impressive sight.[12] There is an enormous limestone marker – usually described as phallic-shaped[13] – toppled over on its summit.[14] Is this one of the five οὖροι mentioned by Herodotus? This has been assumed,[15] but there can be no certainty. While the precise function of phallic markers remains unclear, they are attested as graveside markers in Lydia and seem to have been associated primarily with tumulus burials.[16] However, there is no archaeological evidence for the existence of as many as five markers on a single tumulus.[17] More importantly, the extant marker on top of the tumulus of Alyattes "shows no trace of writing or of a bedding for an inscribed plaque".[18] Furthermore, most extant Lydian inscriptions were carved on marble.[19] As for the alleged content of the inscriptions, the Lydian epigraphic record does not, as far as I can see, offer any direct parallels: extant Lydian funerary inscriptions generally served to protect the tomb and its contents from plunderers and unauthorised secondary users.[20]

The relationship between the archaeological record and Herodotus' account is, thus, difficult to assess. If we extrapolate from the one extant pillar in its current state, Herodotus' description of Alyattes' tomb is at least in part incorrect; if we choose to take Herodotus' account at face value, we have to posit developments for which there is no archaeological evidence.[21]

Even in the case of the latter possibility, the relationship between the inscribed information and Herodotus' text is problematic in that Lydian inscriptions would have been

12 See Roosevelt 2009, 144, and the image at 143 (Fig. 6.8).

13 See e.g. HW I 101; *CH* 145. However, Russin, noting that the stone had been dynamited into four pieces by 1962, claims that "the slope does not suggest a phallus as do some other Lydian markers" (1983, 56).

14 For an image, see Greenewalt/Rautman/Meriç 1986, 20 (Fig. 30).

15 See Russin 1983, 56.

16 See Roosevelt 2009, 151–153.

17 Greenewalt/Rautman/Meriç claim that "no tumulus in western Asia Minor is known to have had more than one marker of the knoblike or 'phallus' kind represented by the Alyattes Tumulus marker" (1986, 28 n. 28), but a second marker (now lost) was, in fact, found near the bottom of the mound (see Ratté 2011, 4). Moreover, Greenewalt/Rautman/Meriç acknowledge that the small number of phallic markers found *in situ* does not constitute a solid basis for conclusions regarding their number per mound and their position (see 1986, 28 n. 28).

18 Greenewalt/Rautman/Meriç 1986, 20.

19 Ratté claims that "all known Lydian inscriptions are in marble, not limestone" (2011, 4), but Gusmani's (1964) collection of Lydian inscriptions includes limestone objects (e.g. no. 4, a limestone slab, and no. 7, a limestone pillar).

20 See Roosevelt 2009, 155. Littmann offers preliminary translations of a selection of funerary inscriptions (see 1916, 41–55); they all feature threats against potential destroyers of the tomb. On Lydian burial customs, see Payne/Wintjes 2016, 108–115.

21 One possible scenario is that the extant markers "were originally supplemented by markers of another type, such as marble stelae, which were inscribed as Herodotus says" (Ratté 2011, 4). Similarly, Naso speculates that "[t]he large cylindrical base [of the marker found on top of the tumulus] might have supported a pillar, such as the inscribed *ouroi* reported by Herodotus for the Alyattes mound" (2016, 21).

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inaccessible for a Greek reader.[22] Lydian inscriptions are written in a script that is "related to or derived from that of Greek",[23] but the linguistic differences between the two languages are considerable.[24] They may have been bridged by an interpreter, but, as usual, the challenge of reading foreign inscriptions is simply not addressed by Herodotus. At the very least, then, Herodotus' description lacks transparency.

The emphasis on the prominent role of prostitutes is likely to have struck a Greek audience as peculiar.[25] Their involvement in the construction is already mentioned in the sentence preceding the paraphrase of the inscriptions, and it is followed by some background information about prostitution in Lydia (1.93.4):

> τοῦ γὰρ δὴ Λυδῶν δήμου αἱ θυγατέρες πορνεύονται πᾶσαι, συλλέγουσαι σφίσι φερνάς, ἐς ὃ ἂν συνοικήσωσι τοῦτο ποιέουσαι· ἐκδιδοῦσι δὲ αὐταὶ ἑωυτάς.
>
> Among the common people in Lydia, the daughters all work as prostitutes, accumulating dowries for themselves and engaging in this practice until they marry. They arrange their own marriages.

Herodotus' interest in this aspect of Lydian culture also emerges from the chapter following the description of the tomb of Alyattes. Before crediting the Lydians with the invention of striking gold and silver coins and calling them the first retailers of goods (κάπηλοι, 1.94.1), Herodotus mentions their custom of prostituting their daughters as the crucial difference between their way of life and Greek customs (1.94.1): Λυδοὶ δὲ νόμοισι μὲν παραπλησίοισι χρέωνται καὶ Ἕλληνες, χωρὶς ἢ ὅτι τὰ θήλεα τέκνα καταπορνεύουσι ("The Lydians have similar customs to the Greeks, except that they have their female children work as prostitutes"). Incidentally, the association of the Lydians with money would tie in well with the assumption that when the prostitutes' ἔργον is mentioned in the paraphrase of the inscriptions on the pillars, we are to imagine some form of financial contribution.[26] In one sense, the information that prostitution is ubiquitous in Lydia simply accounts for the greatness of the prostitutes' contribution. At the same time, it is hard to escape the impression that there is something tongue-in-cheek about the "offhand remark"[27] about the difference between Greek and Lydian culture: these Lydians are just like us – except for this little habit they have of *prostituting their daughters*!

The topic of prostitution plays a considerable role in Herodotus' description not only of the Lydians but also of other peoples. Apart from sacred prostitution in Babylonia (1.199), we hear of Egyptian kings who prostitute their own daughters (2.121; 2.126) and of

22 However, there are Lydianisms in the works of the poet Hipponax (see Melchert 2014, 70).
23 Melchert 2004, 602.
24 For a sketch of Lydian, see Melchert 2004.
25 See Steiner 1994, 137; *CH* 145.
26 On the financial nature of the contribution, see Immerwahr 1960, 265; Bichler 2000, 191 and 216. Powell, by contrast, glosses ἔργον in this passage as "*handiwork*" (1938, *s.v.* III.1).
27 Kurke 1999, 170. Goldhill reads this statement as an example of cultural difference being explored "with bold and surprising humour" (2002a, 19).

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the glamourous life of the courtesan Rhodopis in Egypt (2.134–135). Herodotus does not explicitly condemn the Lydians' custom of prostitution – as opposed to the ritual prostitution of Babylonian women in the service of the goddess Mylitta, which is harshly criticised as "most shameful" (αἴσχιστος, 1.199.1).[28] Nonetheless, the practice of Babylonian commoners to prostitute their own daughters is presented as a decline from the previous custom of the auctioning of women for wives (1.196.5): ὁ μέν νυν κάλλιστος νόμος οὗτός σφι ἦν, οὐ μέντοι νῦν γε διατελέει ἐών ("This was their finest custom; however, it is no longer observed"), and it seems plausible to see here a contrast of "utopian possibility and oppression".[29] Herodotus presents the establishment of prostitution among Babylonian commoners as the result of poverty (1.196.5), but this does not necessarily justify it.

While the middle form πορνεύονται in the first mention of Lydian prostitution (1.93.4) has been understood as implying a notion of voluntariness,[30] the active compound verb καταπορνεύω, which is used to describe both Lydian (1.94.1) and Babylonian (1.196.5) secular prostitution, arguably carries a negative connotation of coercion.[31] Even in the absence of an explicit condemnation as in the case of sacred prostitution in Babylon, the idea that young Lydian women earn their dowries by selling themselves as prostitutes may well have been regarded as objectionable from a Greek perspective.[32]

But what are we to make of this alignment of prostitution with Alyattes' tomb? It has been suggested that Herodotus' mention of the inscriptional reference to Lydian prostitution serves to undermine the grandeur of the royal tomb.[33] At the same time, we should not forget that the great monument with its close link to the industriousness of the Lydian prostitutes is recognised as one of the very few noteworthy things in Lydia. The greatness of the prostitutes' contribution (ἔργον [...] μέγιστον, 1.93.3) echoes the greatness of the monument (ἔργον πολλὸν μέγιστον, 1.93.2), and both of these interconnected

28 This condemnation raises at least two issues. First, the accuracy of Herodotus' picture of sacred prostitution in Babylonia is very controversial (see e.g. Wilhelm 1990; Beard/Henderson 1997; Kuhrt 2002; Budin 2008). Secondly, the specific thrust of Herodotus' criticism is not entirely clear. Elsewhere, Herodotus observes with displeasure (ἔμοιγε οὐκ ἀρεστά, 2.65.1) that all people – with the exception of the Egyptians and the Greeks – allow intercourse in sacred shrines and do not bar worshippers who have not been ritually cleansed after sex from entering (2.64.1). This arguably reflects the pervasive Greek view that intercourse in a sanctuary was an act of sacrilege (see *CH* 211; see also Dover 1973, 60; Romm 1998, 99). Apparently, those who copulated in sanctuaries were believed to be in line for divine retribution (see Parker 1983, 74). An impressive illustration of this taboo from the *Histories* is the story of Artayctes, who repeatedly has intercourse with women in the inner shrine of the sanctuary of Protesilaus at Elaeus (9.116.3). Because of his actions, which are described as ἀθέμιστα ("sacrilegious") in the prolepsis at 7.33, the people of Elaeus demand his execution, and he dies a horrible death (9.120.4). On temple prostitution as an antithesis to the Greek civic ideal, see Kurke 1999, 238.

29 Kurke 1999, 245.

30 See Budin 2008, 87.

31 Kurke speaks of "the degrading act of καταπορνεύειν" (1999, 245).

32 See von Reden 1997, 170.

33 For such an interpretation, see (with different nuances) West 1985, 296; Steiner 1994, 137; Bichler 2007 [2000], 101.

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aspects reflect the greatness of Alyattes – a greatness that, however, should not be equated with moral excellence. With respect to Herodotus' builders and their projects, greatness is "simply wealth and power, and these we measure by reckoning up the troubles undergone in the erection of monuments, and by the marvelous size of the surviving structures".[34] It is this 'amoral greatness' of Alyattes' tomb that Herodotus preserves by means of his description.

As mentioned above, the tomb of Alyattes is contrasted with the lack of Lydian marvels worthy of being recorded in writing (1.93.1). Herodotus briefly mentions the exception of the gold-dust washed down from Mount Tmolus, but the focus is clearly on this tomb and the institution of prostitution on which it largely depends. In other words, a written record of the contributions to the construction of the tomb is the focal point of Herodotus' explicitly written account of Lydian marvels. This suggests a certain continuity between the practice of inscribing information on stone and Herodotus' text.

In this context, the expression ἔτι καὶ ἐς ἐμὲ ἦσαν is of particular interest. In Herodotus' description of Alyattes' tomb, this expression refers to the five pillars (1.93.3); the base and the mound, by contrast, are described in the present (1.93.2). This shift in tenses arguably reflects a difference in the material characteristics of the various parts of the funerary monument (present for the big and imperishable parts of the monument; imperfect for the small and damageable pillars).[35]

The expression with which Herodotus refers to the pillars on top of Alyattes' tomb suggests, in other words, that he has reservations about their durability. At first glance, such an interpretation may seem objectionable. After all, Herodotus clearly claims that the pillars have *not* perished before his time. However, the hypothesis that Herodotus underlines their continued existence leaves the use of the imperfect unaccounted for. By way of explanation, it has been suggested that in conjunction with the adverbial phrase ἔτι καὶ ἐς ἐμέ, the imperfect form ἦσαν is used to describe the pillars as objects "which may no longer exist at the time the historian's words are read".[36] It is, in other words, from the perspective of the future that the durability of the pillars is called into doubt; accordingly, the expression ἔτι καὶ ἐς ἐμὲ ἦσαν can aptly be described as an instance of the "prospective imperfect".[37]

This linguistic detail has important consequences for our understanding of Herodotus' conception of his narrative project as a whole. The anticipation of possible changes in the world as it is described in the *Histories* amounts to a historicisation of Herodotus' work:

> Herodotus re-creates himself as a figure of the past, to which he, as the author, looks back. The writer's glance back at himself coincides with the perspective of

34 Immerwahr 1960, 265.
35 See Naiden 1999, 136.
36 Naiden 1999, 135.
37 Naiden 1999, 135 and *passim*.

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the future reader, whose perception of the *Histories* as a work from the past is anticipated in the text.[38]

This self-historicising by means of the prospective imperfect can not only be observed in connection with various physical objects Herodotus describes; it is also in evidence in a famous programmatic passage (1.5.4): τὰ γὰρ τὸ πάλαι μεγάλα ἦν, τὰ πολλὰ αὐτῶν σμικρὰ γέγονε, τὰ δὲ ἐπ' ἐμεῦ ἦν μεγάλα, πρότερον ἦν σμικρά ("For most of those [cities] which were great in the past have become small, and those which were great in my own time were small before").

Rösler contrasts his interpretation of expressions like ἔτι καὶ ἐς ἐμὲ ἦσαν as indicators of Herodotus' historicising of his own time with an interpretation of these expressions in terms of a cautionary stance. Admittedly, he adduces at least one passage where a cautionary note may seem out of place: at 7.170.1, Herodotus mentions "the city of Camicus, which was in my day inhabited by people originally from Acragas" (πόλιν Καμικόν, τὴν κατ' ἐμὲ Ἀκραγαντῖνοι ἐνέμοντο).[39] Nonetheless, it remains a valid interpretative option for several of the passages he adduces (e.g. 2.154.5; 2.182).[40] In a case such as 5.45.2, where Herodotus mentions the ongoing use (ἐς ἐμὲ ἔτι ἐνέμοντο) of estates on Crotoniate territory, a caveat might seem overcautious[41] – but then again, it would be in line with the notion of the κύκλος τῶν ἀνθρωπηίων [...] πρηγμάτων (1.207.2).[42] In view of the pervasiveness of change, one is well-advised to veer on the safe side when describing the state of the world. In fact, the phenomenon of self-historicising may be just one facet of a general cautionary stance; the *Histories* show an awareness of the possibility of change both between the past and the present and between the present and the future.

In combination with the mention of the act of writing at the beginning of the description of noteworthy things in Lydia, the expression ἔτι καὶ ἐς ἐμὲ ἦσαν with reference to the inscribed pillars on top of Alyattes' monumental tomb draws our attention to the crucial importance of Herodotus' work as a link in the chain of transmission of information. In that it alerts us to the changeability of inscribed records, Herodotus' description of the pillars on top of Alyattes' tomb can be read as a metahistorical foil to the *Histories*: by hinting at the potential instability of these inscriptions, Herodotus highlights the ambition of his work as a powerful antidote to oblivion.

38 Rösler 2002, 92.

39 See Rösler 1991, 218. It may be noted, however, that the description of the inhabitants of Camicus as (former) Acragantians draws attention to the fact that the population of a city cannot be expected to be always the same; consequently, a relativising expression might not be that inappropriate after all.

40 See Rösler 1991, 217; 2002, 91.

41 See Rösler 2002, 91–92, arguing that Herodotus, when writing in Thurii, must have had certain knowledge about the situation in nearby Croton.

42 At 1.207.2, the expression κύκλος τῶν ἀνθρωπηίων [...] πρηγμάτων is used by Croesus in his famous warning to Cyrus; the "theory of historic change" it encapsulates is first pronounced, as Rösler notes, at 1.5 (see 2002, 92).

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4.2 The Horticultural Foundations of Cheops' Pyramid (2.125)

Among the Egyptian buildings Herodotus deems noteworthy, monumental tombs play a significant role. The accounts of the reigns of kings such as Cheops (2.124–126), Chephren (2.127), Mycerinus (2.129–134), and Asychis (2.136) include more or less extensive descriptions of the pyramids they left behind.[43] Just like other types of buildings Herodotus describes in the course of his account of Egypt, the pyramids are usually linked to specific characters.[44]

The first Egyptian king to whom Herodotus ascribes a pyramid is Cheops, whose accession is presented as marking – according to the Egyptians[45] – a change for the worse in the history of Egypt: whereas the reign of Cheops' predecessor was characterised by good governance and prosperity (εἶναι ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ πᾶσαν εὐνομίην ἔλεγον καὶ εὐθηνέειν Αἴγυπτον μεγάλως), Cheops prevented the Egyptians from performing sacrifices and commanded them to work for him (κατακληίσαντα γάρ μιν πάντα τὰ ἱρὰ πρῶτα μέν σφεας θυσιέων τουτέων ἀπέρξαι, μετὰ δὲ ἐργάζεσθαι ἑωυτῷ κελεύειν πάντας Αἰγυπτίους, 2.124.1).[46]

The result of this work, which is described at 2.124.2–125.5, is the Great Pyramid. The great scale of this project emerges not only from this account of the construction process but also from an inscriptional record on the pyramid itself (2.125.6):[47]

> σεσήμανται δὲ διὰ γραμμάτων Αἰγυπτίων ἐν τῇ πυραμίδι ὅσα ἔς τε συρμαίην καὶ κρόμμυα καὶ σκόροδα ἀναισιμώθη τοῖσι ἐργαζομένοισι· καὶ ὡς ἐμὲ εὖ μεμνῆσθαι τὰ ὁ ἑρμηνεύς μοι ἐπιλεγόμενος τὰ γράμματα ἔφη, ἑξακόσια καὶ χίλια τάλαντα ἀργυρίου τετελέσθαι.
>
> It is indicated in Egyptian letters on the pyramid how much was spent on radishes, onions, and garlic for the workers, and so far as I remember rightly what the interpreter reading the inscription to me said, the total cost was sixteen hundred talents of silver.

This passage is remarkable for placing considerable emphasis on the transmission of information. In this respect, already the first words are significant. Although the choice of a form

43 The Egyptians' preoccupation with monumental tombs is explicitly noted by Diod. Sic. 1.51.2 (see Steiner 1994, 136 with n. 22).

44 See Lloyd 1995, 294.

45 I will come back to the fact that Herodotus attributes the information he gives about Cheops' reign to the Egyptians.

46 Herodotus' notion of Cheops' position in the chronology of Egyptian kings is notoriously wrong: Herodotus puts him after a king of the twentieth dynasty; in fact, he belongs to the fourth dynasty. Haase 2004, 12, cautiously dates Cheops' reign to 2580–2550. For a possible explanation of Herodotus' muddled chronology, see Shimron 1990.

47 On this epigraphic reference, see Volkmann 1954, 46; West 1985, 298 and 302; Lloyd III 69–71; 1995, 275; Fehling 1989 [1971], 134; Froschauer 1991, 320–322; Pritchett 1993, 182; Elsner 1994, 235; Steiner 1994, 137–138; Fabiani 2003, 177; Bichler 2007 [2000], 102–103; Clarke 2015, 47–48.

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of the verb σημαίνω should maybe not be pressed too much,[48] we may note that it is sometimes used in the *Histories* of the communication of prophetic messages (e.g. 1.78.2) – that is, messages that carry a special authority.[49] This notion of an authoritative message would tie in nicely with the grand scale of Cheops' pyramid and with the sense of importance it exudes. In this way, it may heighten the tension between the 'pedestrian' content of the inscribed text and its monumental context. Another notion that may be evoked by the use of σημαίνω is the need for interpretation.[50] This need is certainly foregrounded throughout our passage, which is one of only a few cases in which Herodotus gives an explicit characterisation of the script used for an inscription he quotes or paraphrases. Furthermore, this is the only case in which the content of a foreign inscription is explicitly presented as being mediated through an interpreter.[51] Another striking aspect of this passage is that Herodotus draws attention to the (albeit unspecified) temporal distance between the interpreter's rendering of the inscription and his own presentation of this rendering.

What are the metahistorical implications of this reference to the recalling of a specific piece of information? To begin with, it can be read as some sort of disclaimer to the effect that Herodotus, while doing his best to reproduce what he learnt from the interpreter, cannot guarantee that his memory does not deceive him. This does not amount to an expression of strong scepticism, but it does alert us to the possibility of *not* remembering well. At the same time, in drawing attention to an act of recalling information, Herodotus underlines his role as a link in the chain of transmission. It is thanks to Herodotus' ability and willingness to pass on the information about some of the expenses for the Great Pyramid that we can get an impression of the extraordinary scale of Cheops' building project.

The reference to 'narratorial remembering' occurs in the context of a description of an extraordinary regal μνημόσυνον that carries an inscription.[52] This may encourage us to reflect both on the relationship between the aims of a character such as Cheops and Herodotus' narratorial agenda and on the vagaries of the reception of written documents. By recalling the interpreter's rendering of the inscription on the Great Pyramid, Herodotus collaborates with the mighty monarch insofar as he transmits information about this extraordinary construction. The writing on the Great Pyramid preserves information from the past, and Herodotus' written text makes sure that this information is

48 Inscribed letters are repeatedly presented as a means of communication, but the use of the verb σημαίνω in this context is unparalleled; in other passages, διὰ γραμμάτων occurs with a form of λέγω (of a stone statue [2.141.6]; of stelai [2.102.4]) or καταμηνύω (of a stele [7.30.2]).

49 On σημαίνω and authority, see Nagy 1990a, 165. For a survey of the vocabulary of signs, their transmission, reception, and interpretation in the *Histories*, see Hollmann 2011, 9–47 (omitting the occurrence of σημαίνω in our passage).

50 In Homer, the noun σῆμα is often linked to an act of interpretation. To give an example, the σῆμα of the snake that devours eight nestlings and their mother that Zeus sends to the Achaeans requires the interpretation of the seer Calchas (*Il.* 2.308–329; see Nagy 1990b, 203–204).

51 See Ch. 2, p. 31.

52 Admittedly, the word μνημόσυνον is not applied to the pyramid of Cheops, but it does occur with reference to the brick pyramid of Asychis (2.136.3).

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disseminated and made independent from the monument. Seen against this backdrop, the qualification ὡς ἐμὲ εὖ μεμνῆσθαι (2.125.6), which invites us to reflect on the inevitable imperfections of human memory, may serve to underline the importance of Herodotus' literary project: he may have failed to put down the translator's words on the spot, but at least the paraphrase he offers in the *Histories* can draw on the power of writing to ward off forgetfulness.

What are we to make of the content of the inscription, which has struck many modern readers as problematic?[53] What seems clear is that the Great Pyramid did not carry an inscription corresponding to Herodotus' paraphrase – or, for that matter, any inscription – when it was built.[54] However, there have been attempts to identify elements of the Egyptian epigraphic record that the Herodotean inscription might reflect in a distorted way.[55]

In the context of Herodotus' account of Cheops' pyramid, the inscription is used as a basis for further reflections on the overall expenses (2.125.7): εἰ δ' ἐστὶ οὕτως ἔχοντα ταῦτα, κόσα οἰκὸς ἄλλα δεδαπανῆσθαί ἐστι ἔς τε σίδηρον τῷ ἐργάζοντο, καὶ σιτία καὶ ἐσθῆτα τοῖσι ἐργαζομένοισι; ("If that is so, how much more must have been spent, in all likelihood, on the iron with which they worked and on food and clothing for the workers?"). Combined with these musings, the selectivity of the inscription, which lists only three elements, turns out to be an effective way of bringing across the magnitude of the construction[56] – and conveying a notion of this magnitude seems to be a crucial concern of the whole description of the Great Pyramid.

I have suggested above that the reference to (part of) the expenses for the construction of the pyramid reinforces the notion of the large scale of the project as it emerges from

53 See e.g. Gould 1989, 24–25 (noting that the sum of 1600 talents is unrealistically high); Lloyd III 70–71 (pointing out that the reference to talents is anachronistic); Steiner 1994, 138 (stating that the message draws attention to "some banal and unlikely detail of construction").

54 See Goyon 1944, XXVI. Apparently assuming that Herodotus suggests that the inscription lists the food provisions for the workers, Lloyd comments that "radishes, onions, and garlic were certainly important elements in Egyptian diet [...], but the list omits many items which we should expect, e.g. bread, beer, and fish" (*CH* 332). As far as the framing of the list in the *Histories* is concerned, however, it may be worth noting that Herodotus does not, to my mind, suggest that this list comprises all or the most basic elements in Egyptian diet. In fact, Herodotus' subsequent musings on the additional (!) expenses (κόσα οἰκὸς ἄλλα δεδαπανῆσθαί ἐστι) for, among other things, food (σιτία) for the workers at 2.125.7 suggests that the list itself should not be understood as a comprehensive account of the food consumed by the workers. It has been suggested that the onions and garlic mentioned on the list "were for relishes not 'food'" (HW I 229), and the first item, συρμαίη, may well be mentioned in its capacity as a purgative (cf. συρμαΐζουσι, 2.77.2; cf. also 2.88, where συρμαίῃ apparently refers to oil made of radishes that is used to rinse out the bowels of a dead body) (see HW I 210 and 229; that the radish was used to make oil is also noted by Lloyd III 70).

55 For a list of suggestions (visitors' graffiti; an inscription produced in the context of Chaemwaset's restoration of the pyramid; an offering stele set up against the east face of the pyramid), see Lloyd III 69–70 (with further literature). For a sceptical assessment of such attempts to reconcile the content of the Herodotean inscription with the epigraphic record, see Froschauer 1991, 320–322.

56 See Fabiani 2003, 177.

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the preceding account of the building process and noted that the subsequent narratorial reflections concerning the expenses for clothes and other things are explicitly based on the content of the inscription. However, this illustration of the greatness of the awe-inspiring memorial in terms of its horticultural basis may also have a subversive force. Just like the association of the monumental tomb of the Lydian king Alyattes with the institutionalised prostitution of young women has been perceived to undermine the notion of a dignified tomb,[57] it has been claimed that "the culinary detail [...] robs the tomb and Cheops both of their dignity".[58]

Given that the inscription records (some of) the expenses for the workforce, it draws attention to the fact that Cheops' monumental pyramid owes its existence to the labour of the common people.[59] That Herodotus does indeed regard the pyramid of Cheops as being dependent on forced labour clearly emerges from the beginning of his account of Cheops' reign (1.124.1). However, the inscription itself does not refer to what Cheops' subjects are forced to do, namely to carry out hard labour for their king, but rather to the expenses for (some of) the things they receive in exchange for their work. The inscription may fail to praise Cheops (or, for that matter, to mention his name), but it does not – at least not in itself – reveal his exploitative character either. If the pyramid comes across as a symbol of Cheops' despotism, this is arguably due to its being embedded in a framing narrative that makes the king appear in a very unfavourable light.

In the part of the framing narrative that follows the mention of the inscription, for instance, we learn that Cheops exploits not just an anonymous mass of workers but even his own daughter (2.126):

> ἐς τοῦτο δὲ ἐλθεῖν Χέοπα κακότητος ὥστε χρημάτων δεόμενον τὴν θυγατέρα τὴν ἑωυτοῦ κατίσαντα ἐπ' οἰκήματος προστάξαι πρήσσεσθαι ἀργύριον ὁκόσον δή τι· οὐ γὰρ δὴ τοῦτό γε ἔλεγον· τὴν δὲ τά τε ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς ταχθέντα πρήσσεσθαι, ἰδίῃ δὲ καὶ αὐτὴν διανοηθῆναι μνημήιον καταλιπέσθαι, καὶ τοῦ ἐσιόντος πρὸς αὐτὴν ἑκάστου δέεσθαι ὅκως ἂν αὐτῇ ἕνα λίθον <ἐκ τῶν>[60] ἐν τοῖσι ἔργοισι δωρέοιτο. ἐκ τούτων δὲ τῶν λίθων ἔφασαν τὴν πυραμίδα οἰκοδομηθῆναι τὴν ἐν μέσῳ τῶν τριῶν ἑστηκυῖαν, ἔμπροσθε τῆς μεγάλης πυραμίδος, τῆς ἐστι τὸ κῶλον ἕκαστον ὅλου καὶ ἡμίσεος πλέθρου.
>
> [The Egyptians said that] Cheops sank to such depths of wickedness that when he ran short of money, he installed his own daughter in a brothel with instructions to charge a certain amount of money (they did not tell me exactly how much). She did what her father had told her to do, but she also had the idea of leaving behind her own personal memorial, so she asked each of the men who came in to her to give her a single block of stone of those on the building site. They said that from these

57 See Ch. 4.1, p. 57.
58 Steiner 1994, 138.
59 See Bichler 2007 [2000], 103.
60 See Wilson 2015b, 38.

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> blocks of stone the middle pyramid of the three was built, which stands in front of the great pyramid and the sides of which measure one and a half plethra.

Cheops' forcing his daughter to work as a prostitute may appear to be the culmination of his despotic regime: "the king is exposed as a tyrant, and his monumental ambitions as the extreme of depravity".[61] It should be noted, however, that the whole episode about the reign of Cheops and, after him, his brother Chephren is introduced as something which "they [i.e. the Egyptians] said" (ἔλεγον, 2.124.1). This is not to say that Herodotus does not make statements about Cheops' building project in his own voice. As far as the negative judgments about Cheops – e.g. the introductory characterisation of his rule as particularly bad (2.124.1) – are concerned, however, they are invariably presented in *oratio obliqua*.[62] In fact, in the chapter preceding the account of Cheops' rule, Herodotus explicitly distances himself from "what is said by the Egyptians" (τοῖσι [...] ὑπ' Αἰγυπτίων λεγομένοισι, 2.123.1). Rather than vouching for the content of these reports, he declares (2.123.1): ἐμοὶ δὲ παρὰ πάντα τὸν λόγον ὑπόκειται ὅτι τὰ λεγόμενα ὑπ' ἑκάστων ἀκοῇ γράφω ("For me the underlying principle throughout this whole account is that I write down what has been said by everyone as I heard it").

Having described the reign of Cheops' successor Chephren (2.127), Herodotus explicitly notes that the Egyptians have an extremely negative view of these two kings (2.128):

> τούτους ὑπὸ μίσεος οὐ κάρτα θέλουσι Αἰγύπτιοι ὀνομάζειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς πυραμίδας καλέουσι ποιμένος Φιλίτιος, ὃς τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον ἔνεμε κτήνεα κατὰ ταῦτα τὰ χωρία.
>
> The Egyptians loathe them [i.e. Chephren and Cheops] so much that they do not at all like to mention their names. Instead, they call the pyramids after Philitis, a shepherd, who at that time grazed his flocks in those parts.

What Herodotus describes here as the Egyptians' way of dealing with these two pyramids contrasts starkly with Herodotus' own approach to these monuments. As opposed to the Egyptians, Herodotus has, as the preceding chapters of the *Histories* show, no compunctions about mentioning the names Cheops and Chephren and, in particular, about referring to them in their capacity as pyramid builders. Against the backdrop of 2.128, Herodotus' account of the pyramids at 2.124–127 can thus be seen as an attempt to counteract the Egyptians' commemorative policy vis-à-vis the pyramids of Cheops and Chephren. In view of the Egyptians' attempt at manipulating the commemorative function of these monuments by calling them after a mere shepherd, Herodotus re-establishes the link between the pyramids and their royal builders.[63]

On the whole, then, the relationship between Cheops' inscribed pyramid and Herodotus' account turns out to be a complex one. On the one hand, the comparatively

61 Kurke 1999, 222; see also von Reden 1997, 172.
62 On this pattern, see Clarke 2015.
63 See Clarke 2015, 50.

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detailed description of this large-scale building suggests that the commemorative strategy chosen by this king is an efficient one: in Herodotus' account, Cheops is closely associated with the immense pyramid. On the other hand, Herodotus' remarks about the Egyptians' reaction to this monument draw metahistorical attention to the limits of monumental and epigraphic commemoration: according to Herodotus, Cheops' pyramid is in danger of being dissociated from its royal creator – a danger to which Herodotus reacts by (re-)ascribing the pyramid to Cheops. The incorporation of the Egyptians' reception of the pyramid thus highlights the importance of the *Histories* as a text about monuments from the past.

4.3 Asychis' Loquacious Pyramid (2.136)

At the end of the section devoted to the Egyptian king Asychis, Herodotus mentions the inscribed monument left behind by this king; it is, as the inscription underlines, a pyramid of a very special kind (2.136.3–4):[64]

> ὑπερβαλέσθαι δὲ βουλόμενον τοῦτον τὸν βασιλέα τοὺς πρότερον ἑωυτοῦ βασιλέας γενομένους Αἰγύπτου μνημόσυνον πυραμίδα λιπέσθαι ἐκ πλίνθων ποιήσαντα, ἐν τῇ γράμματα ἐν λίθῳ ἐγκεκολαμμένα τάδε λέγοντα ἔστι· μή με κατονοσθῇς πρὸς τὰς λιθίνας πυραμίδας· προέχω γὰρ αὐτέων τοσοῦτον ὅσον ὁ Ζεὺς τῶν ἄλλων θεῶν. κοντῷ γὰρ ὑποτύπτοντες ἐς λίμνην, ὅ τι πρόσσχοιτο τοῦ πηλοῦ τῷ κοντῷ, τοῦτο συλλέγοντες πλίνθους εἴρυσαν καί με τρόπῳ τοιούτῳ ἐξεποίησαν.
>
> [The priests said that] wishing to outdo the kings of Egypt who came before him, this king [i.e. Asychis] left as a memorial a pyramid made out of bricks, on which there is an inscription carved in stone that says the following: "Do not compare me unfavourably with the pyramids of stone: I surpass them as much as Zeus surpasses the other gods. For plunging a pole into a lake and collecting whatever mud clung to it, they formed bricks and thus made me."

Both the ascription of the pyramid to a king named Asychis and the content of the inscription are difficult to relate to Egyptian realities.[65] As opposed to our previous

64 On this epigraphic reference, see Volkmann 1954, 46–47; West 1985, 298 and 302; Lloyd III 90; 1995, 292; Fehling 1989 [1971], 134; Pritchett 1993, 182–183; Steiner 1994, 137; Fabiani 2003, 176; Bichler 2007 [2000], 103–104; von Lieven 2013, 327; Lougovaya-Ast 2017, 108–109.

65 As von Lieven notes, "there is absolutely no royal figure with a name remotely resembling the form Asychis" (2013, 325); she suggests that Herodotus' Asychis is based on the conflation of two private individuals (see esp. 332). For a critical survey of earlier attempts to identify the Herodotean Asychis with an attested king, see 325–326. As for the content of the inscription as presented by Herodotus, it has been observed that it cannot correspond to the content of an actual inscription on an Egyptian pyramid (see Heidel 1935, 84; Lloyd III 90). With due caution, von Lieven suggests that Herodotus'

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example of Egyptian epigraphy, the issue of accessibility is not explicitly addressed. The absence of a reference to the linguistic barrier should maybe not be pressed too much in this particular case; after all, Herodotus does acknowledge his dependence on an interpreter when describing Cheops' inscription just a few chapters previously (2.125.6). As for the challenge of recalling a past reception of a translation, it could also be argued that the (potential) caveat stated in this previous passage is to be applied to the case of Asychis' pyramid as well, but we may also note that this challenge would have been much greater in this latter passage: while the record of expenses on the pyramid of Cheops is merely paraphrased, the speech of the pyramid of Asychis is given as a quotation.

What is strikingly absent from the comparatively long inscriptional speech, which forms the bulk of the two sections devoted to Asychis' pyramid (2.136.3–4), is any mention of the name of the king responsible for building this unusual monument. It is true that the inscriptions on the tombs of Alyattes and Cheops as presented by Herodotus do not refer to these kings either; but then, these are only paraphrases, so some degree of selectivity is to be expected. Given that Herodotus names the kings before paraphrasing the inscriptions on the tombs, the repetition of the names seems unnecessary. The silence regarding the dead king in the case of the pyramid of Asychis, though, is a different matter. After all, Herodotus purports to give a quotation of – presumably – the entire speech of Asychis' "garrulous tomb".[66] Given that Asychis' ambition to outclass his royal predecessors is made very clear before the inscription is quoted, the question of whether the wording of the inscription is apt to serve this purpose seems justified.

That Asychis is not mentioned in the inscription has been interpreted as a failure of the royal tomb to fulfil its memorialising function: "the words it carries parody the Greek practice whereby the monument makes mention of its builder and celebrates his virtues".[67] At the same time, the garrulity of the tomb is, in a way, supported by Herodotus: the proud pyramid is, as it were, allowed to have its say. If one imagines an uninformed wanderer chancing upon the pyramid, it could be said that the lack of an inscriptional mention of Asychis' name endangers the latter's being remembered. In the context of Herodotus' description of the monument, however, this is not necessarily a serious defect. After all, it is clearly stated prior to the quotation of the peculiar inscription that the tomb belongs to Asychis.

If we assume that a pyramid made of bricks is per se less impressive than the 'proper' ones left behind by the great pyramid builders Cheops, Chephren, and Mycerinus, it is up to the inscription to compensate for the deficient materiality of the monument.[68] Apparently operating on the principle that attack is the best form of defence, the pyramid apodictically asserts its own superiority by putting itself on a level with Zeus and then goes on to give an account of the provenance of its building materials. On the one hand,

rendering of the inscription may be linked to Egyptian wisdom teachings (i.e. texts – sometimes inscribed on funerary stelai – expressing a negative view of stone buildings) (see 2013, 327).

66 Steiner 1994, 137.

67 Steiner 1994, 137.

68 See Bichler 2007 [2000], 103.

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these remarks about the production of bricks can be seen as yet another reminder that the Egyptian kings' architectural self-representation is based on hard toil on the part of their subjects:[69] while Herodotus' account of Cheops' pyramid is focused on the large scale of the building project, the present passage draws attention to the difficulty of obtaining building materials. On the other hand, the result of all this work is an unusual edifice that is included in Herodotus' gallery of noteworthy Egyptian monuments that testify to the (amoral) greatness of their builders.

What are the metahistorical implications of Herodotus' description of Asychis' pyramid? Within Herodotus' short account of Asychis' reign (2.136), the description of his pyramid takes up considerable space. In other words, his legacy as it is presented by Herodotus is closely linked to this inscribed memorial. Herodotus does not hesitate to ascribe the pyramid to Asychis. As is often the case, he does not explicitly account for the information he gives about the pyramid. What clearly emerges is that the inscription as he renders it cannot be regarded as the basis for the ascription of the pyramid to Asychis. Herodotus thus not only acknowledges the power of inscriptions to preserve information for future generations but also draws attention to the importance of contextualising them: it is thanks to Herodotus' identification of the pyramid that the inscription carved on it can be perceived as part of Asychis' legacy.

4.4 Nitocris' Epigraphic Trap (1.187)

In Herodotus' descriptions of the funerary monuments of Alyattes, Cheops, and Asychis, the focus is on the construction process. In the passage to which we now turn, which is devoted to the tomb of the Babylonian queen Nitocris, a different aspect comes to the fore. While Herodotus does present the construction of the tomb as one of various building projects carried out under the aegis of this queen, the focus seems to be on Darius' interaction with this monument – and on how the queen manipulates this interaction by epigraphic means (1.187):[70]

> ἡ δ' αὐτὴ αὕτη βασίλεια καὶ ἀπάτην τοιήνδε τινὰ ἐμηχανήσατο. ὑπὲρ τῶν μάλιστα λεωφόρων πυλέων τοῦ ἄστεος τάφον ἑωυτῇ κατεσκευάσατο μετέωρον ἐπιπολῆς αὐτέων τῶν πυλέων, ἐνεκόλαψε δὲ ἐς τὸν τάφον γράμματα λέγοντα τάδε· Τῶν τις ἐμεῦ ὕστερον γινομένων Βαβυλῶνος βασιλέων ἢν σπανίσῃ χρημάτων, ἀνοίξας τὸν τάφον λαβέτω ὁκόσα βούλεται χρήματα· μὴ μέντοι γε μὴ σπανίσας γε ἄλλως ἀνοίξῃ· οὐ γὰρ

69 See Bichler 2007 [2000], 104.

70 On Herodotus' account of Nitocris' epigraphic activities, see Lehmann 1901, 258–259 n. 5; Baumgartner 1950, 96–97; Volkmann 1954, 48–49; Röllig 1969; West 1985, 296; Gammie 1986, 182; Fehling 1989 [1971], 134; Erbse 1991, 143–144; 1992, 63–64; Dillery 1992; Pritchett 1993, 170–173; Steiner 1994, 136–137; Tourraix 1996; Gera 1997; Fabiani 2003, 175–176; Bichler 2007 [2000], 104–105; Baragwanath 2008, 62–64; Henkelman 2011, 113–114 and 133–134.

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ἄμεινον. οὗτος ὁ τάφος ἦν ἀκίνητος μέχρις οὗ ἐς Δαρεῖον περιῆλθε ἡ βασιληίη. Δαρείῳ δὲ καὶ δεινὸν ἐδόκεε εἶναι τῇσι πύλῃσι ταύτῃσι μηδὲν χρᾶσθαι καὶ χρημάτων κειμένων καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν γραμμάτων ἐπικαλεομένων μὴ οὐ λαβεῖν αὐτά. τῇσι δὲ πύλῃσι ταύτῃσι οὐδὲν ἐχρᾶτο τοῦδε εἵνεκα, ὅτι ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς οἱ ἐγίνετο ὁ νεκρὸς διεξελαύνοντι. ἀνοίξας δὲ τὸν τάφον εὗρε χρήματα μὲν οὔ, τὸν δὲ νεκρὸν καὶ γράμματα λέγοντα τάδε· Εἰ μὴ ἄπληστός τε ἔας χρημάτων καὶ αἰσχροκερδής, οὐκ ἂν νεκρῶν θήκας ἀνέῳγες. αὕτη μέν νυν ἡ βασίλεια τοιαύτη τις λέγεται γενέσθαι.

This same queen also devised the following ruse. She built a tomb for herself over the most frequented gate of the city, in mid-air above the actual gate, and carved an inscription on the tomb that said the following: "If any king of Babylon who comes after me needs money, let him open the tomb and take as much money as he wants. Let him not, however, open it unless he is truly in need, for that would be for the worse." This tomb remained undisturbed until the kingship fell to Darius. He resented the fact that he could not use this gate and take the money when it lay there and the inscription itself invited him. The reason he did not use the gate was that the dead body would be over his head as he passed through. Having opened the tomb, however, he found no money there, only the dead body and an inscription that said the following: "If you were not so insatiable for money and shamefully greedy, you would not open up the tombs of the dead." That is the kind of person this queen is supposed to have been.

While the beginning of the inscription (Τῶν τις ἐμεῦ ὕστερον γινομένων Βαβυλῶνος βασιλέων, 1.187.2) can be paralleled with Babylonian inscriptions,[71] the account of Nitocris' inscribed tomb is in several respects difficult to reconcile with Babylonian realities. There is, for instance, the general problem that the identity of Herodotus' Nitocris

71 Lehmann adduces an inscribed stele by the Babylonian king Šamaššumukin as an example (see 1901, 258–259 n. 5). This inscription records Šamaššumukin's restoration of a temple in Borsippa. Interestingly, the sentence following the one featuring the formula in question resembles the Herodotean inscription in that it contains a warning (for the text, see 1892 II, 10–11). On funerary inscriptions warning against doing damage to tombs, see Dillery 1992, 34; Henkelman 2011, 115.

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remains a puzzle.[72] As for the tomb, its alleged position over a gate is implausible,[73] and the fact that the inscription on it does not contain Nitocris' name contrasts with the habit of Babylonian rulers of "le[aving] their names everywhere".[74]

The inconsistency of the story as Herodotus relates it – at first, the presence of the corpse discourages Darius from passing through the gate, but then, such qualms suddenly vanish and he actually opens the tomb – may indicate a certain degree of dependence on previous stories.[75] At the same time, Darius' decision to open the tomb illustrates, as we shall see, an aspect of his character that can also be observed on other occasions in the *Histories*.

Having forced his way into the tomb under the influence of the inscription on it, Darius ends up being reprimanded for this disturbance of the peace of the dead. The accusation of greed ties in nicely with the later remark that the Persians call Darius a "retailer" (κάπηλος, 3.89.3).[76] In fact, it has been argued that the whole episode serves to illustrate this particular character trait.[77] Herodotus does not say anything about Darius' reaction, but the neutral report of the inscriptional reproach is sufficient to make him appear in a very unfavourable light.

In itself, the story of how Darius enters Nitocris' tomb only to be reproached for the insatiability that has impelled him to such a transgression may convey the impression that

72 Suggestions include Adad-guppī, the mother of King Nabonidus (see Röllig 1969), and King Nebuchadnezzar (see Baumgartner 1950, 96–97). The former suggestion is tempting in that Nabonidus' mother "is unique among Assyrian-Babylonian women in having her own formal inscription" (Gera 1997, 109). While this inscription is not funerary, it does mention Adad-guppī's burial and contains an exhortation to worship the gods of Babylon; in view of this moralising slant, it has been likened to Nitocris' epitaph (see 109). However, Adad-guppī, whose name does not at all resemble the name of Herodotus' queen, is said to have been buried in a secret place, and she is never credited with any public works (see 109). For the impossibility of identifying Herodotus' Babylonian queen with a historical figure, see also Tourraix 1996, 111. In the *Histories*, Herodotus' Babylonian Nitocris shares her name with an Egyptian queen who is similarly associated with deception and vengeance (2.100), and the achievements with which the Babylonian Nitocris is credited appear to duplicate the activities of the Babylonian queen Semiramis (1.184) (see Dillery 1992, 30–31).

73 See Röllig 1969, 132; Tourraix 1996, 112.

74 Gera 1997, 115. Bayliss notes that royal tombs in Assyria and Babylonia were furnished with inscriptions identifying the occupant (see 1973, 124).

75 The internal inconsistency of the story is emphasised by Dillery, who explains it by assuming that the story as it stands is the result of Herodotus' attempt to account for the puzzling detail that Darius is vexed by Nitocris' tomb by drawing on familiar story patterns (tomb violation; the carefully arranged revenge of a woman) (see 1992, esp. 36–38).

76 Admittedly, not all scholars would agree that the image of the κάπηλος Darius has a negative edge to it. For Gammie, it reflects "respect for the genius of the king in administration" (1986, 182). By contrast, Ruffing argues that Herodotus' use of κάπηλος/καπηλεύω bespeaks a very negative view of commercial activities (see 2011, 79–82), though it seems problematic when Ruffing adduces the report that Egyptian women go out to the market place and retail goods while the men weave at home (2.35.2) to illustrate a general association of commerce and effemination (see 79): after all, most Egyptian customs are, according to Herodotus, the exact opposite of those everywhere else (2.35.2).

77 See Henkelman 2011, 134.

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Nitocris' assumptions about the character and behaviour of the future king of Babylon could hardly have been more accurate: "The deception relies upon her expectation of some future ruler's pragmatism and greed."[78] The episode thus makes for an effective climax of a number of examples that likewise seem to attest to Nitocris' remarkable ability to predict the future.[79] In anticipation of the Median threat (1.185.1), she alters the Euphrates' course (1.185.2) and excavates a lake (1.185.4) to make journeys from Media more difficult (1.185.7). At first glance, all these activities appear to be straightforward illustrations of Nitocris' successful use of her exceptional intelligence – a quality that is ascribed to her when she is first introduced (1.185.1) and that, though not mentioned again, is likely to come to mind at the end of the account of Nitocris' reign (1.187.5): αὕτη μέν νυν ἡ βασίλεια τοιαύτη τις λέγεται γενέσθαι ("That is the kind of person this queen is supposed to have been").

The list of carefully planned building feats Herodotus ascribes to Nitocris is certainly impressive. Ironically, though, her interventions turn out to contribute to the fall of Babylon in the next generation.[80] When the Persian king Cyrus besieges Babylon, he uses the reservoir excavated by Nitocris to lower the level of the Euphrates; this enables him to capture the city by surprise (1.191). As for the inscription on the outside of her tomb, we may note that Herodotus explicitly mentions it as one of the factors that encourage Darius to open the tomb (αὐτῶν τῶν γραμμάτων ἐπικαλεομένων, 1.187.3). Given that earlier in the narrative, Darius foregoes his plan to carry off a statue of Zeus (1.183.3), we may speculate that an explicit warning not to violate the tomb under any circumstances might have stood a good chance of deterring Darius. Instead, Nitocris' showing Darius up comes at the cost of having her tomb disturbed.

A noteworthy feature of the inscription on Nitrocris' tomb is the expression οὐ γὰρ ἄμεινον (1.187.2).[81] There are two further instances in the *Histories*, both with Darius as the speaker: at 3.71.2, Darius uses it at the end of a warning (addressed to his fellow conspirators) not to lose time in striking against the false Smerdis; at 3.82.5, the expression rounds off his case for the adoption of monarchy.[82] In both instances, this expression serves to lend special force to an exhortation in a situation where much is at stake.[83] Darius gets his way in both cases (3.72.1; 3.83.1). The recurrence of the expression in two situations in

78 Baragwanath 2008, 62.

79 See Baragwanath 2008, 62.

80 See Gera 1997, 111.

81 On the oracular ring of this expression and its parallelism with a Hesiodic warning in a funerary context (Hes. *Op.* 750), see Dillery 1992, 32–33.

82 See Dillery 1992, 32 n. 13.

83 Commenting on the use of οὐ μήν οἱ τό γε κάλλιον οὐδέ τ' ἄμεινον in Apollo's condemnation of the mistreatment of Hector's dead body at the hands of Achilles (*Il.* 24.52), Macleod states that this expression "looks like a weighty understatement" and "seems particularly proper to solemn or serious warnings" (1982, 93). Yamagata distinguishes between the moral condemnation expressed by κάλλιον and the word ἄμεινον, which "seems to refer only to Achilles' interest" (1994, 202), but this does not mean that this latter aspect is of little importance: Achilles' behaviour is not profitable for him because it may offend the gods (see 202).

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which Darius paves his way to the Persian throne may invite us not to underestimate the self-serving nature of his actions: Darius' thirst for both money and power is insatiable.

The episode of Nitocris' tomb has been regarded as one of several instances where Herodotus uses inscribed monuments to reveal the dark side of the glamour displayed by Eastern monarchs.[84] It should be noted, however, that the inscriptions on and within Nitocris' tomb differ from the ones on the pyramids of Asychis and Cheops in the following respect. While the latter illustrate aspects of Eastern despotism that may seem problematic from a Greek point of view, they do not feature an explicit criticism of the respective monarch. In other words, a negative evaluation results here from the assumption that Herodotus makes these monarchs unmask themselves by means of boastful inscriptions that, as it were, fall back on them – at least to the extent that they prompt us to think of aspects of their reign that are implicitly or explicitly presented as problematic. By contrast, Nitocris', i.e. an Eastern monarch's, second inscription contains an explicit reproach, and the person who ends up being reprimanded is Darius, i.e. another Eastern monarch.

Nitocris' ruse, successful as it may be as a strike against Darius,[85] comes at a certain price. Otherwise keen on leaving behind memorials, the queen encourages others to disrespect her tomb. The inscription on the tomb does not, as one might expect, say anything about the queen. As opposed to Darius, whose inscribed monuments invariably vaunt his achievements, power, or general excellence,[86] Nitocris does not use the inscription to immortalise herself in a direct way. Instead, she sacrifices the integrity of her tomb so as to deceive an anticipated oppressor. However, this strategy does not turn out to be detrimental to her memory – on the contrary: the clever way in which she uses inscriptions to show Darius up forms the climax of a section of the *Histories* that pays tribute to the many notable achievements of this exceptional queen.

At the same time, Nitocris' epigraphic encouragement to disturb the integrity of the tomb (at least under certain circumstances) arguably draws our attention to the importance of Herodotus' role as a transmitter of information: it is thanks to the text of the *Histories* that the episode about Nitocris' tomb is saved from oblivion.[87] This observation may suggest the metahistorical conclusion that Herodotus' non-inscriptional *Histories* are superior to inscriptions in terms of preserving memory. It should be noted, though, that even in terms of monumental persistence, the episode is not a story of failure. The integrity of Nitocris' tomb ends up being compromised, but this development is envisaged and even encouraged by the queen. As opposed to the episode featuring the stelai at the

84 See Bichler 2007 [2000], 105.

85 Gera points out that Nitocris cannot know who will break into her tomb and thus cannot be said to mete out revenge against Darius in particular (see 1997, 117). Still, it could be said that the false promise of riches lying inside the tomb exposes the impious greed of the first person who decides to violate it, and Darius turns out to be that person.

86 See Ch. 3; admittedly, in the case of the brief paraphrase of the inscriptions on the two stelai at the Bosporus, it is not clear to what extent Darius himself is to be imagined as the subject of these inscriptions.

87 As Baragwanath notes, Herodotus' text serves as Nitocris' "true and final memorial" (2008, 63).

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Bosporus,[88] there is no juxtaposition between a (presumable) attempt to record information permanently and the unforeseen removal and fragmentation of the inscribed object.

Among the inscriptions discussed so far, the one on Nitocris' tomb stands out in that it has an appellative function directed at a comparatively specific addressee: the *apodoseis* of the two complementary conditional sentences contain a third-person imperative (λαβέτω) and a negated subjunctive (μὴ [...] ἀνοίξῃ), respectively, and the addressee, while not identified by name, is specified at least to the extent of being one of the future kings of Babylon (Τῶν τις ἐμεῦ ὕστερον γινομένων Βαβυλῶνος βασιλέων, 1.187.2).[89] Regarding the communicative orientation, the closest parallel in the *Histories* is Themistocles' inscriptional message to the Ionians in Xerxes' army (8.22.1–2):[90]

> Ἀθηναίων δὲ νέας τὰς ἄριστα πλωούσας ἐπιλεξάμενος Θεμιστοκλέης ἐπορεύετο περὶ τὰ πότιμα ὕδατα, ἐντάμνων ἐν τοῖσι λίθοισι γράμματα, τὰ Ἴωνες ἐπελθόντες τῇ ὑστεραίῃ {ἡμέρῃ} ἐπὶ τὸ Ἀρτεμίσιον ἐπελέξαντο. τὰ δὲ γράμματα τάδε ἔλεγε· Ἄνδρες Ἴωνες, οὐ ποιέετε δίκαια ἐπὶ τοὺς πατέρας στρατευόμενοι καὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα καταδουλούμενοι. ἀλλὰ μάλιστα μὲν πρὸς ἡμέων γίνεσθε· εἰ δὲ ὑμῖν ἐστι τοῦτο μὴ δυνατὸν ποιῆσαι, ὑμεῖς δὲ ἔτι καὶ νῦν ἐκ τοῦ μέσου ἡμῖν ἔζεσθε καὶ αὐτοὶ καὶ τῶν Καρῶν δέεσθε τὰ αὐτὰ ὑμῖν ποιέειν· εἰ δὲ μηδέτερον τούτων οἷόν τε γίνεσθαι, ἀλλ' ὑπ' ἀναγκαίης μέζονος κατέζευχθε ἢ ὥστε ἀπίστασθαι, ὑμεῖς δὲ ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ, ἐπεὰν συμμίσγωμεν, ἐθελοκακέετε, μεμνημένοι ὅτι ἀπ' ἡμέων γεγόνατε καὶ ὅτι ἀρχῆθεν ἡ ἔχθρη πρὸς τὸν βάρβαρον ἀπ' ὑμέων ἡμῖν γέγονε.
>
> Picking the fastest Athenian ships, Themistocles made his way around the various places where there was drinkable water and cut inscriptions on the rocks that the Ionians read on the following day when they came to Artemisium.[91] The inscriptions said the following: "Men of Ionia, it is wrong of you to fight against your ancestral line and to enslave Greece. Ideally, you should join us; if you are unable to do this, even now adopt a position of neutrality, and ask the Carians to do the same. If neither of these options is possible and you are hindered, by a compulsion too strong to resist, from deserting, deliberately fight badly in the battle, remembering that you are descended from our stock and that you were the original cause of the enmity between us and the barbarian."

88 See Ch. 3.2.

89 Contrast, for instance, the lack of any specification of the addressee in the inscription on Asychis' pyramid (μή με κατονοσθῇς πρὸς τὰς λιθίνας πυραμίδας, "Do not compare me unfavourably with the pyramids of stone", 2.136.4).

90 On this epigraphic reference, see Volkmann 1954, 63–64; West 1985, 285–287; Harris 1989, 59–60; Pritchett 1993, 159–160; Steiner 1994, 153–154; Boedeker 2000, 101–102; Bing 2002, 55 n. 34; Fabiani 2003, 165; Blösel 2004, 173–184.

91 We are probably to imagine that the same message is inscribed in different places: note the plural ἐν τοῖσι λίθοισι; this ties in well with an iterative interpretation of the present-stem forms ἐπορεύετο and ἐντάμνων. That Themistocles inscribes his message in more than one place is emphasised in Plutarch's version (*Them.* 9.2) of this episode (see Blösel 2004, 173 n. 208).

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This is Herodotus' only quotation of a Greek prose inscription.[92] While the direct address ἄνδρες Ἴωνες is typical of an orator and not of formal Greek prose inscriptions,[93] the content of the inscription (especially the attempt not to leave any loopholes) is reminiscent of inscribed oaths of allegiance to the Delian League.[94]

Whereas Themistocles relies on oral transmission when he communicates secretly with the Persian king (8.75; 8.110.2), the point of the inscriptional message to the Ionians is its publicness (8.22.3):

> Θεμιστοκλέης δὲ ταῦτα ἔγραψε, δοκέειν ἐμοί, ἐπ' ἀμφότερα νοέων, ἵνα ἢ λαθόντα τὰ γράμματα βασιλέα Ἴωνας ποιήσῃ μεταβαλεῖν καὶ γενέσθαι πρὸς ἑωυτῶν, ἢ ἐπείτε ἀνενειχθῇ καὶ διαβληθῇ πρὸς Ξέρξην, ἀπίστους ποιήσῃ τοὺς Ἴωνας καὶ τῶν ναυμαχιέων αὐτοὺς ἀπόσχῃ.
>
> Themistocles wrote this, in my opinion, with two possibilities in mind: either the inscriptions would escape the king's notice and induce the Ionians to change sides, or, if they were reported and denounced to Xerxes, they would render the Ionians untrustworthy and keep them from participating in the sea battles.

The cunning employment of an 'open' inscriptional message aimed at influencing specific groups (the Ionians) and/or a member of a specific group (Xerxes) aligns Themistocles' inscription with the inscription on Nitocris' tomb.[95] Seen against the backdrop of this similarity, the very different consequences of Themistocles' and Nitocris' messages are all the more noticeable. While Nitocris succeeds in putting Darius in a humiliating situation (though, as we have seen, at the price of the integrity of her tomb), Themistocles' attempt to make the Ionians useless for Xerxes, clever though it may be, does not meet

92 According to West, Herodotus, by presenting Themistocles' message in a direct speech introduced by τάδε (instead of the vaguer τοιάδε), professes to give a "*verbatim* report" of what "must be an imaginative reconstruction" of "Themistocles' epigraphic propaganda" – a procedure she censures as "slightly irresponsible" (1985, 286). By contrast, Kirk suggests that "Herodotus' *oratio recta* may not signal faithful copying of the inscribed text so much as the fact that *this was an utterance*" (2019, 36). Whether Themistocles did, in fact, address the Ionians in Xerxes' army in epigraphic form has been much debated (see the literature listed at Blösel 2004, 179 n. 237).

93 A personal address to the reader is attested in Greek *poetic* epitaphs and in Achaemenid inscriptions (see Bowie 2007, 113).

94 See Blösel 2004, 180, citing an inscription concerning the re-integration of Chalcis from 446/445.

95 Both Themistocles and Nitocris can be seen as trickster figures (see Dewald 2003, 44; for Herodotean trickster figures in general, see Dewald 1985, 53–55; Bencsik 1994; Wesselmann 2011, 160–196). It could be argued, though, that there is a certain contrast between Nitocris' egotistic revengefulness and Themistocles' more community-oriented motivation: while Herodotus' portrayal of Themistocles, "[t]his most slippery and inscrutable of Greek leaders" (Romm 1998, 187), is far from unambiguously positive, the stratagem of the inscriptions appears to be motivated not so much by personal motives as by the desire to further the Hellenic cause (see Fabiani 2003, 166).

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with success.[96] As becomes clear at 8.85.1, most of the Ionians do not follow Themistocles' orders to desert the Persians: ἐθελοκάκεον μέντοι αὐτῶν κατὰ τὰς Θεμιστοκλέος ἐντολὰς ὀλίγοι, οἱ δὲ πλεῦνες οὔ ("However, only a few of them complied with Themistocles' instructions and deliberately fought badly; the majority did not").

In summary, the inscription on Nitocris' tomb illustrates the power of inscriptions to trigger human action. In most instances where Herodotus refers to inscriptions, this power is only implicit in the act of narration itself (insofar as the act of reporting an inscription can be said to correspond to the most prominent intention that arguably lies behind the creation of monuments, i.e. ensuring commemoration). By contrast, the Nitocris episode features the interaction between an inscribed monument and a character. That inscriptions "say" something is nothing unusual in the *Histories* (e.g. 3.88.3; 4.91); still, it is striking that Darius is portrayed as being invited by the inscription to open the tomb and as promptly following the invitation – only to find himself reprimanded by another inscription inside the tomb. Whereas the inscriptions on the tombs of the Lydian king Alyattes and the Egyptian kings Cheops and Asychis draw attention to the efforts required for the construction of monumental tombs, the one on the outside of Nitocris' tomb is explicitly concerned with how future recipients should act when encountering this monument. By virtue of its appellative nature, the latter inscription can be compared to Themistocles' inscriptional message to the Ionians. However, whereas Themistocles' military stratagem turns out to be largely (though not completely) ineffective, Nitocris succeeds in devising a (self-destructive) 'inscriptional trap' in which Darius gets caught.

4.5 The Thermopylae Epigrams and the Politics of Memorialisation (7.228)

Having given an account of the battle of Thermopylae,[97] Herodotus turns to its commemoration. After mentioning a stone lion commemorating Leonidas (7.225.2) and

96 Incidentally, Themistocles' failed attempt to influence the Ionians contrasts not only with the success of Nitocris' inscriptional ruse but also with the Spartan commander Leotychidas' successful oral appeal to the Ionians. Instead of using writing to convey his message, he brings his ship close to the Ionian coast and has his herald address the Ionians (9.98.2–3). It might be argued that this contrast illustrates a more general opposition of the efficiency of oral communication and the inefficiency of epigraphic communication. However, Themistocles' reasoning as hypothesised by Herodotus at 8.22.3 does not seem intrinsically flawed; in other words, the inscriptional ruse might well have worked better. The episode shows that there is no guarantee that an inscribed message will be heeded by all readers, but Herodotus states that at least some Ionians do follow Themistocles' orders (8.85.1).

97 On the problems of reconstructing the battle on the basis of Herodotus' account, see Lazenby 1993, 142–148; Szemler/Cherf/Kraft 1996, 59–77. On the history of reception of the battle of Thermopylae, see esp. Albertz 2006.

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an anecdote illustrating the wit and bravery exhibited by the Spartan Dieneces (7.226), Herodotus quotes the following three epigrams (7.228.1–3):[98]

θαφθεῖσι δέ σφι αὐτοῦ ταύτῃ τῇ περ ἔπεσον καὶ τοῖσι πρότερον τελευτήσασι ἢ <τοὺς>
ὑπὸ Λεωνίδεω ἀποπεμφθέντας οἴχεσθαι, ἐπιγέγραπται γράμματα λέγοντα τάδε·
μυριάσιν ποτὲ τῇδε τριηκοσίαις ἐμάχοντο
ἐκ Πελοποννάσου χιλιάδες τέτορες.
ταῦτα μὲν δὴ τοῖσι πᾶσι ἐπιγέγραπται, τοῖσι δὲ Σπαρτιήτῃσι ἰδίῃ·
ὦ ξεῖν', ἀγγέλλειν Λακεδαιμονίοις ὅτι τῇδε
κείμεθα τοῖς κείνων ῥήμασι πειθόμενοι.
Λακεδαιμονίοισι μὲν δὴ τοῦτο, τῷ δὲ μάντι τόδε·
μνῆμα τόδε κλειτοῖο Μεγιστία, ὅν ποτε Μῆδοι
Σπερχειὸν ποταμὸν κτεῖναν ἀμειψάμενοι,
μάντιος, ὃς τότε Κῆρας ἐπερχομένας σάφα εἰδὼς
οὐκ ἔτλη Σπάρτης ἡγεμόνα προλιπεῖν.

For these men, who were buried in the place where they fell, and for those who died before the departure of the men sent away by Leonidas, there is an inscription that says the following: "Here four thousand from the Peloponnese once fought three million." That is inscribed for all of them, but for the Spartiates in particular: "Stranger, report to the Lacedaemonians that here we lie, obedient to their words." That is for the Lacedaemonians, but for the seer there is the following: "This is the monument of famed Megistias, whom once the Medes killed, when they crossed the River Spercheius, the seer, who, knowing well the death-spirits were then approaching, could not bear to abandon Sparta's chief."[99]

In view of this focus on the epigraphic commemoration of the battle of Thermopylae, I do not share Steiner's impression that "[w]riting should not hold too large a place in the

98 On Herodotus' quotation of these epigrams, none of which is extant in epigraphic form, see esp. Volkmann 1954, 56–58; West 1985, 287–289; Pritchett 1993, 160–162; Steiner 1994, 140; Fabiani 2003, 173–174; Lougovaya-Ast 2017, 114–115. Editions and further discussions of the epigrams include Bergk nos. 91, 92, and 94; Preger 1889, 6–8; *IGM* nos. 20, 21, and 200; Reitzenstein 1893, 112; Hauvette 1896, 12–13 and 42–48; Boas 1905, 1–38 and 81–83; Gragg 1912, 20–21; von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff 1913, 201 and 204–205 n. 1; *GE* nos. 102, 105, and 106; *HGE* nos. 15, 16, and 17; Wade-Gery 1933, 72–73; Friedländer 1938, 99–102; Stanford 1940; Diehl nos. 83, 91, and 92; *GVI* nos. 3, 4, and 94; Dascalakis 1962, 176–180; Kierdorf 1966, 17–22; Gauer 1968, 118–119; Philipp 1968, 30–31 and 40–45; Podlecki 1968, 257–258; 1973, 34–35; Guarducci 1969, 163–164; *EG* nos. 6, 22a, and 22b; *FGE* nos. 6, 22a, and 22b; Lausberg 1982, 123–124 and 126–129; Clairmont 1983, 222–225; Molyneux 1992, 175–185; Nickel 1995, 23–24; Gelzer 1997, 415–418; Erbse 1998, 213–222; Flower 1998, 367–368; Baumbach 2000, 7–9; Derderian 2001, 127–136; Clarke 2002, 76–77; Petrovic 2004; 2007a, 63–79 and 231–249; 2007b, 52–53 and 56–57; Albertz 2006, 49 and 57–66; Bravi 2006, 19, 44, and 53–54; Sider 2007, 122–123; Vannicelli 2007, 296–298; 2017, 581–583; Parker 2009; Baumbach/Petrovic/Petrovic 2010, 15–19; Livingstone/Nisbet 2010, 35–39; Ziogas 2014.

99 The translation is adapted from Livingstone/Nisbet 2010, 36.

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evocation of this grand example of Greek excellence".[100] To substantiate her claim that Herodotus' treatment of Thermopylae "suggests a deliberate neglect or suppression of the epigraphic record",[101] Steiner argues that Herodotus fails to mention the stele recording the names of the three hundred Spartans who stayed behind to die with Leonidas that stood beside Leonidas' tomb in Sparta.[102] It is, however, quite likely that this stele did not exist in Herodotus' time.[103] Admittedly, there is, as we have seen, evidence to suggest that Herodotus repeatedly fails to mention inscribed objects that would (at least to modern readers) seem to be relevant to his account.[104] As far as 7.228 is concerned, however, the epigraphic commemoration of the battle of Thermopylae is very much at the centre of Herodotus' attention. The series of three epigrams, which are separated from each other by short framing sentences, creates the impression that the events at Thermopylae found ample echo in the epigraphic sphere.

As we have seen, the quotation of the epigrams is preceded by mentions first of a lion statue and then of an anecdote about the Spartan fighter Dieneces. It has been argued that the epigrams

> form the climax of a triad of memorials to the battle: first the iconic statue, then the orally transmitted story, and finally the inscribed words, a lasting voice capable of telling the visitor to the battlefield directly and authoritatively about what happened there.[105]

But what did happen at Thermopylae? As it turns out, the information furnished by the epigrams is in many respects problematic.

Consider, for instance, the second epigram (ὦ ξεῖν', ἀγγέλλειν Λακεδαιμονίοις ὅτι τῇδε / κείμεθα τοῖς κείνων ῥήμασι πειθόμενοι, 7.228.2) – the most famous of the series and arguably one of the most well-known Greek epigrams in general.[106] The epigram mentions people lying dead and states that these people obeyed the Spartans – and that is it. The

100 Steiner 1994, 141.
101 Steiner 1994, 140.
102 See Steiner 1994, 141, referring to Paus. 3.14.1.
103 See Marincola 2016, esp. 230.
104 See Ch. 2, pp. 21–23.
105 Livingstone/Nisbet 2010, 37.
106 Herodotus is our earliest source for the epigram; for later quotations (e.g. Diod. Sic. 11.33.2, with πειθόμενοι νομίμοις instead of ῥήμασι πειθόμενοι at the end of the second line), see Petrovic 2007a, 245. Herodotus does not name an author; the epigram is ascribed to Simonides by Cicero (*Tusc.* 1.101) and in the *Anthologia Palatina* (7.249). For different assessments of this ascription, see e.g. *FGE* pp. 231–232 (arguing against Simonidean authorship) and Erbse 1998 (arguing for Simonidean authorship). Since Reitzenstein 1893, 112, it has usually been assumed that the Herodotean version reflects the inscribed text (see e.g. Baumbach/Petrovic/Petrovic 2010, 18; for the contrary position, see *FGE* pp. 233–234). The epigram has a long and rich history of reception, both in antiquity and beyond (see e.g. Nickel 1995; Gelzer 1997; Baumbach 2000).

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dead are not explicitly identified,[107] the manner of their death also remains vague, and the identity of the enemy and the outcome of the battle are not mentioned at all. Admittedly, the reference to the spatial context (via the deictic τῇδε) – i.e. the famous battlefield of Thermopylae – may encourage the reader to recall the historical context of the death of the people mentioned in the epigram.[108] However, what the epigram expressly expects of its reader, who is addressed at the very beginning of the epigram (ὦ ξεῖν'),[109] is something different:

> The epigram does not expect the reader to understand its message and to reconstruct a local *Erinnerungsort* at Thermopylae in the first place, but asks him/her to accomplish a mission: the reader should inform the Spartans about the obedience of the deceased.[110]

It has been argued that by encouraging the reader to act as a messenger, the epigram attempts to transcend its fixity *qua* inscribed text: "The passer-by becomes a medium for the epigram and functions as a transmitter on its way to the intended readers, the Spartans."[111] It should be noted, however, that the epigram does not actually ask the passer-by to transmit it *qua* epigram; rather, it is the content of the epigram (more precisely, the content of the ὅτι clause) that the passer-by is explicitly asked to make known in Sparta. If one accepts this distinction, the full quotation of the epigram by Herodotus turns out

107 It could be argued, however, that the statement that the dead met their end in obeying the Spartans suggests that they too were Spartans (see Baumbach/Petrovic/Petrovic 2000, 16 n. 76). Still, the dead are not explicitly identified in the epigram. Such a lack of individualisation (e.g. by means of proper names) is unusual in Greek funerary epigrams (see Baumbach 2000, 9 n. 24, referring to the epigrams collected in Peek 1960, 46–81; however, this collection includes at least some epigrams lacking, like the second epigram quoted by Herodotus, a clear identification of the dead [e.g. nos. 5 and 8]). Ziogas insists that the short and simple epigram is more ambiguous than is usually assumed (see 2014, 116) and goes on to advocate a reading of the epigram "as critique of a military code that led to the futile death of three hundred men" (117; see also Clarke 2002, 76–77). This reading is based on the contextualisation of the epigram in the *Histories* (in particular: the information that the bulk of the Spartan troops do not leave for Thermopylae before concluding the festival of the Carnea [7.206; see Ziogas 2014, 117–118]). However, it is precisely the Herodotean framing that creates serious difficulties for Ziogas' subversive reading of the famous epigram: if the epigram is considered in isolation, "the voice of the dead warriors" (118) may be perceived to have a reproachful tone, but the preceding information that the epigram is inscribed for the Spartiates (7.228.2) and above all the subsequent reference to the Amphictyony as the body responsible for the epigrams (7.228.4) do seem to favour the traditional interpretation of the epigram as an acknowledgement of the dead's selfless obedience.

108 See Baumbach/Petrovic/Petrovic 2010, 16.

109 Together with *IG* I³ 1143 (= *CEG* no. 131), our epigram is the earliest one in which the passer-by is addressed with the word ξένος alone (see Tueller 2010, 51). As Tueller points out, the use of this term can be accounted for by the fact that "the deceased are [...] buried in a foreign land, and thus would address *everyone* as ξένος" (52).

110 Baumbach/Petrovic/Petrovic 2010, 16.

111 Baumbach/Petrovic/Petrovic 2010, 17.

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to be at variance (at least to a certain extent) with the transmission of information as it is envisaged in the epigram itself. On the one hand, Herodotus can be seen in the role of the "stranger" who is addressed at the very beginning of the epigram. Whereas he does not explicitly claim autopsy of the inscribed memorials on the battlefield of Thermopylae, the way he describes them may well create the impression of autopsy.[112] The inclusion of the epigram in the *Histories* can thus be seen as evoking an encounter between a travelling Herodotus and an epigram. On the other hand, we may note that instead of informing the Spartans about the content of the ὅτι clause, as the beginning of the epigram asks any ξεῖνος who comes across it to do, Herodotus presents the whole epigram to a wider audience. What are the consequences of this approach to the epigram?

By quoting the epigram, Herodotus gives the recipients of the *Histories* the opportunity to appreciate the epigrammatic strategy of turning its readership into messengers, which can be seen as a shrewd way of dealing with the challenge of securing the dissemination of inscribed information. At the same time, the embedding of this epigram with its focus (at the beginning of the first line) on the gap between the inscribed message and its ultimate recipients invites us to engage in metahistorical reflections on the limits of epigraphic communication and on the commemorative power of Herodotus' work.

The relationship between Herodotean inscriptions and their host-text is, as we have seen on various occasions, paradoxical: by embedding inscriptions in his massive narrative work, Herodotus contributes to their dissemination, yet his doing so may raise our awareness of the potential risks of epigraphic communication and throw the importance of Herodotus' project into metahistorical relief. What makes the second of the Thermopylae epigrams particularly noteworthy in this context is the fact that the role of the reader is presented as crucial. The epigram attempts to induce the reader to make sure that a piece of epigraphically recorded information reaches a distant final recipient, but a certain risk of failure remains, and the very attempt to overcome it alerts us of this risk.

The fact that Herodotus presents the three epigrams in quick succession is in itself notable. On an admittedly small scale, this series of epigrams anticipates the Hellenistic practice of publishing collections of epigrams.[113] The arrangement of the three embedded texts creates a powerful climactic effect:

> We start with a terse and colourless tribute to a very large group; there follows the memorable, though uninformative, epigram for the select band of heroic Spartans [...]; lastly we have Simonides' memorial to his friend the Acarnanian seer Megistias, who, knowing that death was certain, nevertheless resisted Leonidas' attempts to send him away (7.221) [...].[114]

112 See e.g. Marincola 2016, 224.

113 See Petrovic 2007b, 56; Livingstone/Nisbet 2010, 39.

114 West 1985, 288. Similarly, Livingstone/Nisbet observe that the epigrams are presented as a "neat triad" (2010, 37).

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This arrangement is indicative of the creativity inherent in Herodotus' presentation of inscribed monuments; far from being a simple reflection of the epigraphic record, the epigrams as they are presented in the *Histories* are the result of a creative process.[115] An important aspect of the presentation of the Thermopylae epigrams is their framing; they are not only quoted in a certain order but also surrounded by narratorial statements. This raises the question of the relationship between these statements and the content of the epigrams they frame.

Consider, for instance, the introduction of the very first epigram, according to which this epigram has been inscribed "for these men, who were buried in the place where they fell, and for those who died before the departure of the men sent away by Leonidas" (θαφθεῖσι δέ σφι αὐτοῦ ταύτῃ τῇ περ ἔπεσον καὶ τοῖσι πρότερον τελευτήσασι ἢ <τοὺς> ὑπὸ Λεωνίδεω ἀποπεμφθέντας οἴχεσθαι, 7.228.1). The prominence of the dead in this statement arguably raises the expectation that the following epigram is to be understood as a funerary inscription, but instead of referring to the dead, the epigram itself commemorates four thousand Peloponnesians who "fought" (ἐμάχοντο, 7.228.1) – a group including those who were sent away before the last stand and thus survived.[116] What is more, "these men" (σφι, 7.228.1) arguably refers to the men mentioned in the preceding paragraph, among them the Thespian (i.e. non-Peloponnesian) Dithyrambus (7.227):

> μετὰ δὲ τοῦτον ἀριστεῦσαι λέγονται Λακεδαιμόνιοι δύο ἀδελφεοί, Ἀλφεός τε καὶ Μάρων Ὀρσιφάντου παῖδες. Θεσπιέων δὲ εὐδοκίμεε μάλιστα τῷ οὔνομα ἦν Διθύραμβος Ἁρματίδεω.
>
> The next bravest Lacedaemonians after him [i.e. Dieneces] are said to have been two brothers, Alpheus and Maron, sons of Orsiphantus. The most distinguished Thespian was a man called Dithyrambus, son of Harmatides.

In view of this statement, the focus in the epigram on the Peloponnesians to the exclusion of fighters from other places is remarkable.[117]

115 When Livingstone/Nisbet note that Herodotus "arranges them [i.e. the epigrams] in such a way that they interact *with each other* and function collectively as an artistic composition greater than the sum of its parts" (2010, 39; my italics), they also make allowance for the transformative quality of the narrativisation of epigrams. Instead of focusing exclusively on interactions between the epigrams, however, it seems best to take the framing text into account as well.

116 See *FGE* p. 232. Petrovic argues that Herodotus does not introduce the epigram as a funerary one (see 2007a, 238–239), but see the objections of Livingstone/Nisbet 2010, 38.

117 Excluded are not only the Thespians; the group of "those who died before the departure of the men sent away by Leonidas" (τοῖσι πρότερον τελευτήσασι ἢ <τοὺς> ὑπὸ Λεωνίδεω ἀποπεμφθέντας οἴχεσθαι, 7.228.1) also comprises other non-Peloponnesians (see Boas 1905, 14; *FGE* p. 232). On the issues surrounding the number of four thousand Peloponnesians that is given in the epigram, see e.g. Lazenby 1993, 134–135; Flower 1998, 367–368; Petrovic 2007a, 239–240; Vannicelli 2007, 297–298.

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The way in which Herodotus introduces the epigram has been treated as a sign of carelessness and gullibility,[118] but it may be more fruitful to approach it from another angle. In a way, the introductory statement with its focus on the dead assimilates the first epigram to the following two (clearly funerary) epigrams,[119] with which it forms, as mentioned above, a climactic sequence. A notable feature of the first two epigrams is the absence of any reference to the non-Peloponnesian warriors – an absence that contrasts with Herodotus' preceding account of the battle. While it is arguably primarily the Spartans' heroism that one immediately associates with Thermopylae,[120] there are other groups who play a considerable role in the battle as Herodotus describes it. In particular, the Thespians stand out among Leonidas' allies in that they remain willingly, whereas all the other allies either follow his orders to depart or have to be forced to stay (7.222). Herodotus clearly highlights the Thespians' valour when he juxtaposes their readiness to join Leonidas in facing death with the Thebans' unwillingness to stay (7.222): Θεσπιέες δὲ ἑκόντες μάλιστα, οἳ οὐκ ἔφασαν ἀπολιπόντες Λεωνίδην καὶ τοὺς μετ' αὐτοῦ ἀπαλλάξεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καταμείναντες συναπέθανον ("The Thespians, however, were quite willing to stay. They refused to go off and abandon Leonidas and his men; instead, they stayed and died with them"). This acknowledgement of the Thespians' valour contrasts with their absence from the epigrams quoted by Herodotus.

Admittedly, it could be argued that the exclusive focus on men from the Peloponnese in the first two epigrams is mitigated by the fact that Megistias, who is honoured in the third epigram, is an Acarnanian (as Herodotus states at 7.221) and thus of non-Peloponnesian origin. It should be noted, however, that this epigram is presented as existing thanks to Simonides' initiative; the first two epigrams, by contrast, are stated to have been inscribed on the Amphictyons' initiative (7.228.4):[121]

118 See esp. *FGE* pp. 232–233.

119 Lausberg observes that while the epigram may commemorate the battle as a whole rather than the dead, the latter are nevertheless included in the commemoration (see 1982, 127). We may still perceive a certain tension between the reference to the dead in Herodotus' introductory statement and the reference to those who fought in the first epigram, but there is at least a partial overlap of these two groups.

120 Cartledge 2006, 153–195, traces the development of the "Thermopylae legend" and discusses its status as "a key element in the European and so Western cultural tradition" (154); see also Albertz 2006.

121 In this passage, the first two epigrams, which are linked to the Amphictyony, are juxtaposed with the third one, which is linked to Simonides. However, the precise nature of these links is difficult to determine. Consider, for instance, the reference to Simonides as ὁ ἐπιγράψας. Is Simonides here named as the composer of the epigram? The expression has been understood in this way (see *EG* p. 18), but comparable instances of the verb in Herodotus (1.51.3; 1.51.4; 3.88.3; 4.88.1) suggest that the reference is not to the process of poetic composition but rather to the (responsibility for) the act of inscribing (see Erbse 1998, 214; Petrovic 2007a, 77). To be sure, this does not exclude the notion of Simonides as the composer of the third epigram (see *FGE* p. 231) – or, for that matter, of the first two epigrams as well (see Boas 1905, 12–13; Molyneux 1992, 177; Sider 2007, 123; for a different view, see *FGE* p. 231) –, but it appears that Herodotus is not, strictly speaking, referring to Simonides in his capacity as a poet.

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> ἐπιγράμμασι μέν νυν καὶ στήλῃσι, ἔξω ἢ τὸ τοῦ μάντιος ἐπίγραμμα, Ἀμφικτύονές εἰσί σφεας οἱ ἐπικοσμήσαντες· τὸ δὲ τοῦ μάντιος Μεγιστίεω Σιμωνίδης ὁ Λεωπρέπεός ἐστι κατὰ ξεινίην ὁ ἐπιγράψας.
>
> In the case of the inscriptions and the stelai, with the exception of the seer's inscription, it was the Amphictyons who honoured them [i.e. the dead]; as for the one for the seer Megistias, it was Simonides, son of Leoprepes, who inscribed it out of friendship.[122]

While Megistias' epigram invites us to consider the great number of other Greeks whose participation in the battle of Thermopylae is not honoured with an inscription, the pro-Peloponnesian bias of the first two epigrams may prompt us to think about the merits of the individual cities in the battle and elicit "simultaneous feelings of admiration for Sparta's greatness in battle and chagrin at its pettiness in refusing to recognize the accomplishments of other *poleis* at Thermopylae".[123] Consequently, the sequence of epigrams cannot simply be regarded as a confirmatory supplement to the preceding account of the battle.[124] By juxtaposing a battle narrative with the presentation of a series of inscribed memorials, Herodotus invites us to compare the two sections, and such a comparison of the epigraphic record and Herodotus' non-epigraphic narrative reveals, as we have seen, a notable tension.[125]

Even though Herodotus does not explicitly criticise the epigraphic commemoration of the battle of Thermopylae as tendentious or otherwise problematic, the discrepancy we have observed is suggestive of an implicit criticism. The potential subversiveness of Herodotus' presentation of the Thermopylae epigrams has important ramifications for the general picture of Herodotus' staging of inscriptions. Concerning the Greek world, it has been claimed that "[w]hen inscribed markers do appear, they announce the collective valor of citizens whose acts have benefited the community at large".[126] There are certainly Greek monuments that do fit this description (e.g. the chariot on the Acropolis mentioned at 5.77.4), but the pattern is not universal. The last of the three Thermopylae epigrams quoted by Herodotus, for instance, honours an individual.[127] The other two epigrams do honour collectives – but, as we have seen, in a selective and tendentious way.

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122 The translation is adapted from Livingstone/Nisbet 2010, 36–37. As always in Herodotus (and Thucydides), the term ἐπίγραμμα is used here for a metrical inscription (in Herodotus, the other occurrence is at 5.59; the Thucydidean passages are 6.54.7 and 6.59.3); on this pattern, see Puelma 1996, 123–124; Petrovic 2007a, 270–272.

123 Petrovic 2007b, 57.

124 For such a reading, see Fabiani 2003, 174.

125 Petrovic suggests that Herodotus involves "his reader [...] in a game that compares the epigrams to the narrative Herodotus supplies for them" (2007b, 56).

126 Steiner 1994, 135.

127 Of course, the epigram commemorating Megistias states that he chose not to abandon the "leader of Sparta" (Σπάρτης ἡγεμόνα, 7.228.3), and as opposed to the memorials of the Persian king Darius, it is not Megistias himself who plans his epigraphic commemoration. Clearer counter-examples

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The Herodotean series of the Thermopylae epigrams thus presents the Greek practice of setting up inscribed military memorials in an ambiguous light.[128]

4.6 Conclusion

In spite of the inclusion of potentially surprising and problematic aspects of foreign cultures that produced monumental tombs such as tumuli and pyramids, the way in which Herodotus describes these monuments does not consistently undermine the monarchs' attempts to leave behind memorials of the immense power they enjoy while alive. By including the tangible products of their determination to secure lasting fame for themselves in the text of the *Histories*, Herodotus ultimately contributes to their projects of self-memorialisation.

As for the effectiveness of inscriptions as a means of transmitting information and exerting influence, Herodotus' epigraphic references attest to the power of writing in that information presented as having been recorded by epigraphic means is passed on to the recipients of Herodotus' work. In this respect, the *Histories* function as a link in a chain of transmission of information that is presented, at least in part, as being based on writing.[129] The embedding can thus always be seen as a 'performative affirmation' of the use of inscriptions as a means of transmitting information.

It has to be admitted that it is very difficult to identify two of Herodotus' epigraphically active monarchs, Asychis and Nitocris, with attested historical figures, so the *Histories* cannot simply be seen as a faithful preservation of the actual inscribed messages of specific historical figures. My point is, however, that Herodotus readily ascribes monuments to the monarchs that have been the focus of this case study. It is the commemorative ambitions of Alyattes, Cheops, Asychis, and Nitocris as characters within the narrative world of the *Histories* that Herodotus can be said to collaborate with.

The fact that none of the inscriptions linked to royal tombs is presented as featuring a name does not contradict this observation. In the framing narrative, the monuments are always attributed to the monarchs whose memory they are meant to preserve. In this way, Herodotus saves these monarchs from oblivion. The case of Cheops' pyramid is particularly noteworthy in this context: the ascription of this monument to Cheops stands in explicit contrast to the Egyptian practice of dissociating it from Cheops and attributing it to some shepherd instead.

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to the alleged correlation between Greekness and collective orientation are the epigrams on the tripods Herodotus quotes at 5.59–61.

128 Contrast Grethlein's claim that the Greeks' practice of putting up inscriptions for commemorative purposes "appears far less ambiguous" than that of the Persians (see 2013, 199).

129 In the case of Cheops' pyramid, Herodotus draws attention to a non-written step, namely the oral transmission of the inscribed information via an interpreter.

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Herodotus' inclusion of such memorials need not, however, amount to a simple affirmation. The additional information Herodotus gives about Alyattes, Cheops, and Asychis invites us to reflect on the potentially or even obviously problematic preconditions of their – successful – attempts to use their power to immortalise themselves. Similarly, the epigrammatic commemoration of the battle of Thermopylae turns out to be tendentious once it is read against the backdrop of Herodotus' preceding account of the battle.

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Summary of Part I

Embedded inscriptions represent only a tiny proportion of Herodotus' vast narrative. At the same time, the passages in question show considerable variety. In view of this variety, the following general trend stands out all the more: Herodotus regularly establishes a link between inscriptions and the individuals or groups responsible for the construction of the monuments featuring these inscriptions. Due to these links, we can interpret the embedded inscriptions in the *Histories* as a means of characterisation. What is more, Herodotus' focus on inscribed monuments as results of epigraphic acts invites us to engage in metahistorical reflections on the relationship between epigraphic writing on the part of characters and Herodotus' work.

Inscribed funerary monuments are a case in point. At a general level, the inclusion of these monuments mirrors a crucial characteristic of Herodotus' work, namely the concern for lasting commemoration. This concern is explicitly ascribed to the Egyptian king Asychis when Herodotus notes that he "left as a memorial a pyramid made out of bricks" (μνημόσυνον πυραμίδα λιπέσθαι ἐκ πλίνθων ποιήσαντα, 2.136.3). By describing Asychis' pyramid (and quoting its inscription), Herodotus promotes the endurance of this μνημόσυνον. Such an approach to a remarkable funerary monument is in line with the aim of the *Histories* as it is stated in the proem: Herodotus presents his work "so that the things brought about by mankind do not become faded with time, and great and marvellous achievements, some presented by Greeks, some by barbarians, do not become deprived of glory" (ὡς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται, μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, τὰ μὲν Ἕλλησι, τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα, ἀκλεᾶ γένηται).

What is more, the non-Hellenocentric perspective as it is claimed in the second part of the statement just quoted is reflected in the fact that Herodotus includes both Greek and non-Greek inscribed funerary monuments. Certainly, this still leaves room for a different treatment of the use of inscriptions in funerary contexts in East and West. Is there not a striking contrast between the monuments of individual Eastern monarchs and the epigram with which the Amphictyony (i.e. a collective) honours the band of Spartans who sacrificed themselves at Thermopylae? It is hard to escape this impression altogether, but, on closer scrutiny, both the inscribed memorials of powerful non-Greek autocrats and the epigraphic commemoration of the battle of Thermopylae are staged in an ambiguous way. The conspicuous focus on certain details concerning the construction process of non-Greek memorials may draw our attention to the 'dirty' foundations of autocratic self-representation in the form of grandiose monuments, but it can also be seen as an acknowledgement that such sumptuous monuments – as opposed to the myriad of actions and objects Herodotus does *not* include in his account – are worthy of being remembered as outstanding human achievements. Conversely, the way in which the past is presented in the Thermopylae epigrams appears tendentious once they are read against the backdrop of

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his preceding account of the battle. Herodotus thus acknowledges the setting-up of both Eastern and Western examples of inscribed memorials as a noteworthy act; at the same time, the embedding of the texts on these monuments in the *Histories* sheds light on potentially problematic aspects of the monumental commemoration of the deceased.

A particularly prominent epigraphically active individual in the world of the *Histories* is the Persian king Darius. The lengthy account of Darius' accession is crowned by the mention of an inscribed relief commemorating his acquisition of the Persian throne. Later, Herodotus narrates two epigraphic acts Darius performs in the course of his Scythian campaign. In that the inscriptions set up at the Bosporus are concerned with the present, they contrast with the retrospective stance characteristic of the *Histories*. Since Herodotus narrates that the two stelai at the Bosporus do not remain intact, it is tempting to conclude that Darius' inscriptions are a foil that reveals the superiority of the retrospective stance taken by Herodotus. However, the relief commemorating Darius' accession shows that he is not consistently linked with a concern for the epigraphic recording of the present. What all of Darius' inscriptions do illustrate is his interest in self-display, and this limited commemorative focus contrasts with the comprehensiveness of Herodotus' narrative project.

The explicit remark (in the prospective imperfect) about the continued existence of the inscribed pillars on Alyattes' tomb draws attention to the potential ephemerality even of writing on stone. The fate of the inscribed stelai set up by Darius at the Bosporus provides a spectacular illustration of this danger. It has to be admitted that such a drastic and unforeseen change in the 'biography' of an inscribed monument is singular in the *Histories*, so we should be wary of generalising from this special case. That having been said, (potential) instability is clearly one aspect of the Herodotean conception of inscriptions.

By including both permanent and unstable monuments, the ambition of Herodotus' project as it is outlined in the proem appears particularly striking – if one is willing to let Herodotus have his cake and eat it too. Whereas the accounts of changeable monuments such as the stelai at the Bosporus may make Herodotus' 'literary preservation' of monumental ἔργα that happen to have withstood the ravages of time seem all the more urgent, the fragmentation of inscribed monuments does not stop Herodotus from giving a confident description of their original place and condition. Instead of offering an explicit and tentative reconstruction of Darius' epigraphic act at the Bosporus on the basis of fragmentary evidence, Herodotus narrates it without accounting for his knowledge about the stelai in their original condition. In other words, Herodotus does not just intervene in cases in which epigraphic ἔργα are in danger of becoming ἐξίτηλα; he implicitly vaunts his paradoxical ability to preserve even what is lost (at least in its original form).

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Part II:
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5 The Epigraphic Dimension of the *History*

In the course of the *History*, the following specific inscriptions are referred to: an epigram inscribed on the Plataean tripod (1.132.2), a list of cities that replaces it (1.132.3; this list is also referred to at 3.57.2, in a speech in the Plataean Debate), inscribed stelai indicating the place where Pausanias is buried (1.134.4), an addition to the inscription on the so-called Laconian stele (5.56.3), an obliterated epigram on the altar of the Twelve Gods in the Agora (6.54.7), an epigram on the altar of Apollo in the Pythian sanctuary (6.54.7), an inscription on a stele on the Acropolis (6.55.1–2), and an epigram on a tomb in Lampsacus (6.59.3).[1] In addition, there is a fairly general mention of the epigraphic commemoration of the war dead in Pericles' Funeral Oration (2.43.3).[2]

Before offering some general observations about these embedded inscriptions, I would like to consider two other aspects of the epigraphic dimension of the *History*, namely the possibility that the proem implicitly likens Thucydides' work to a monumental inscription and possible links between passages without explicit references to inscriptions and the epigraphic record.

The status of Thucydides' *History* as a written text is thrown into relief in the very first sentence (Θουκυδίδης Ἀθηναῖος ξυνέγραψε τὸν πόλεμον τῶν Πελοποννησίων καὶ Ἀθηναίων, 1.1). While the implications and hence the most adequate translation of the verb in this sentence are controversial,[3] there can be no doubt that Thucydides' work is introduced here as a written text. This "textual quality" of the *History* is, according to Moles, "reinforced by its being compared to an inscription".[4] In this connection, Moles adduces the expression ὅσοι [...] βουλήσονται [...] σκοπεῖν at 1.22.4, which, he posits, recalls "a formula used in Athenian inscriptions from the fifth century onwards: namely that the inscription is set up 'for anyone who wishes to look' (τῷ βουλομένῳ σκοπεῖν)".[5] As Moles acknowledges, the correspondence is not perfect, but he makes the fair point that "[a]llusions do not have to be absolutely identical with their original".[6] In fact, Thucydides' use of the

1 See Appendix 2; see also Bearzot 2003, 292. The list of Thucydidean inscriptions given by Zizza 1999, 3, is incomplete (as is acknowledged by Zizza 2007, 228–229 n. 47).

2 On quotations of treaty texts featuring publication clauses, which are a special case, see Ch. 8.

3 On ξυνέγραψε in the first sentence, see e.g. Loraux 1986a; Edmunds 1993, esp. 834–836; Crane 1996, 28–29; Bakker 2006, esp. 109–113.

4 Moles 1999a, 43.

5 Moles 1999a, 32. In Moles' view, Thucydides' use of this formula is "the single strongest piece of evidence" for the thesis that the *History* is presented as a monumental inscription (see 28; see also 52); for other features that might contribute to an inscriptional staging of the *History*, see esp. 45–46. Moles' thesis that ὅσοι [...] βουλήσονται [...] σκοπεῖν alludes to a formula used in Athenian inscriptions is adopted e.g. by Greenwood 2006, 9–10.

6 Moles 1999a, 32.

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future form βουλήσονται (instead of the epigraphically attested present participle) can be argued to reinforce the claim that the *History* is a work that will be relevant in the future.[7]

That having been said, the implications of the formula potentially alluded to by Thucydides' ὅσοι [...] βουλήσονται [...] σκοπεῖν at 1.22.4, namely τῷ βουλομένῳ σκοπεῖν, merit closer scrutiny. To begin with, it should be noted that only five inscriptions featuring it are extant from fifth- and fourth-century Athens: *IG* I^3 60; 133; 140; 1453g; II^2 487.[8] This limited number of attestations does not exclude the possibility of an allusion to this formula on Thucydides' part; after all, many further examples may simply have been lost. Still, we should be wary of assuming that we are dealing with a prominent aspect of Athenian epigraphic culture that would therefore suggest itself as an implicit point of reference.[9]

Secondly, there is the issue of the precise implications of σκοπεῖν. As for the occurrence of this word at 1.22.4, Moles asks rhetorically: "what exactly is the recipient of Thucydides' work supposed to be 'looking at', if not at a text and its contents?"[10] However, the extent to which σκοπεῖν in the Athenian formula – the only context in which it is attested epigraphically[11] – reflects a concern for the dissemination of the content of a text (as Moles seems to assume) is difficult to determine. Does σκοπεῖν indicate a perception of the inscribed monument as an object that is there to be seen but not necessarily read?[12] This interpretation of σκοπεῖν has met with criticism,[13] and there is one intriguing case in which, as we shall see, the formula occurs in a context that does suggest a concern for the reception of the content of a text (*IG* II^2 487). Still, it should be noted that the formula is not only rare but also ambiguous in terms of the type of situation of reception envisaged. Consequently, the potential implications of an allusion to this formula by Thucydides are by no means evident.

Thirdly, and most importantly, there is the issue of the material of the object the formula refers to. According to Moles, Thucydides' use of the expression ὅσοι [...] βουλήσονται [...] σκοπεῖν at 1.22.4 draws on, among other things, the notion of epigraphic

7 As Greenwood notes (see 2006, 133 n. 43), the use of the future would tie in well with Moles' emphasis on the wide temporal range of the *History* (see 1999a, 59 and 68; 2001, esp. 206–207).

8 See Hedrick 1999, 411–412; 2000. The formula is attested almost exclusively in Athenian inscriptions. The main exception is an inscription from Halisarna on Cos (*LSCG* no. 173, c. 200; as Hedrick notes, though, this inscription features merely an approximation of the formula, namely σκοπεῖν τῷ χρήζοντι [see 2000, 131]). Another inscription found outside Attica, namely in Oropos (*LSCG* no. 69, dating from either 411–402 or 386–377), has been explained by Athenian influence (see 131).

9 The formula has certainly received considerable attention in scholarship on Athenian inscriptions, but this is due to its (apparent) emphasis on the divulging of information, which plays an important role in the debate about the relationship between democracy and the Athenian epigraphic habit (see e.g. Hedrick 1999, esp. 411–413; Sickinger 2009, esp. 88–90).

10 Moles 1999a, 43.

11 See Hedrick 2000, 127.

12 See Thomas 1989, 51 (note, though, the subsequent relativisation).

13 See Immerwahr 1992, 97.

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permanence.[14] However, as far as extant inscriptions are concerned, the relationship between the formula σκοπεῖν τῷ βουλομένῳ and the publication of a text on a durable material such as stone is complicated.[15] In two of the fifth-century examples, *wooden* objects are mentioned in the vicinity of the formula (wooden boards at *IG* I³ 60.30–31; a wooden tablet at *IG* I³ 133.10–11).[16] Consequently, it seems that the formula, while preserved due to its having been carved on stone, actually applies to documents that were only temporarily displayed.[17]

This can be illustrated not only with inscriptions dealing with financial matters (such as *IG* I³ 60 and 133) but also (at least indirectly) with *IG* II² 487 (dating from 304/303), an inscription honouring one Euchares for having arranged the display of certain laws "for anyone who wishes to see" (σκοπεῖν [τῶ]ι βουλο[μένω]|ι, lines 8–9). As in the examples mentioned above, the formula does not refer to the extant inscription itself but to some other text. What makes *IG* II² 487 particularly interesting is the juxtaposition of "for anyone who wishes to see" (referring to the display of the laws arranged by Euchares) with another formula that does refer to the extant honorary inscription: the latter has been erected, we read, ὅπως [ἂν] οὖν ἡ βουλὴ [φα]|ίνηται ἀξίαν χάρι[ν] ἑκάστωι [[ς]] ἀ[πο]|διδοῦσα τῶν πεφιλοτιμημένων ("so that the Boule may appear to return appropriate thanks for benefits rendered", lines 10–12).[18] Whereas the display of the laws for which Euchares is honoured is presented as a means of making them known (μηδὲ εἷς ἀγν[ο]εῖν τοὺς τῆς [πό]|λεως νόμους, lines 9–10), the statement referring to the honorary inscription itself "implies", as Hedrick observes, less a concern for the dissemination of information than "a symbolic conception of the inscription".[19] As for the material used for displaying the laws, which is not specified in the extant text of the honorary inscription, the occurrence

14 See Moles 1999a, 41–42.

15 Moles is not the only one to presuppose that the formula refers to the monuments on which it has been preserved (see e.g. Thomas 1989, 51). In a follow-up article to his 1999 article, Moles acknowledges his previous unawareness of the epigraphic problem (see 1999b, 110).

16 See Hedrick 2000, 130. The assessment of the third fifth-century example, *IG* I³ 1453g, which lacks any potential mention of the object(s) to which the formula refers, is more difficult. According to Hedrick, the assumption that the account in question "was written up on a wooden plaque" is "not fanciful" (2000, 130); similarly, Sickinger states that "nothing stands in the way of seeing the phrase modifying a wooden document" (2009, 90). This does not amount to a positive proof of an association of the formula with wooden documents in *IG* I³ 1453g, but neither does *IG* I³ 1453g contradict the hypothesis that the formula is *not* applied to documents on *stone*. *IG* I³140 features both a reference to a stone stele ([ἐν | σ]τέλει λιθ[ίνει], lines 2–3) and the formula, but since the latter occurs several lines later than the former, namely in lines 7–8, it has been suggested that the mention of the stele is part of a statement stipulating the erection of the extant inscription, whereas the formula applies to some other document (see Hedrick 2000, 130–131). On such an interpretation, the materiality of this other document would not be specified in the extant fragment (just like in the case of *IG* I³ 1453g).

17 According to Robertson, the phrase is "regularly used of a temporary display at an accessible place" (1990, 47); see also Wilhelm 1909, 285.

18 The translation is from Hedrick 2000, 128.

19 Hedrick 2000, 128.

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of a form of the verb ἐκτίθημι (ἐκτε[θῶσι] in line 6) may provide a clue: this verb is "typically used to describe the 'setting out' of texts on wooden boards".[20] Consequently, there is at least a fair chance that the use of materials for the display of texts as it is implied in the honorary inscription for Euchares corresponds to the pattern observed above.

To conclude, we should distinguish between the impermanent documents to which the formula σκοπεῖν τῷ βουλομένῳ is (at least sometimes) clearly applied and the stones on which we can still read the formula.[21] That having been said, we may still regard the Thucydidean expression ὅσοι [...] βουλήσονται [...] σκοπεῖν at 1.22.4 as an echo of epigraphic language in the sense that it occurs on extant stone objects and thus implicitly aligns the *History* with monumental inscriptions. In that Moles draws attention to the role of evocations of the epigraphic sphere for the fashioning of Thucydides' work, his contribution is an important stimulus for the present study. As opposed to his focus on potential inscriptional associations of programmatic statements, however, the following case studies will be mainly concerned with the implications of those passages where specific inscribed objects are explicitly referred to.

Especially in view of the "multitude of inscriptions – both in Athens and in other Greek cities – which were historically relevant for the period between 479/8 and 404 BC",[22] the very limited degree to which inscriptions are 'visible' in the *History* seems noteworthy. It could be argued, of course, that the presence of inscriptions in Thucydides' work is not based exclusively on the small number of explicit references to specific inscribed objects that have been listed above (and on the not substantially greater number of quotations of treaties). Scholars have identified passages that can at least be assumed to be based on epigraphically recorded information. It is conceivable, for instance, that the description of the one-hundred-year treaty at 3.114.3 is based on an inscribed version of the treaty.[23]

Thucydides may well have made more extensive use of epigraphically recorded information than the very limited number of references to specific inscribed objects suggests. Such a tacit use of inscriptions constitutes an important difference between Thucydides' way of presenting information and modern historiographical practice. To a certain

20 Hedrick 2000, 129, adducing *IG* II² 1237 and Andoc. 1.83, where we find the expression ἐν σανίσιν ἐκτιθέντων as part of a quotation of the decree of Tisamenus; on ἐκτίθημι, see also Wilhelm 1909, 285–286. It should be noted, however, that the interpretation of Andoc. 1.83 is controversial (for a discussion of various interpretative problems raised by it, see Moles 1999b, 114–121).

21 The importance of such a distinction is also underlined by Sickinger 2009, 90.

22 Smarczyk 2006, 497.

23 Rhodes 2007, 58, mentions this passage as a possible instance of Thucydides' reliance on "documents". To take another example, the *History* contains various references to the Thirty Years' Peace of 446/445, but Thucydides does not include a quotation of the terms of this treaty, which was published in epigraphic form (Pausanias 5.23.4 refers to a copy of the treaty on a bronze stele in Olympia). Instead, the terms of the peace have to be inferred from various sections of the narrative (see Smarczyk 2006, 498, listing 1.23.4; 1.35.1–2; 1.40.2; 1.78.4; 1.87.6; 1.115.1; 1.140.2; 1.145; 4.21.3; 7.18.2 [see his n. 9]). A somewhat different form of the tacit use of an inscription might be observable at 1.13.6: the dactylic rhythm of the expression Ῥήνειαν ἑλὼν ἀνέθηκε has been taken to suggest that Thucydides' brief account of the capture of the island of Rheneia and its dedication to Apollo is based on a dedicatory epigram (see Sieveking 1964, 171; *CT* I 47).

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extent, this lack of transparency could be compensated by the existence of a general methodological statement concerning the use of inscriptions, but the *History* does not feature such a statement.[24]

What the *History* does offer is a number of explicit references to inscribed objects, and it is to these epigraphic references that I now turn. Compared to the corpus of Herodotean inscriptions, there are both similarities and differences. Arguably the most obvious parallel with Herodotus' corpus of inscriptions is the Plataean tripod, which is, after all, also mentioned in the *Histories* (8.82.1; 9.81.1).[25] At a more general level, we may observe that in both works, it is usually stated or at least implied what type of object the epigraphic text is inscribed on, where the object was/is located and to what individual or group it can be linked. Thanks to this association with certain (groups of) people and on the basis of further information contained in the framing text, the inscriptions can also be assigned to certain periods in time. The inscriptions referred to by Thucydides invariably predate the beginning of the Peloponnesian War; they belong to a time period (spanning from the archonship of Pisistratus the Younger [probably 522/521][26] to the death of Pausanias [after c. 470][27]) that is clearly separated from the main narrative.

Compared to the inscriptions we encounter in Herodotus' *Histories*, those referred to by Thucydides are markedly less diverse in terms of provenance and linguistic character. Roughly half of the Herodotean inscriptions are non-Greek (in the sense that they are ascribed to members of other ethnic groups, situated in regions beyond mainland Greece, and stated or at least implied to be written in foreign languages and scripts).[28] By contrast, Thucydides exclusively refers to inscriptions in Greek set up by Greeks; moreover, with the exception of the funerary epigram for Archedice in Lampsacus (located on the eastern side of the Hellespont in the northern Troad), they are all located in mainland Greece.

The rare cases in which inscribed objects are referred to are mostly confined to the Pausanias excursus (1.128–134) and the Pisistratid excursus (6.54–59). In both sections, Thucydides deals with the (more or less remote) past. The former is set in the aftermath of the defeat of the Persians in 479, and with the account of how the tyranny of the Pisistratids in Athens comes to an end, Thucydides even ventures into the late sixth century. It is tempting to account for this observation in terms of research possibilities: "inscriptions are more appropriate evidence for the past than for the present, where personal inquiry and research offer superior guidance".[29] However, in view of this potential role of inscriptions in reconstructing the past, it bears emphasising that Thucydides

24 In view of the lack of "general statements about the different sources Thucydides used", Smarczyk doubts that "he considered the systematic value of inscriptions as a specific type of source, or he developed valid methodological rules for the assessment of inscriptions or documentary sources in general" (2006, 512).

25 For Herodotus' treatment of this inscribed object, see Ch. 2, pp. 26–27.

26 See Arnush 1995, 135–138.

27 See White 1964, 152 (suggesting the year 467/466); Rhodes 1970, 399.

28 See p. 31 n. 91.

29 Hornblower 1987, 90–91; see also Zizza 1999, 14; Bearzot 2003, 295; Rhodes 2007, 59; *CT* III 446–447.

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repeatedly deals with non-contemporary Greek history without making even the most passing reference to epigraphic material.[30] From a modern perspective, the "total neglect of epigraphical evidence"[31] in the Archaeology is particularly conspicuous.

As for those cases where specific inscriptions are referred to, we may note that there is no unequivocal claim of autopsy. What Thucydides does offer is some information about the physical context of the inscriptions he refers to; he notes, for example, that the epigram on Archedice is located on her tomb in Lampsacus (καὶ αὐτῆς σῆμα ἐν Λαμψάκῳ ἐστὶν ἐπίγραμμα ἔχον τόδε, 6.59.3).[32] The fact that Thucydides comments on the condition of the lettering of the epigram on the altar of Apollo (6.54.7) has often been regarded as a clear indication of autopsy, and the close correspondence between the partially preserved inscription and Thucydides' rendering makes such a scenario seem all the more plausible.[33] At least in the case of Pausanias' erased epigram (1.132), however, autopsy can be ruled out.[34] If nothing else, this shows that autopsy was not a necessary condition for the presence of an embedded inscription in the *History*.

30 Apart from the biographical sketch of Pausanias and the account of the events surrounding the fall of the Pisistratids, Thucydides treats non-contemporary events in the so-called Archaeology (1.2–19), the account of the *Pentekontaetia* (1.89–117), the biographical sketch of Themistocles (1.135–138), and the brief account of the Greek colonisation of Sicily (6.2–5). On Thucydides and earlier Greek history, see Tsakmakis 1995; Alonso-Núñez 2000 (both with further references).

31 Smarczyk 2006, 512. Hornblower refers to the dactylic formulation at 1.13.6 as a "partial and concealed exception" (*CT* III 446); see p. 92 n. 23.

32 Concerning the epigrams quoted by Thucydides, Petrovic argues that the fact that their location is specified excludes the possibility that these quotations are based on an epigrammatic collection (see 2007a, 256–266).

33 However, the precise meaning of the comment is by no means clear; for a discussion of Thucydides' presentation of this epigram, see Ch. 7.1, pp. 127–129.

34 See Smarczyk 2006, 503.

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6 The Plataean Tripod and the Funeral Oration: Exploring the Power of Epigraphic Commemoration

The Plataean tripod plays an important role in Thucydides' account of the last years of the Spartan regent Pausanias, where it features as the carrier medium for two very different inscriptions: a boastful epigram inscribed at Pausanias' instigation is replaced by a list of the Greek cities that contributed to the defeat of the Persians. Later in the *History*, the latter is referred to by the Plataeans, who evoke it in a desperate attempt to prevent the Spartans from destroying their city. Whereas the changing inscriptions on the Plataean tripod and the Plataeans' appeal to this monument draw attention to the importance of epigraphic commemoration, Pericles' Funeral Oration juxtaposes the fixity of inscribed memorials for the war dead with a form of commemoration that does not depend on monumental writing.

6.1 Pausanias and the Plataean Tripod (1.132)

The first clear references to inscribed objects in Thucydides' *History* occur in the excursus on the last years of the Spartan regent Pausanias (1.128–134).[1] According to Westlake, this excursus is notable for having a "Herodotean flavour"[2] – a flavour he explains by hypothesising that Thucydides drew on a (lost) Ionian work.[3] However, this "Herodotean flavour" may also point to an engagement with the *Histories* themselves.

1 For a bibliography on this excursus, see Pothou 2009, 166–168; see also Patterson 1993; Tsakmakis 1995, 132–139 and 145–148; Munson 2012, 250–256.

2 Westlake 1977, 95, noting, among other things, its anecdotal quality. See also Carawan 1989, 144. On the differences between the Pausanias excursus and the rest of the *History*, see also Rhodes 1970, 387 (but see 400); Meiggs 1972, 465; *CT* I 211.

3 See Westlake 1977, 96. The problem is that "[t]here appears to be no evidence that any author whose name has survived and who was [...] a predecessor of Thucydides wrote an account of the events leading to the eclipse and death of Pausanias" (107). What can be said, then, about Thucydides' putative written source? Westlake ends his discussion of the issue with the claim that "[i]t is undeniable that Thucydides might have derived from Charon most of the source-material for his excursus" (109), but he also notes that the author of Thucydides' source "could well have been one of his many predecessors or older contemporaries who are even more nebulous than Charon" (110). For Parker, by contrast, it is virtually certain that in the Pausanias excursus, Thucydides "was practically copying" the work of Charon (see 2005, 3). The usefulness of speculations about the identity of the author of the work on which Thucydides presumably drew for his treatment of Pausanias is questioned by Hornblower (see *CT* I 211).

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One 'macroscopic' parallel between Herodotus and Thucydides concerns the introduction of Athens and Sparta by means of biographical sketches of a great citizen of each city. Thucydides' digressions on the Spartan Pausanias and the Athenian Themistocles thus correspond to Herodotus' account of the Spartan Lycurgus (1.65) and the Athenian Pisistratus (1.59–64).[4] I would like to focus on a different feature of the Pausanias excursus that is paralleled in Herodotus' work, namely the occurrence of references to specific inscribed objects.

The first inscribed monument explicitly referred to in the *History* is the thank-offering dedicated in Delphi by the Greek cities that defeated the Persians, i.e. the Plataean tripod.[5] We have already encountered this monument in Herodotus' *Histories*: at 8.82.1, Herodotus notes that the Tenians "were inscribed in Delphi on the tripod among those who had defeated the barbarian" (ἐνεγράφησαν [...] ἐν Δελφοῖσι ἐς τὸν τρίποδα ἐν τοῖσι τὸν βάρβαρον κατελοῦσι). Thucydides states that "the Lacedaemonians inscribed by name all the cities that had joined in overthrowing the barbarian and set up the dedication" (οἱ Λακεδαιμόνιοι [...] ἐπέγραψαν ὀνομαστὶ τὰς πόλεις ὅσαι ξυγκαθελοῦσαι τὸν βάρβαρον ἔστησαν τὸ ἀνάθημα, 1.132.3). So far, we may only note a slightly different focus: whereas Herodotus says nothing about the Spartan responsibility for the inscription, Thucydides does not single out the Tenians.

Much more notable, however, is another difference. In the *History*, the reference to the list of cities is preceded by the quotation of another inscription on the Plataean tripod (1.132.2):[6]

> τά τε ἄλλα αὐτοῦ ἀνεσκόπουν, εἴ τί που ἐξεδεδιήτητο τῶν καθεστώτων νομίμων, καὶ ὅτι ἐπὶ τὸν τρίποδά ποτε τὸν ἐν Δελφοῖς, ὃν ἀνέθεσαν οἱ Ἕλληνες ἀπὸ τῶν Μήδων ἀκροθίνιον, ἠξίωσεν ἐπιγράψασθαι αὐτὸς ἰδίᾳ τὸ ἐλεγεῖον τόδε·
>
> Ἑλλήνων ἀρχηγὸς ἐπεὶ στρατὸν ὤλεσε Μήδων,
> Παυσανίας Φοίβῳ μνήμ' ἀνέθηκε τόδε.

4 See Hornblower 1987, 33.

5 This is not the text-bearing object mentioned in the Pausanias excursus, which also features an exchange of letters between Pausanias and the Persian king: Thucydides quotes a letter sent by Pausanias to Xerxes (1.128.7) and Xerxes' answering letter (1.129.3); furthermore, he paraphrases another letter sent by Pausanias to Xerxes (1.132.5). On this correspondence, which I shall briefly discuss later in this chapter, see Ceccarelli 2013, 138–140 (with further literature).

6 On Thucydides' quotation of this epigram, which is not extant in epigraphic form, see esp. *CT* I 218–219; Steiner 1994, 135–136; Crane 1996, 14 and 205–206; Zizza 1999, 5–6 and 17–18; Smarczyk 2006, 503; Sheppard 2018, 28. Editions and further discussions of the epigram include Bergk no. 138; *IGM* no. 84; Hauvette 1896, 58–59; Lanzani 1903, 235–238; von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff 1913, 197; *GE* no. 103; *HGE* no. 27; Diehl no. 105; Fornara 1967, 291–294; Meister 1971; *EG* no. 17; *FGE* no. 17a; ML no. 27; Molyneux 1992, 198; Steinhart 1997, 53; Higbie 1999, 62; 2010, 183–184; Rausch 1999, 144; Aloni 2001, 99; Rutherford 2001, 41; Kowerski 2005, 78–79; Bravi 2006, 68–70; Petrovic 2007a, 267–272; 2010, 202–203; Stephenson 2016, 79–88. Thucydides is our earliest source for the epigram; for later quotations, see Petrovic 2007a, 267. It is ascribed to Simonides by Pausanias the Periegete (3.8.2) and in the *Anthologia Palatina* (6.197); on the question of Simonidean authorship, see Petrovic 2007a, 270–272.

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> They [i.e. the Spartiates] reviewed both the various other ways in which he [i.e. Pausanias] had changed his way of life from established customs and the fact that once, on the tripod at Delphi which the Greeks dedicated as first fruits from the Medes, he presumed on his own initiative to have the following couplet inscribed: "Ruler of the Greeks, after he had destroyed the army of the Medes, Pausanias dedicated this memorial to Phoebus."

The quotation of Pausanias' epigram is immediately followed by the information that it exists in this form only for a limited period of time (1.132.3): τὸ μὲν οὖν ἐλεγεῖον οἱ Λακεδαιμόνιοι ἐξεκόλαψαν εὐθὺς τότε ἀπὸ τοῦ τρίποδος τοῦτο ("Now at the time the Lacedaemonians immediately erased this couplet from the tripod").[7] The statement about the erasure of the epigram "from the tripod" seems straightforward enough, but the original location of the epigram remains, in fact, unclear.[8] The implications of Thucydides' wording for the chronology of the epigraphic interventions he mentions have also been debated. While it has been argued that this reaction did not take place until after Pausanias' trial (i.e. after his second return to Sparta),[9] the expression εὐθὺς τότε does appear to imply that it was erased very soon after being inscribed.[10] In any case, it is clear that the original epigram had long disappeared by Thucydides' time. In other words, Thucydides cannot have had direct access to Pausanias' inscription. Instead, it must have lived on independently of its original epigraphic recording.[11]

7 Thucydides' account involves two inscriptions, Pausanias' epigram and the list. By contrast, Diodorus mentions neither of these inscriptions but quotes a different epigram (see pp. 106–107 n. 43).

8 According to one theory, the epigram was inscribed on the cauldron supported by the tripod legs (see Frick 1859, 529; Stephenson 2016, 2). By contrast, the fact that Thucydides does not explicitly state that the replacement involved a change of position has been taken to indicate that the original inscription was placed on the same part of the monument as the extant list, i.e. on the column (see Dethier/Mordtmann 1864, 22). On the basis of the observation that the thirteenth coil from the bottom (i.e. the one that is now inscribed with the heading of the list of cities) is thinner than the neighbouring ones, Dethier/Mordtmann assume that Pausanias' epigram was inscribed on this coil (see 23–24). However, it can be objected that we should not expect the coils to be of exactly the same thickness (see Fabricius 1886, 182 n. 12). Finally, various scholars have suggested that the epigram was written on the stone base of the column (see e.g. Fabricius 1886, 182; Poulsen 1920 [1919], 201; *HCT* I 434). For the identification of a limestone fragment found in Delphi as part of the original base, see Laroche 1989; for a brief history of scholarly attempts to identify the base, see Stephenson 2016, 17–19. Regarding the theory that the epigram was on the base, Page notes that "[i]t seems to be taken for granted that Thucydides was not expressing himself carefully; what he says (twice) is that the inscription was *on the tripod*, not on the snake-column or on the pedestal" (*FGE* p. 216 n. 1), but the possibility that the term τρίπους was used to refer to the whole monument has to be reckoned with (see Gauer 1968, 83; Amandry 1987, 112 n. 65).

9 See Fornara 1967, 291–294. Gomme dates the second return to 473 at the latest (see *HCT* I 397).

10 See Trevett 1990, 410–411; Kapparis 1999, 378.

11 See Zizza 1999, 6, noting that the inscription became part of oral and/or written tradition. Without offering an argument, Bearzot asserts that a written source is more likely than oral transmission (see 2003, 294). By contrast, Petrovic plausibly suggests that the epigram, which can be assumed to have quickly achieved notoriety thanks to its indecent content, circulated orally (see 2007a, 270); he also

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It has been suggested that the fact that the epigram had ceased to exist in epigraphic form helps account for its being quoted by Thucydides, who (it is surmised) wanted to conserve it.[12] This cannot be excluded, though it should be noted that the corpus of Thucydidean inscriptions, small as it is, includes a clear counterexample. In the Pisistratid excursus, Thucydides states that the altar of the Twelve Gods in the Agora used to bear an inscription identifying it as a dedication by Hippias' son Pisistratus that was, however, obliterated in the course of its lengthening at a later point (6.54.7).[13] As in the case of the original inscription on the thank-offering in Delphi, Thucydides refers to an epigram that is presented as having been obliterated. But as opposed to Pausanias' epigram, the epigram on the Athenian altar is *not* quoted. It could be argued that this difference in treatment can be accounted for by the greater notoriety of Pausanias' boastful epigram, which may appear more interesting and hence particularly worthy of written preservation. At the same time, it is precisely the wide oral diffusion of Pausanias' epigram that makes a secondary recording in writing seem less urgent than in the case of Pisistratus' dedicatory epigram.[14] In any case, the fact that the latter is not quoted speaks against an antiquarian disposition as a defining characteristic of Thucydides' approach to inscriptions.

As mentioned above, the epigram on the Plataean tripod is quoted in the course of Thucydides' excursus on the latter part of the life of Pausanias. Even if the precise implications of the use of the term ἀρχηγός (1.132.2) remain, as we shall see, unclear, there can be no doubt that Pausanias claims for himself the decisive role in the fight against the Persians. The embedding of such an epigraphic assertion of importance is reminiscent of some Herodotean passages such as the episode of Darius' sojourn at the Tearus, but what sets the Thucydidean passage apart is the focus on text-internal interpreters of epigraphic activities. In the Tearus episode in Herodotus' *Histories*, no reaction to the setting-up of Darius' boastful inscription is recorded. By contrast, the quotation of Pausanias' self-laudatory epigram is part of Thucydides' report about the Spartans' assessment of Pausanias' behaviour. When the Spartans hear about Pausanias' adoption of Persian ways, they recall him (1.131). There is no "clear evidence" (φανερὸν [...] σημεῖον, 1.132.1) of Pausanias' treachery – "yet by his flouting of convention and his imitation of the barbarians he had furnished many reasons to suspect that he did not want to be limited to his existing circumstances" (ὑποψίας δὲ πολλὰς παρεῖχε τῇ τε παρανομίᾳ καὶ ζηλώσει τῶν βαρβάρων μὴ ἴσος βούλεσθαι εἶναι τοῖς παροῦσι, 1.132.2). It is in this context that Pausanias' inscription on the Plataean tripod is referred to (1.132.2):

points out that the designation of the poem as ἐλεγεῖον suggests oral transmission: in contrast to ἐπίγραμμα (6.54.7; 6.59.3), which is reserved for metrical inscriptions, ἐλεγεῖον describes the metrical form of a text without implying that it exists in epigraphic form (see 270–271).

12 See Bearzot 2003, 293.

13 On this inscription, see Ch. 7.1, pp. 124–129.

14 As Petrovic notes, the fact that Pausanias' epigram is quoted, in different versions, in a relatively high number of texts suggests a wide dispersion (see 2007a, 270).

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> τά τε ἄλλα αὐτοῦ ἀνεσκόπουν, εἴ τί που ἐξεδεδιήτητο τῶν καθεστώτων νομίμων, καὶ ὅτι ἐπὶ τὸν τρίποδά ποτε τὸν ἐν Δελφοῖς, ὃν ἀνέθεσαν οἱ Ἕλληνες ἀπὸ τῶν Μήδων ἀκροθίνιον, ἠξίωσεν ἐπιγράψασθαι αὐτὸς ἰδίᾳ τὸ ἐλεγεῖον τόδε.
>
> They [i.e. the Spartiates] reviewed both the various other ways in which he had changed his way of life from established customs and the fact that once, on the tripod at Delphi which the Greeks dedicated as first fruits from the Medes, he presumed on his own initiative to have the following couplet inscribed.

After quoting the epigram and noting its replacement by the list of cities, Thucydides focuses once more on the Spartans' being engaged in the interpretation of Pausanias' epigraphic activity (1.132.3):

> τοῦ μέντοι Παυσανίου ἀδίκημα καὶ τότ'[15] ἐδόκει εἶναι, καὶ ἐπεί γε δὴ ἐν τούτῳ καθειστήκει, πολλῷ μᾶλλον παρόμοιον πραχθῆναι ἐφαίνετο τῇ παρούσῃ διανοίᾳ.
>
> Yet even then it [i.e. the inscribing of the epigram] seemed a crime on Pausanias' part, and now that he was in this position it appeared much more to have been done in accord with his present attitude.

Although the assessment of Pausanias' epigraphic intervention as an ἀδίκημα is arguably set in the temporal vicinity of the inscribing of the epigram (as opposed to the time when the Spartans review Pausanias' past behaviour), Thucydides does not explicitly state that this assessment causes the erasure, and the mention of the assessment of Pausanias' epigraphic intervention follows the information that the epigram is erased. Nevertheless, even without a more specific description of how the decision to erase the epigram is made, it seems natural to assume that it is motivated by a negative evaluation of the epigram.[16]

But in what respect exactly can Pausanias' epigraphic act be regarded as problematic? In Thucydides' rendering of the Spartans' review of their regent's past behaviour, much emphasis is placed on the fact that he acted entirely on his own initiative (αὐτὸς ἰδίᾳ, 1.132.2).

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15 Stuart Jones and most other editors adopt Struve's τότ' (substituting the transmitted τοῦτ'; see Struve 1820, 772). It has been objected that such an emendation deprives the sentence of its subject (see Herbst 1892 I, 44; see also Fornara 1967, 291–294, and Kapparis 1999, 379, for further defences of the transmitted text). The usual solution is to assume that the action described at 1.132.2, i.e. τὸ ἐπιγράψασθαι ἰδίᾳ τὸ ἐλεγεῖον, is to be understood as the subject (see e.g. Classen/Steup 1919, 341). It has also been suggested to emend the text to <τότε> τοῦτ' (see *HCT* I 434; adopted by Luschnat 1960).

16 Higbie, for instance, is convinced that "the cities who banded together to turn back Xerxes were outraged when Pausanias, king of Sparta, claimed for himself on the inscription at Delphi all of the glory for having chased the Persians from Greece and did not acknowledge the Greek cities over whom he had command" (2010, 184). A different assessment of the objectionable character of Pausanias' epigraphic act is offered by Hornblower, who observes that "[a]ssertive personal dedications in sacred surroundings were slow to win respectability" (*CT* I 218). On the strictures on private dedications by military leaders, see Rausch 1999, 144.

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This self-centredness, which can also be seen in the text of the inscription, contrasts with the status of the Plataean tripod as a joint thank-offering (ἀκροθίνιον, 1.132.2) on the part of the Greek coalition that defeated the Persians. In itself, the reference to the tripod "which the Greeks dedicated as first fruits from the Medes" (ὃν ἀνέθεσαν οἱ Ἕλληνες ἀπὸ τῶν Μήδων ἀκροθίνιον, 1.132.2) may seem inconspicuous, and the collaboration of the Greek cities is not explicitly emphasised; nevertheless, there is a contrast between the identification of the tripod as a dedication by "the Greeks" and the strong emphasis on Pausanias' freelancing.[17]

Personal dedications are repeatedly attested for Spartan commanders in the fifth century,[18] but the (few) examples that have been adduced in this context hardly indicate that Pausanias' appropriation of the Greek thank-offering would have been perceived as unobjectionable. Consider, for instance, the case of a certain bronze bowl allegedly dedicated by Pausanias at the Bosporus. Herodotus only mentions it in passing without saying anything of an inscription (4.81.3), but Athenaeus (drawing on Nymphis of Heraclea, who wrote in the third century) gives a more detailed account that includes a quotation of the dedicatory epigram (Ath. 536a–b = Nymphis 432 F 9 *FGrH*). It is true that Nymphis says nothing of a Spartan reaction to this epigraphic intervention; in fact, he explicitly notes that the epigram is still extant. At the same time, this epigraphic act, which involves a usurped (!) memorial, is presented as an example of how the Spartan regent departs from Spartan customs. Consequently, the episode narrated by Nymphis can hardly serve as evidence for the normality of Pausanias' behaviour. Moreover, it should be noted that as opposed to the Plataean tripod, the bowl is not a thank-offering from spoils of war.

Thucydides' focus is on the Spartans' interpretation of the episode of Pausanias' epigram in view of his "present attitude". The mention of Pausanias' imitation of Persian ways in the context of the Spartans' review of his behaviour (1.132.2) recalls the fairly detailed mention of various examples of the regent's Medising tendencies earlier in the narrative (1.130.1–2):

> σκευάς τε Μηδικὰς ἐνδυόμενος ἐκ τοῦ Βυζαντίου ἐξῄει καὶ διὰ τῆς Θρᾴκης πορευόμενον αὐτὸν Μῆδοι καὶ Αἰγύπτιοι ἐδορυφόρουν, τράπεζάν τε Περσικὴν παρετίθετο καὶ κατέχειν τὴν διάνοιαν οὐκ ἐδύνατο, ἀλλ' ἔργοις βραχέσι προυδήλου ἃ τῇ γνώμῃ μειζόνως ἐς ἔπειτα ἔμελλε πράξειν. δυσπρόσοδόν τε αὐτὸν παρεῖχε καὶ τῇ ὀργῇ οὕτω χαλεπῇ ἐχρῆτο ἐς πάντας ὁμοίως ὥστε μηδένα δύνασθαι προσιέναι.

17 Kahrstedt has claimed that all the spoils from Plataea belonged to Pausanias and that it was entirely up to him what to do with them (see 1922, 190–191), but both Herodotus' description of the distribution of the spoils after the battle (9.70.3; see Gauer 1968, 30) and the Thucydidean relative clause quoted above suggest otherwise.

18 See Gauer 1968, 93, who adduces a bronze bowl dedicated by Pausanias to Poseidon at the Bosporus (Hdt. 4.81.3), an inscription that names Brasidas and the Acanthians as the dedicators of a treasury (Plut. *Lys.* 1; *De Pyth. or.* 15), and a dedication by Lysander from the spoils of Aegospotami (Paus. 10.9.7); see also Asheri 2006, 285.

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> He would go forth from Byzantium wearing Median garb, Medes and Egyptians formed a bodyguard for him as he proceeded through Thrace, he had a Persian table set for himself, and he was unable to contain his pretensions but gave away by minor actions what he was resolved to do in the future on a grander scale. He made himself difficult of access and displayed such a harsh temper to everyone alike that no one could approach him.

Pausanias' taking up of this type of behaviour is linked with his correspondence with the Persian king. Having received a letter from Xerxes, Pausanias "had then become much more conceited and could no longer bear to live in the conventional manner" (πολλῷ τότε μᾶλλον ἦρτο καὶ οὐκέτι ἐδύνατο ἐν τῷ καθεστῶτι τρόπῳ βιοτεύειν, 1.130.1); further letters are mentioned at 1.128.6 and 1.132.5. We can observe, then, that it is via written messages that Pausanias communicates with the Persian king: "Along with the trappings of royal rule, he [i.e. Pausanias] also enters the network of written relations favored by the Eastern monarchs."[19] As for the use of writing to assert his crucial role in the fight against the Persians, however, it seems questionable whether it is the act of dedicating an object by means of an inscription that assimilates him with Eastern monarchs in their role as writers. What is more, it should be noted that while Pausanias' use of an inscription for self-aggrandisement is not tolerated by the Spartans, their reaction does not imply a general opposition to writing. After all, they do not simply erase Pausanias' offensive inscription but replace it with a different one. In other words, the Spartans avail themselves of the same strategy as Pausanias.

Even in the absence of explicit comments on how the two inscriptions featuring in the tripod episode differ, some contrasting aspects are hard to miss: a pithy epigram that one-sidedly extols the Spartan regent's role as leader of the Greeks is replaced with a non-metrical list that seems to reflect a view of the Persian defeat as a joint achievement of an alliance of Greek cities. By contrast, Pausanias' tendency to act on his own behalf without giving any heed to the aims and needs of his city, Sparta, is repeatedly emphasised in Thucydides' account. At the beginning of the excursus devoted to him, Thucydides relates how Pausanias undertakes a naval mission "in a private capacity" (ἰδίᾳ, 1.128.3) and "without authorisation from the Lacedaemonians" (ἄνευ Λακεδαιμονίων, 1.128.3). Similarly, the inscribing of the boastful epigram is clearly described as an instance of self-serving freelancing (ἠξίωσεν ἐπιγράψασθαι αὐτὸς ἰδίᾳ, 1.132.2). This tendency to act in his own interest is reflected in the text of his epigram on the Plataean tripod.

In this epigram, which has struck many readers as "arrogant",[20] Pausanias is called Ἑλλήνων ἀρχηγός (1.132.2); the context suggests that this refers to his role as commander of the Greek forces. At 1.130.1, Thucydides notes that Pausanias is honoured greatly by the Greeks "because of his leadership at Plataea" (διὰ τὴν Πλαταιᾶσιν ἡγεμονίαν),[21] and at

19 Steiner 1994, 136.

20 Molyneux 1992, 198; Rutherford 2001, 41; see also Kowerski 2005, 79.

21 A striking example of Pausanias' glory is Herodotus' statement that the Spartan regent "Pausanias, son of Cleombrotus, son of Anaxandridas, won the most glorious victory of any known to us"

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1.94.1, Pausanias is referred to as "commander of the Greeks" (στρατηγὸς τῶν Ἑλλήνων). Nevertheless, the designation of Pausanias as ἀρχηγός is conspicuous.[22] After all, the word can be used to designate the position of an absolute ruler.[23] Does the epigram reflect such a self-image of Pausanias? This would, in fact, tie in well with the information about Pausanias' aspirations to be the ruler of all of Greece (1.128.3).

It has been argued that the epigram does not contain an unambiguous claim on Pausanias' part to be responsible for the victory against the Persians. Translating "Pausanias, Captain-general of the Hellenes, dedicated this monument to Phoebus when he destroyed the army of the Medes", Barron asserts: "The ambiguity – who destroyed the Medes? – was no doubt intended."[24] However, in the first verse, the focus is entirely on Pausanias, who is the subject of the main clause. The subject of the temporal clause is not expressed. Theoretically, Phoebus, whose name occurs in the dative in the main clause, could be understood to be the subject of the temporal clause. On the other hand, the fact that the temporal clause is sandwiched between Ἑλλήνων ἀρχηγός and Παυσανίας (1.132.2) strongly suggests that Pausanias is to be understood as its subject.

At any rate, the presence of Pausanias' epigram on the thank-offering provokes a radical intervention, namely its erasure. While Thucydides appears to imply that the Spartans erase the epigram on their own initiative (1.132.3), Apollodorus states that the Spartans are compelled to do so by the other allies ([Dem.] 59.98):[25]

> ὀργισθέντων δὲ τῶν Ἑλλήνων, οἱ Πλαταιεῖς λαγχάνουσι δίκην τοῖς Λακεδαιμονίοις εἰς τοὺς Ἀμφικτύονας χιλίων ταλάντων ὑπὲρ τῶν συμμάχων, καὶ ἠνάγκασαν αὐτοὺς ἐκκολάψαντας τὰ ἐλεγεῖα ἐπιγράψαι τὰς πόλεις τὰς κοινωνούσας τοῦ ἔργου.
>
> The Greeks were furious, and the Plataeans, on behalf of the allies, brought a prosecution against the Lacedaemonians before the Amphictyons for one thousand talents, and compelled them to erase these verses and inscribe the names of the cities which had taken part in the undertaking.[26]

(νίκην ἀναιρέεται καλλίστην ἁπασέων τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν Παυσανίης ὁ Κλεομβρότου τοῦ Ἀναξανδρίδεω, 9.64.2).

22 See Petrovic 2007a, 269.

23 Consider, for instance, Eur. *IT* 1303, where the word is used of Thoas. It can be used to designate the supreme position not only in the human realm but also among gods: at Bacchyl. 5.179, it refers to Zeus; on the parallelism between the position of kings and gods in Greek political imagery, see Brock 2013, 1–24. Petrovic claims that the word usually designates a colony founder and in particular Apollo in this capacity (see 2007a, 269). Given that Apollo is named in the epigram, an Apollinian connotation of the term for Pausanias' position seems plausible, and one might wonder whether Pausanias casts himself as an Apollo-like figure. However, it should be noted that the Pindaric passage adduced by Petrovic as evidence of the use of ἀρχηγός of Apollo as a colony founder (*Pyth.* 5.60) actually contains a different noun, namely ἀρχαγέτας.

24 Barron 1988, 617.

25 Text and translation (adapted) are from Kapparis 1999.

26 That the inscription was unacceptable for the allies is also stated explicitly by Plutarch (*De Herodoti malignitate* 873C).

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That the matter was brought before the Amphictyony seems plausible,[27] but the high sum of one thousand talents has been regarded as implausible.[28] However, as Kapparis observes, it was never paid:

> This was the timema in the indictment presented by the Plataians to the Amphictyony; however, the dispute never came to trial since the Lacedaemonians complied and erased the epigram.[29]

Apart from the characteristic failure to mention any involvement of the Amphictyony,[30] Thucydides' account differs from Apollodorus' in the way in which Pausanias is portrayed:

> Thucydides depicts Pausanias as a vain and over-ambitious maverick at odds with his city, whilst Apollodoros represents him as seeking to further the interests of Sparta, and as acting in an official capacity.[31]

In a sense, then, Thucydides' account of the controversy about Pausanias' epigram is rather apolitical.[32] At the very least, however, the information that it is deemed necessary to erase Pausanias' boastful inscription suggests that it is regarded as having some form of special power. At the same time, the episode shows that one aspect that may contribute to the communicative power of publicly displayed inscribed objects, namely their permanence, cannot be taken for granted: inscribing a text does not guarantee its preservation even for the immediate future. However, Pausanias' epigram lives on as a part of Thucydides' work; physical stability and communicative effect are not necessarily linked. As far as Pausanias and the Spartans are concerned, the potential impermanence of monumental inscriptions does not seem to limit their appeal as commemorative media. Thucydides' account of the changing inscriptions on the Plataean tripod rather suggests that the epigraphic publication of a text is in itself a significant and potentially memorable

27 According to Bonner/Smith, the affair was "a religious matter which was international in its scope" and hence fell under the purview of the Amphictyony (see 1943, 2; see also Trevett 1990, 410).

28 See Trevett 1990, 410; Petrovic 2010, 203 ("somewhat suspicious").

29 Kapparis 1999, 379.

30 On Thucydides' tendency to minimise the role played by Delphi in Greek affairs, see Hornblower 1987, 81–83.

31 Trevett 1990, 409; the differences between the two accounts are also emphasised by Fornara 1967. By contrast, Kapparis argues that the two accounts are not incompatible (see 1999, 378–379).

32 The additional information Apollodorus gives about the incident may well be accurate, and Thucydides' omission of details regarding the procedure through which the Spartans were forced to erase the epigram may be accounted for by his focus on the Spartans' review of their regent's past behaviour: "the information that the Lacedaemonians retrospectively came to associate the incident of the erasure of the epigram with more recent allegations against Pausanias would be adequate for his [i.e. Thucydides'] purposes" (Kapparis 1999, 379).

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act. Still, the impermanence of Pausanias' epigram as an inscribed text can be seen as a metahistorical foil that underlines the *History*'s claim to permanence.

The epigram on the Plataean tripod is certainly the most prominent link between Pausanias and an inscribed monument that is established in the *History*, but it is not the only one. Having narrated at some length how Pausanias is hunted down by the ephors and dies and that he is, after being buried somewhere else, in the end transferred to the place of his death, the sanctuary of the Goddess of the Bronze House (1.134.1–3),[33] Thucydides notes (1.134.4): καὶ νῦν κεῖται ἐν τῷ προτεμενίσματι, ὃ γραφῇ στῆλαι δηλοῦσι ("and he now lies in the area before the precinct, as inscribed stelai indicate"). Brief as it may be,[34] this mention of the stelai marking Pausanias' tomb[35] contrasts with the chaotic movements Pausanias' dead body is subjected to before it is finally buried in the area before the precinct of the Goddess of the Bronze House (1.134.3–4):

> καὶ μέλλοντος αὐτοῦ ἀποψύχειν ὥσπερ εἶχεν ἐν τῷ οἰκήματι, αἰσθόμενοι ἐξάγουσιν ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἔτι ἔμπνουν ὄντα, καὶ ἐξαχθεὶς ἀπέθανε παραχρῆμα. καὶ αὐτὸν ἐμέλλησαν μὲν ἐς τὸν Καιάδαν [οὗπερ τοὺς κακούργους] ἐσβάλλειν· ἔπειτα ἔδοξε πλησίον που κατορύξαι. ὁ δὲ θεὸς ὁ ἐν Δελφοῖς τόν τε τάφον ὕστερον ἔχρησε τοῖς Λακεδαιμονίοις μετενεγκεῖν οὗπερ ἀπέθανε (καὶ νῦν κεῖται ἐν τῷ προτεμενίσματι, ὃ γραφῇ στῆλαι δηλοῦσι).
>
> When they [i.e. the ephors] learned that he was about to expire, right inside the chamber, they brought him out of the temple still breathing, and as soon as he was brought out he died. And they were going to throw him into the Caeadas ravine, but then it seemed best to bury him somewhere nearby. But the god in Delphi later ordained that they transfer his tomb to the place where he died (and he now lies in the area before the precinct, as inscribed stelai indicate).

In view of the 'volatility' of dead Pausanias, statements about his current whereabouts appear precarious, so the epigraphic confirmation mentioned by Thucydides seems welcome. But does the mention of the inscribed stelai amount to irrefutable proof?[36] Especially in view of the impermanence of Pausanias' self-aggrandising inscription on the Plataean tripod as it clearly emerges from the preceding account of the Spartan regent's epigraphic intervention (1.132.2–3), such an assessment seems problematic. After all, this episode clearly shows that inscriptions need not reflect the reality (or, at least, a commonly

33 Pausanias the Periegete notes that the tomb of the Spartan regent is opposite the theatre in Sparta (3.14.1). There seem to be no traces of the tomb today (see Frazer 1965 III, 224), but Dodwell, who toured Greece at the beginning of the nineteenth century, mentions "[a] fine sepulchral chamber of a square form" (1819 II, 404).

34 There is, for instance, no information about the exact number of stelai or the form of the text(s) they bear.

35 On this epigraphic reference, see Steiner 1994, 136; Crane 1996, 188–189; Higbie 1999, 62; Zizza 1999, 6–7; Smarczyk 2006, 503–504.

36 For such a reading, see Zizza 1999, 7.

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accepted version of how certain events transpired); Pausanias' epigram is clearly not irrefutable proof of his role as the sole architect of the victory over the Persians.

Since the inscribed stelai are only briefly referred to in their capacity as markers of the place where Pausanias is buried, they do not shed light on the regent's character in the way the inscription on the Plataean tripod does. They do, however, illustrate the assessment of Pausanias on the part of his fellow Greeks: in spite of his offensive actions, he is, in the end, granted a proper burial. What is more, the detail that the burial takes place in obedience to an oracle of Apollo enhances the sense of a post-mortem rehabilitation of Pausanias.[37]

To conclude, Pausanias' use of epigraphic writing in the episode about the Plataean tripod is presented as (having been perceived as) problematic, and there is a contrast between his unauthorised and egotistical epigraphic intervention and the (presumably) officially sanctioned setting-up of stelai marking his tomb. Precisely because inscriptions feature in both episodes, however, the excursus does not suggest a particularly close link between epigraphic writing and transgressive behaviour. Whereas Pausanias uses the epigram to claim a special role for himself and thus to set himself apart from the community, the funerary stelai mentioned in the final section of the excursus attest to his rehabilitation.

6.2 The Appeal to the Plataean Tripod in the Plataean Debate (3.57)

The Plataean tripod is not only mentioned in the context of the Spartans' investigations into suspicious activities of their regent; it is also referred to in the course of the Plataean Debate (3.52–68).[38] The speech the Plataeans deliver in this debate is a fascinating instance of the reception of an inscribed monument in the context of an 'international' political debate in times of war.

In 427, the scarcity of food forces the Plataeans to hand over the city to the Spartans (3.52). The judges from Sparta ask the Plataeans what good things they have done for Sparta "in the present war" (ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ τῷ καθεστῶτι, 3.52.4). The Plataeans evade this question and instead make an appeal to the past, specifically the Persian Wars. This appeal fails to sway the Spartans: in the end, Plataea is razed (3.68).

The futility of the Plataeans' rhetorical efforts did not stop at least one ancient reader of the *History*, namely Dionysius of Halicarnassus, from praising the speech in the highest

37 As Flower observes, "it was Delphic Apollo who insisted on honorific burial for Pausanias at the site of his death and on expiation of the curse the Spartans had incurred through their treatment of him" (2006, 27). Allen suggests that "Pausanias's eventual return to the temple doorstep was also his reinstatement as a member of the city" (2000, 218).

38 On the Plataean Debate, see e.g. Hogan 1972; Macleod 1983; Erbse 1987; Crane 1996, esp. 104–106 and 170; Debnar 1996; 2001, 125–146; Price 2001, 103–126; Grethlein 2012; Nichols 2015, 68–74; Yunis 2015.

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terms: for him, no finer speech can be found in the *History* (*On Thucydides* 42). Modern assessments tend to be less enthusiastic: the speech is often noted for its lack of rhetorical sophistication,[39] and it is not difficult to spot some contradictions;[40] Hornblower harshly comments that by the end of their speech, the Plataeans "have almost started to gabble".[41] This section of the *History* raises various interpretative issues; in the context of the present study, the most remarkable aspect of the speech is the fact that it not only abounds in references to past deeds but also features an appeal to an inscribed memorial that preserves the Plataeans' merits in the Persian Wars, namely the Plataean tripod (3.57.2):[42]

> δεινὸν δὲ δόξει εἶναι Πλάταιαν Λακεδαιμονίους πορθῆσαι, καὶ τοὺς μὲν πατέρας ἀναγράψαι ἐς τὸν τρίποδα τὸν ἐν Δελφοῖς δι' ἀρετὴν τὴν πόλιν, ὑμᾶς δὲ καὶ ἐκ παντὸς τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ πανοικεσίᾳ διὰ Θηβαίους ἐξαλεῖψαι.
>
> It will be judged a terrible thing if the Lacedaemonians sack Plataea and if your fathers inscribed the city on the tripod at Delphi for valour but you erase it from the whole Greek world to the last house because of the Thebans.

The reference to the Plataean tripod is brief but, as I hope to show, well worth a close examination. Having predicted that the sacking of their city would cause an outrage, the Plataeans contrast the inclusion of their city on the list on the tripod with the imminent destruction of Plataea. Although no explicit causal relationship between the epigraphic activity in the past and the rest of the sentence is established, it seems clear that the epigraphic presence of the city on the tripod is adduced as the reason why the Spartans would be wrong to destroy it.

The inscription on the memorial is presented as an acknowledgement of the Plataeans' valour by the Spartans in the aftermath of the Persian Wars. Instead of citing or paraphrasing the statement introducing the list of cities,[43] the Plataeans simply claim that

39 See e.g. Macleod 1977, 230–231; Price 2001, 105. For more positive assessments of the rhetorical quality of the speech, see Hogan 1972, esp. 249; Debnar 2001, esp. 136.

40 Grethlein observes, for instance, that the Plataeans invoke νόμος "both to justify the killing of the Theban captives and to argue that the Plataeans, now themselves captives, should be spared" (2012, 60; see also Macleod 1977, 233).

41 *CT* I 446.

42 On this epigraphic reference, see Smarczyk 2006, 504; Grethlein 2012, 61 and 71–74; Bruzzone 2015, 296–297; Pavlou 2017, 133–141.

43 According to a widely accepted reconstruction: το[ίδε τὸν] | πόλεμον [ἐ]||πολ[έ]μεον (see p. 26 n. 58). This is a very general way of describing the achievement of the Greek cities. However, it may have been the case that the list of names was framed not only by this short and unspecific heading but also by the presence of an epigram transmitted (only) by Diodorus, who does not mention either Pausanias' epigram or the list of cities (11.33.2 [cited from Oldfather 1946]): Οἱ δ' Ἕλληνες ἐκ τῶν λαφύρων δεκάτην ἐξελόμενοι κατεσκεύασαν χρυσοῦν τρίποδα, καὶ ἀνέθηκαν εἰς Δελφοὺς χαριστήριον τῷ θεῷ, ἐπιγράψαντες ἐλεγεῖον τόδε, Ἑλλάδος εὐρυχόρου σωτῆρες τόνδ' ἀνέθηκαν, / δουλοσύνης στυγερᾶς ῥυσάμενοι πόλιας ("The Greeks, taking a tenth part of the spoils, made a gold tripod and set it up in Delphi as a thank-offering to the God, inscribing on it the following couplet: 'This is the

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their city was inscribed on the monument for valour. It is on the basis of this alleged principle governing the epigraphic act they mention that the Plataean speakers can now adduce the memorial as evidence of the Plataeans' valour in the Persian Wars. As we can see, then, the Plataeans' emphasis on the tripod as a testimony of the valour displayed by their city in the Persian Wars is shaped by the argumentative context. It should also be noted that the Plataeans do not shy away from exaggerating the role their city played in the Persian defeat.[44] As far as the inscription on the tripod is concerned, however, the way in which the Plataeans adduce it hardly involves a serious distortion of the view of it that seems to be implicit in its mention in the Pausanias excursus (1.132.3).[45]

By adducing a past act of inscribing (ἀναγράψαι), the Plataeans try to prevent the Spartans from erasing (ἐξαλεῖψαι, 3.57.2) their city – not from the tripod but from the world. The verb ἀναγράφω is used with reference to an inscription (as the expression ἐς τὸν τρίποδα makes clear); by contrast, the verb ἐξαλείφω, "the proper word for erasing a name or a sentence from a public record",[46] is modified here by the expression ἐκ παντὸς τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ and thus refers in a drastic way to the looming destruction of the city of Plataea, which is presented as all the more scandalous in view of the presence of this city

gift the saviours of far-flung Hellas upraised here, / Having delivered their states from loathsome slavery's bonds'"). According to Fabricius, the list of cities was merely a supplement to this epigram, which constituted the actual dedicatory inscription (see 1886, 181). Commemorating the "saviours of Greece", this epigram would support the Plataeans' (in itself plausible) interpretation of the act of inscribing the cities on the monument as an acknowledgement of valiant behaviour in the fight against the Persians. Now, this passage is the only attestation of the epigram, and the reliability of Diodorus' quotation is difficult to assess. Page claims that Diodorus' statement does not sit easily with Thucydides' account at 1.132, according to which Pausanias' epigram was replaced by a list of cities, not a new epigram (see *FGE* p. 216). However, such an omission is not inconceivable (see Fabricius 1886, 181; Gauer 1968, 94 n. 417). It could be argued that both the new epigram and the list contrast with Pausanias' individualistic epigram (consider, for instance, the plural form σωτῆρες in the new epigram), so it is not as obvious as Fabricius and Gauer suggest that Thucydides should omit it. Nevertheless, Fabricius and Gauer are right to point out that its absence from Thucydides' account does not indicate its non-existence.

44 At 3.54.3, they make the grand claim that Plataea was the only city in Boeotia to resist the Persians. With such a statement, the Plataeans ignore the commitment of another Boeotian city, namely Thespiae (Hdt. 7.132.1 and 202; 8.50.2): "they forget the Thespians in order to make the point" (Macleod 1977, 230).

45 The same is true of the first mention of the Plataean tripod in Herodotus' *Histories*. Herodotus narrates that the Tenians are included on the list because one Tenian ship deserted the Persian fleet and confirmed the news that the entire Greek camp was encircled by Xerxes' ships. Admittedly, Herodotus does not describe this action in evaluative terms; the expression he uses is διὰ [...] τοῦτο τὸ ἔργον (8.82.1). Nonetheless, the passage suggests that the Tenians' inclusion is an acknowledgement of their contribution to the Greek victory over the Persians.

46 *HCT* II 343; see also Culasso Gastaldi 2003, 258. In the examples given by Fischer 2003, 247, the act of ἐξαλείφω is associated with texts written on wood, but Lys. 30.21 shows that the verb can also be used with reference to the erasure of texts on durable materials (in this case, stelai; see Robertson 1990, 55 n. 39). As for our Thucydidean passage, the Plataean speakers clearly picture the impending destruction of their city against the backdrop of the notion of the Plataean tripod as a permanent inscribed memorial.

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on the tripod. From the Plataeans' perspective, the epigraphic testimony of valour should guarantee the persistence of the city.

Later in their speech, the Plataeans warn the Spartan judges (3.58.2): βραχὺ γὰρ τὸ τὰ ἡμέτερα σώματα διαφθεῖραι, ἐπίπονον δὲ τὴν δύσκλειαν αὐτοῦ ἀφανίσαι ("To destroy our bodies is the act of a moment, but it will be laborious to obliterate the infamy resulting from it"). Just like the impending destruction of Plataea in the former passage, the enduring infamy that will, according to the Plataeans, result from an unjust judgment on the part of the Spartans is described with a verb that can be applied to inscriptions (among other things).[47] The Plataeans entertain the possibility that they will suffer at the hands of the Spartans, but they predict that such a behaviour, which will involve the erasure of their city (ἐξαλεῖψαι, 3.57.2), will give rise to an infamy that the Spartans will not easily be able to obliterate (ἀφανίσαι, 3.58.2).[48]

The thank-offering in Delphi is not the only monument from the time of the Persian Wars that is adduced by the Plataeans: towards the end of their speech, they mention the tombs at Plataea. Not only are these tombs relics from the past that happen to have survived, but they are also at the centre of continuing commemorative activities (3.58.4).[49] The Plataeans encourage their Spartan audience to look at these tombs (ἀποβλέψατε γὰρ ἐς πατέρων τῶν ὑμετέρων θήκας, 3.58.4), which "embody the continuity from the Persian Wars to the present on which the Plataeans' argument hinges".[50]

The degree to which the Plataeans draw on the time of the Persian Wars is remarkable.[51] Moreover, references to the past are repeatedly linked with explicit mentions of the acts of remembering and reminding. The Plataeans define the goal of their speech as "reminding" their audience of the history of their city (ὑπόμνησιν ποιησόμεθα, 3.54.1); complementarily, they say that it is "not proper to forget" how the Plataeans supported the Spartans in the Third Messenian War (οὐκ εἰκὸς ἀμνημονεῖν, 3.54.5) and call upon the Spartans "not to forget" the oaths sworn by their forefathers (μὴ ἀμνημονεῖν, 3.59.2); finally, they "remind" the Spartans that Plataea and Sparta fought side by side in the battle of Plataea (ἀναμιμνήσκομεν, 3.59.2). It is also worth noting that one of the two

47 The verb ἀφανίζω is used with reference to an inscription at 6.54.7 (see Ch. 7.1, pp. 123–124).

48 It must be conceded that at 3.58.2, the Spartan's future infamy is immediately juxtaposed with the Plataeans' impending execution (τὰ ἡμέτερα σώματα διαφθεῖραι), but the mention of the latter corresponds to the preceding mention of the impending destruction of Plataea (τὴν πόλιν [...] ἐξαλεῖψαι, 3.57.2).

49 The tombs are also mentioned at 3.59.2. Debnar suggests that "the judges may have been able to see these graves" (2001, 134), which were, according to Pausanias, located near the entrance to Plataea (9.2.5). On the reference to the tombs, see also Pavlou 2017, 141–148.

50 Grethlein 2012, 61.

51 As Hornblower observes, the speech "circles endlessly round the theme of the Plataians' stand on behalf of Greece at a time when Thebes medized" (*CT* I 445). On the prominence of the theme of the Persian Wars in the Plataeans' speech, see also Bruzzone 2015, 293.

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Plataean speakers is the Spartan *proxenos* Lacon, son of Aeimnestus (3.52.5), i.e. 'Always to be Remembered'.[52]

What makes the Plataeans' focus on past events especially remarkable in the narrative context of the Plataean Debate is the fact that it does not correspond to the task the Spartans have set for the Plataean speakers (3.52.4):

> ἐλθόντων δὲ αὐτῶν κατηγορία μὲν οὐδεμία προυτέθη, ἠρώτων δὲ αὐτοὺς ἐπικαλεσάμενοι τοσοῦτον μόνον, εἴ τι Λακεδαιμονίους καὶ τοὺς ξυμμάχους ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ τῷ καθεστῶτι ἀγαθόν [τι] εἰργασμένοι εἰσίν.
>
> On their [i.e. the Lacedaemonian judges'] arrival, no accusation was brought forward, but they summoned them [i.e. the Plataeans] and asked just this, whether in the present war they had done any service to the Lacedaemonians and their allies.

Instead of giving a direct answer to this question, the Plataeans ask for permission to speak at greater length (3.52.5). In the course of the debate, the discrepancy between the Spartans' brief question and the Plataeans' extended speech is repeatedly underlined.[53] Having listened to the speeches of the Plataeans (3.53–59) and the Thebans (3.61–67), the Spartans simply repeat their original question (3.68.1):

> αὖθις τὸ αὐτὸ ἕνα ἕκαστον παραγαγόντες καὶ ἐρωτῶντες, εἴ τι Λακεδαιμονίους καὶ τοὺς ξυμμάχους ἀγαθὸν ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ δεδρακότες εἰσίν, ὁπότε μὴ φαῖεν, ἀπάγοντες ἀπέκτεινον καὶ ἐξαίρετον ἐποιήσαντο οὐδένα.
>
> They [i.e. the Lacedaemonian judges] again brought them [i.e. the Plataeans] in one by one and asked them the same question, whether they had done the Lacedaemonians and their allies any service during the war; when they said they had not, they took them away and slew them, and they made no exceptions.

Within the framework imposed by the Spartans, then, the Plataeans' attempt to strengthen their position by adducing the evidence of the Plataean tripod (or, indeed, by drawing on any past achievements) is doomed to failure.[54]

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52 As Bruzzone points out, this name "sends the most pointed message about remembrance, particularly because its bearer belongs to the generation at risk of being forgotten" (2015, 294). Bruzzone reads the Plataeans' unsuccessful attempt to sway their Spartan judges as "a study on an important symptom of wartime morality, the rejection of [...] [the] duty to honor the past" (290).

53 The Plataeans highlight the brevity of the Spartans' question at 3.54.2, and the Thebans in their counter-speech repeatedly draw attention to the (exceeding) length of the Plataeans' speech (3.60; 3.61.1; 3.67.6).

54 As Macleod notes, "the Plataeans' defence is all irrelevant as indeed is the Thebans' prosecution; the 'brief question' – concerned only with Sparta's immediate interests, which coincide with Theban vindictiveness – makes both superfluous" (1977, 242). On the irrelevance of the Plataeans' arguments in the context of the "mock trial" held by the Spartans, see also Price 2001, 105.

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According to Grethlein, the Plataeans' use of inscriptional imagery in describing the looming destruction of their city draws metahistorical attention to the impermanence of inscriptions, which thus appear as a negative foil to Thucydides' work.[55] It could be objected that in the passage in question (3.57.2), a clear distinction is drawn between the list of cities, which was inscribed in the past (and is still extant when the debate takes place), and the impending destruction of Plataea: the Spartans' fathers (τοὺς μὲν πατέρας) are juxtaposed with the Spartan judges (ὑμᾶς δέ), the past act of inscribing the city on the tripod (ἀναγράψαι ἐς τὸν τρίποδα τὸν ἐν Δελφοῖς) with its impending erasure from the Greek world (καὶ ἐκ παντὸς τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ πανοικεσίᾳ [...] ἐξαλεῖψαι), and the recognition of the Plataeans' valour (δι' ἀρετήν) with the aim of pleasing the Thebans (διὰ Θηβαίους).[56] From the Plataeans' perspective, the imminent destruction of their city is strictly *contrasted* with the past act of inscribing the Plataean tripod. On the other hand, the occurrence of ἐξαλεῖψαι in the context of a mention of the tripod as an inscribed artefact may suffice to remind us of the episode from Book 1. The verb used for the erasure of the inscription in Book 1 is not the same one as in the Plataean debate (ἐξεκόλαψαν [1.132.3] instead of ἐξαλεῖψαι [3.57.2]),[57] but the occurrence of the latter verb in the context of a clear reference to the Plataean tripod, i.e. the very monument at the centre of the tripod episode in Book 1, may remind us that the 'biography' of the Plataean tripod as a carrier medium for inscriptions has been turbulent. While the list of cities to which the Plataeans appeal is still extant when they make their speech, it replaced another inscription, namely Pausanias' epigram, which conveyed a different picture of the Greek victory over the Persians.

Seen against this backdrop, the contrast between the Plataean tripod and the notion of erasure, obvious as it may seem when the passage from Book 3 is considered in isolation, is undermined. Whereas the Plataeans apparently intend to draw on the tripod as a stable source of authoritative information about their brave support of the Greek cause in the Persian Wars, this very same monument can also be seen as a prime example of the malleability of epigraphic commemoration. Emphasising the latter aspect, Grethlein concludes that Thucydides offers a metahistorical contrast between the tripod *qua* illustration of the impermanence of epigraphic records and his own account (with its claim to permanence).[58]

It is certainly fruitful to read the Plataeans' appeal to the Plataean tripod against the backdrop of the episode about this monument in Book 1, and it is striking that the very first inscription Thucydides quotes in the course of his work is erased soon after being

55 See Grethlein 2012, 73.

56 On this "bitter and moving antithesis", see Macleod 1977, 235.

57 The only other occurrence of a form of ἐξαλείφω is at 3.20.3, where it refers to the whitewashing of walls (ᾗ ἔτυχε [...] οὐκ ἐξαληλιμμένον τὸ τεῖχος).

58 See Grethlein 2012, 73.

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inscribed. This conveys an awareness of the potential fragility of inscriptions,[59] and for the aim of preserving information for the future, such a fragility must be conceived of as a serious problem.

However, it could also be argued that precisely in view of the potential impermanence of inscriptions in general and the spectacular case of Pausanias' epigram in particular, the stability and authority of the list of cities is all the more remarkable. After all, the episode about the changing inscriptions on the Plataean tripod illustrates how an individualistic inscription that is unacceptable to the community is replaced by a less individualistic one. The fact that the latter is not in its turn erased suggests that the picture of the Greek resistance it conveys is deemed acceptable. Seen in this way, the status of the tripod as an example of epigraphic malleability could even be said to buttress the Plataeans' argument. The Spartans, who quickly intervene in the case of Pausanias' epigram, acknowledge the role of Plataea in the Persian defeat by including this city on the list that replaces the offensive epigram, and Plataea is not deleted from this list in the subsequent decades. This attests to a continuing acknowledgement of the Plataeans' merits in the Persian Wars. The implication is that erasing Plataea from the face of the earth, although it has not been erased from the list, would be a grave mistake indeed.

Of course, we should not forget that the argumentative efforts of the Plataeans come to nought in the end. The Spartans are not impressed by the epigraphic acknowledgement of the Plataeans' past merits. However, this does not mean that the specific inscribed object the Plataeans choose to mention, i.e. the Plataean tripod, somehow turns against them. As opposed to Pausanias' boastful epigram, the epigraphic record of the Plataeans' contribution to the defeat of the Persians has endured; consequently, the reference to the Plataean tripod contributes in a significant way to the (unsurprisingly positive) picture the Plataeans attempt to draw of the achievements of their city.

Both Pausanias' epigram and the Plataeans' speech offer accounts of the past that are then countered by differing accounts of the past. By incorporating competing inscriptions and competing speeches, the *History* offers a greater breadth of perspectives than Pausanias' epigram alone or the Plataeans' speech alone. In this sense, it may come across as a superior form of approaching the past.[60]

However, the contribution of the specific materiality of the two embedded forms of approaching the past (monumental writing, spoken words) to the creation of the impression that the *History* is superior to them may not be very notable. As for the epigraphic sphere, the mention of the Plataean tripod may invite us to recall Pausanias' impermanent and egocentric epigram (even if it is not explicitly mentioned here), and this epigram can be seen as contrasting metahistorically with Thucydides' (conceptually) permanent and (seemingly) impartial account of the past. However, the list of cities – and it is this

59 As Grethlein notes, this is not the only inscription in the *History* that is stated to have been subject to some kind of change (see 2012, 73, adducing the two inscribed altars mentioned at 6.54.7). However, as can be seen from the inscribed monuments mentioned at 1.134.4, 6.55.1–2, and 6.59.3, there is no consistent correlation between Thucydidean inscriptions and impermanence.

60 See Grethlein 2012, 71–74.

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epigraphic text to which the Plataeans refer – seems to be a different case: as a potentially impermanent but actually durable prose text, this list hardly serves as a negative foil to the *History*'s claim to permanence.

To summarise, the relationship between the Plataean tripod as an inscribed artefact, the Plataeans' speech, and Thucydides' *History* is a complex one. As the narrative in Book 1 shows, the tripod is an intriguing example of the impermanence of an epigraphic text (Pausanias' epigram), but this does not necessarily cancel out the Plataeans' explicit reference to another epigraphic text with a different 'biography' (the list of cities). Given that the Plataeans' speech does not succeed in making the Spartans change their mind, the Plataean Debate may draw our attention to the limitations of the rhetorical use of epigraphic records of past achievements, but it should also be noted that the Plataean speakers find themselves in an extraordinarily difficult situation.

6.3 Limits and Possibilities of Commemorative Inscriptions in the Funeral Oration (2.43)

The Plataeans' appeal to the inscription on the Plataean tripod (3.57) is not the only instance of an epigraphic reference as part of a Thucydidean speech. Another reference to the epigraphic sphere (albeit in more general terms) occurs in Pericles' Funeral Oration (2.35–46).[61]

Extant funeral speeches from the fourth century,[62] which are probably representative of the lost speeches from the fifth century,[63] present "a semi-official polis-history in which Athens' past appears as an uninterrupted chain of great deeds".[64] Seen against this backdrop, it is striking that past exploits are hardly touched upon in the Thucydidean Funeral Oration. Thucydides may well have perceived a contrast between the evocation of past glories that seems to have been a traditional feature of the genre of the Athenian funeral oration and his own work,[65] but in the one specimen he embeds, namely that of Pericles

61 On this famous speech, see e.g. Flashar 1969; Landmann 1974; Gaiser 1975; Ziolkowski 1981; Loraux 1986b [1981], esp. 180–192; Brunt 1993; Sicking 1995; Prinz 1997, 94–147; Ober 1998, 83–89; Bosworth 2000; Wohl 2002, 30–72; Grethlein 2005; 2010, 221–228. It seems best not to regard the Thucydidean Funeral Oration as a reliable account of an actual speech by the historical Pericles (see e.g. Flashar 1969, 6–7; Brunt 1993, 160–161 and 180); even Bosworth, who argues that the Funeral Oration is "first and foremost a speech anchored in its immediate historical context" (2000, 1), concludes by stating that "what he [i.e. Thucydides] has given us is a *potent distillation* of the speech Pericles actually delivered" (16; my italics).

62 Lys. 2; Dem. 60; Hyp. 6; Pl. *Menex.*

63 On the scanty evidence for fifth-century speeches, see Grethlein 2010, 107.

64 Grethlein 2010, 221. Lysias, for instance, dwells very much on past accomplishments (2.3–66); see also Plato (*Menex.* 239a–246b) and Demosthenes (60.6–11). On the prominence of the Athenian past in funeral orations, see e.g. Ziolkowski 1981, 176; Loraux 1986b [1981], 133–171.

65 For this thesis, see Grethlein 2005.

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on those who died in the first year of the Peloponnesian War, we do not actually find a long catalogue of past achievements.

After some introductory remarks about his own role as a speaker and the difficulties he has to face, Pericles announces (2.36.1): Ἄρξομαι δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν προγόνων πρῶτον· δίκαιον γὰρ αὐτοῖς καὶ πρέπον δὲ ἅμα ἐν τῷ τοιῷδε τὴν τιμὴν ταύτην τῆς μνήμης δίδοσθαι ("First of all, I will begin with our ancestors, since it is right and also appropriate on such an occasion as the present that the honour of this remembrance should be given to them"). As it turns out, the overview of Athenian history – divided into the period of ancestors (πρόγονοι, 2.36.1), the generation of the fathers (πατέρες, 2.36.2), and the present generation (αὐτοὶ ἡμεῖς οἵδε οἱ νῦν ἔτι ὄντες, 2.36.3) – is very short. What is more, there follows a remarkable *praeteritio* (2.36.4):[66]

> ὧν ἐγὼ τὰ μὲν κατὰ πολέμους ἔργα, οἷς ἕκαστα ἐκτήθη, ἢ εἴ τι αὐτοὶ ἢ οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν βάρβαρον ἢ Ἕλληνα πολέμιον ἐπιόντα προθύμως ἠμυνάμεθα, μακρηγορεῖν ἐν εἰδόσιν οὐ βουλόμενος ἐάσω.
>
> I will pass over the deeds in war that led to each of our acquisitions and every instance of stout resistance we or our fathers made against attacking enemies, whether barbarian or Greek, since I do not wish to recount them at length among those who know of them.

The brief section on the past is followed not, as one might expect, by a section on the dead, but by a lengthy digression on the Athenian government, way of life, and habits (2.37.1–42.2). Eventually, however, Pericles returns to the subject of the dead, and it is in this context that he makes some remarks about the role of inscribed memorials (2.43.2–3):[67]

> κοινῇ γὰρ τὰ σώματα διδόντες ἰδίᾳ τὸν ἀγήρων ἔπαινον ἐλάμβανον καὶ τὸν τάφον ἐπισημότατον, οὐκ ἐν ᾧ κεῖνται μᾶλλον, ἀλλ' ἐν ᾧ ἡ δόξα αὐτῶν παρὰ τῷ ἐντυχόντι αἰεὶ καὶ λόγου καὶ ἔργου καιρῷ αἰείμνηστος καταλείπεται. ἀνδρῶν γὰρ ἐπιφανῶν πᾶσα γῆ τάφος, καὶ οὐ στηλῶν μόνον ἐν τῇ οἰκείᾳ σημαίνει ἐπιγραφή, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῇ μὴ προσηκούσῃ ἄγραφος μνήμη παρ' ἑκάστῳ τῆς γνώμης μᾶλλον ἢ τοῦ ἔργου ἐνδιαιτᾶται.
>
> For in giving their lives in common cause, they individually gained imperishable praise and the most distinctive tomb, not the one where they are buried but the one where on every occasion for word or deed their glory is left after them eternally. The whole earth is the tomb of famous men, and not only an inscription on stelai

66 Sicking describes Pericles' extraordinary *praeteritio* as follows: "On an audience which was familiar with the traditional content of a funeral oration the effect of this omission of one of its most important parts must have been something like that of a Christmas preacher announcing to the congregation that he is not going to reiterate the overworked story of Bethlehem" (1995, 411 n. 34).

67 On this reference to the epigraphic sphere, see esp. Longo 1978, 535–539; Harris 1989, 90; Steiner 1994, 141–142; Shrimpton 1997, 148; Grethlein 2005, 52–55; Smarczyk 2006, 504.

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> in their own country marks it but even in foreign territory an unwritten memory, present not in monument but in mind, abides within each man.[68]

When Pericles speaks of an "inscription on stelai" (στηλῶν [...] ἐπιγραφή, 2.43.3), he refers to the practice of commemorating the war dead by means of inscriptions placed on collective tombs. Such inscriptions recorded not only the names of the fallen but also the *phyle* to which they belonged, the place where they died in battle, and their rank.[69] The lists of names were sometimes combined with funerary epigrams and adorned with reliefs and sculpture.[70] We have pieces of at least thirty distinct specimens of such casualty lists from Athens.[71]

Intriguingly, it has been suggested that the funerary monument Pericles refers to in the passage quoted above is (at least in part) extant: *IG* I³ 1180 (= *IG* I² 944). In the third line of a marble fragment with stoichedon lettering (EM 2651), the letters ΟΠΕΙ can still be read. Wilhelm proposed the reading [ἐν Ἀλ]όπει, which would link the monument with the first year of the Peloponnesian War, when the Athenians fought, as Thucydides reports, at Alope in Locris (2.26).[72] It has also been suggested that the funerary monument for the war dead of the first year consisted not only of the list represented by *IG* I³ 1180 but also of an epigram that has been preserved in fragmentary form on stone (*IG* I² 946 = *IG* I³ 1181).[73] However, it is doubtful whether the list and the epigram really belong together – not least since the epigram does not contain information that would allow us to date it with sufficient certainty.[74]

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68 For the interpretation of γνώμης and ἔργου as indicating commemorative media, see Grethlein 2005, 54; see also Rusten 1989, 171.

69 See Ebbott 2000, 88, noting that no single extant list exhibits all these features. The formal conventions of casualty lists have been studied by Bradeen (see 1967; 1969); for a summary of their physical aspects, see Clairmont 1983, 46–54. The variety among casualty lists in terms of both physical format and inscriptional content is emphasised e.g. by Bakewell 2007, 93–95. For a catalogue of Athenian casualty lists, see Bradeen 1974, 3–34. Recent studies of Athenian casualty lists include Low 2012; Arrington 2015, esp. 91–123; Petrovic 2016.

70 See Pritchett 1985, 157. A funerary epigram is combined with a list e.g. in *IG* I³ 1162 and in the recently found casualty list for the tribe Erechtheis that has been identified as part of a collective tomb monument from the Soros at Marathon (see Keesling 2012).

71 See Bradeen 1969, 145, noting that a secure number cannot be established. The oldest casualty list from Athens itself is *IG* I³ 1144 (usually dated to 464), a list of the Athenian war dead from campaigns in 465/464 (see 1967), though it is likely that the Marathon cenotaph in Athens (probably dating from 490/489) was inscribed with the names of the dead (see Matthaiou 2003, 199; on this monument, see also Arrington 2015, 43–48).

72 See *SEG* III 52, followed by Raubitschek 1943, 26–27, and Bradeen 1974, no. 17.

73 See Raubitschek 1943, 25–26. This epigram is also known from the literary tradition (*Anth. Pal.* 7.254).

74 See Thomas 1989, 231 n. 125. Gomme challenges Raubitschek's identification of the epigram on the grounds that "whereas in i.² 944 the caption is set off by one space, in the new fragment the captions are set back one space, producing a quite different effect" (*HCT* II 101–102). Bradeen counters that "the identification of these fragments depends not just upon letter-forms, but also upon the spacing and the marble itself" and adduces *IG* I² 950 to show that consistency in the projecting of headings

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As for *IG* I³ 1180 itself, strong evidence against the reading [ἐν Ἀλ]όπει has come to light. Clairmont has discovered a small fragment from the Ceramicus (I 66) that can be joined with the above-mentioned fragment (referred to by Clairmont as EM 2657). At the beginning of line three, the combination of the two fragments reads EN (previously conjectured), and Clairmont holds that the combination of the two fragments supports Hondius' proposal to restore [ἐν Σιν]όπει, which would suggest an association with Pericles' expedition to the Pontic region in 435 (mentioned at Plut. *Per.* 20.1–2).[75] Moreover, I 6523, another fragment that has been assigned to *IG* I³ 1180, contains the geographical rubric of Thrace, which suggests that the monument commemorates those who fell in Thrace against the Chalcidians in the summer of 430[76] – i.e. after Pericles' speech, which (according to Thucydides) was delivered in the winter of 431/430.

It seems, then, that we cannot point to the extant monument that commemorated the war dead honoured in Pericles' speech. Nevertheless, the impressive *IG* I³ 1180 may serve to give an idea of the type of monument that can be assumed to have been set up to honour the Athenians who fell in the first year of the Peloponnesian War. However, when Pericles, in the passage quoted above, mentions "the most distinctive tomb" (τὸν τάφον ἐπισημότατον), it turns out that this is not, as one might expect, the actual physical tomb but rather something immaterial, namely their "glory" (δόξα, 2.43.2). The notion of a tangible physical entity is overridden by the notion of something intangible.

This is not the first passage in which Pericles speaks of the dead's δόξα; at 2.42.4, he says that they "departed at the height of glory rather than fear" (ἀκμῇ τῆς δόξης μᾶλλον ἢ τοῦ δέους ἀπηλλάγησαν).[77] So far, then, δόξα appears to be a positive term for describing what the dead achieved and what they can expect.[78] It should be noted, however, that these invocations of δόξα are part of a speech at the beginning of which this very same term is used to draw attention to a questionable aspect of Pericles' understanding of his task as a speaker (2.35.3): χρὴ καὶ ἐμὲ ἑπόμενον τῷ νόμῳ πειρᾶσθαι ὑμῶν τῆς ἑκάστου βουλήσεώς τε καὶ δόξης τυχεῖν ὡς ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ("I too must follow the custom and try to conform with the wishes and opinions of each one of you as far as is possible"). These introductory words alert us to the flaws of epideictic oratory and invite us to see Pericles' speech as a negative foil to Thucydides' work.[79]

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should not be expected (see 1964, 35 n. 37). It seems difficult to be certain one way or the other; Hansen describes Raubitschek's suggestion as "omnino incertum" (*CEG* no. 4).

75 See Hondius 1921, 202–204; Clairmont 1979. Referring to Clairmont 1983, 179, Hornblower rejects the restoration of Alope as "probably incorrect" (*CT* I 282).

76 See Clairmont 1979, 126 n. 11. While the occurrence of certain geographical rubrics – and hence the question of what to restore in line 3 – has played a crucial role in the dating of the list, Clairmont has suggested that we are dealing with a list recording the casualties from multiple years (see 126). For objections to this theory, see Pritchett 1985, 155–156.

77 This is a difficult passage; I follow the analysis offered by Rusten 1989, 164–168.

78 The word also occurs at 2.45.2; here, the δόξα of those women who have been widowed is defined in terms of their having the least possible κλέος among men. On this statement, see Lacey 1964; Cartledge 1993; Hardwick 1993; Bosworth 2000, 2–3.

79 See Grethlein 2010, 221.

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Let us return to the notion of a tomb other than the one in which the war dead are buried (2.43.2):

> κοινῇ γὰρ τὰ σώματα διδόντες ἰδίᾳ τὸν ἀγήρων ἔπαινον ἐλάμβανον καὶ τὸν τάφον ἐπισημότατον, οὐκ ἐν ᾧ κεῖνται μᾶλλον, ἀλλ' ἐν ᾧ ἡ δόξα αὐτῶν παρὰ τῷ ἐντυχόντι αἰεὶ καὶ λόγου καὶ ἔργου καιρῷ αἰείμνηστος καταλείπεται.
>
> For in giving their lives in common cause, they individually gained imperishable praise and the most distinctive tomb, not the one where they are buried but the one where on every occasion for word or deed their glory is left after them eternally.

It could be argued that this surprising contrast is mitigated by the expression οὐκ [...] μᾶλλον in the first part of the negative-positive statement.[80] However, the introduction of the second, positive part with ἀλλ' – as opposed to the expected ἤ[81] – actually implies a strict negation of what came before.[82] In this remarkable statement, the curt reference to the war dead's actual tomb is thus overridden by a much more extensive description of the immaterial glory they enjoy.

At the same time, the contrast is not complete. In epitaphs, the notion of the eternal renown of the dead is often associated with the physical tomb, which is contrasted with the transience of human life.[83] In fact, the adjective used by Pericles to describe the never-ending renown he envisages for the dead, αἰείμνηστος, is familiar from funerary inscriptions.[84] The tomb may thus serve as a metaphor for permanent renown, which means that the superficial contrast of material τάφος and immaterial δόξα is mitigated. In spite of the use of the strong contrastive expression οὐκ [...] μᾶλλον, ἀλλ', then, the form of commemoration envisaged by Pericles is not so much the exact opposite of the one associated with tombs but rather its perfection. The power of warding off oblivion, frequently associated with funerary monuments, is emphatically claimed for the immaterial δόξα envisaged by Pericles, which is twice linked with the notion of eternity (αἰεί; αἰείμνηστος).

The transition from the material to the immaterial sphere is repeated in the second part of Pericles' description of the commemoration he envisages for the war dead (2.43.3):

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80 On various forms of sentence structures expressing a negative-positive contrast, see Rusten 1986, 51–53; 1989, 24.

81 According to Stuart Jones' edition, only two manuscripts (CG) have ἤ.

82 See Kakridis 1961, 91. On the construction in general, see KG § 534.5, translating the parallel case καὶ ἔστιν ὁ πόλεμος οὐχ ὅπλων τὸ πλέον ἀλλὰ δαπάνης (1.83.2) as "der Krieg ist nicht sowohl durch die Waffen bedingt, sondern durch das Geld"; Hornblower translates "war is not a matter of weapons, but of money" [*CT* I 128]). Denniston suggests to "regard οὐκ ... ἀλλά as the primary construction, and the comparative as secondary and redundant" (1959, 4).

83 See e.g. *IG* I³ 1162.45–48 (= *CEG* no. 6.ii). On the juxtaposition of the end of human life and the eternity of the tomb, see Grethlein 2005, 53.

84 Usually, it is applied to a person (see Lattimore 1942, 244, with the list of inscriptions in n. 233), but Lattimore also mentions a funerary epigram from fourth-century Pharsalus where it is the tomb itself (μνα[μεῖον) that is described as ἀείμναστον (*IG* IX.2 252).

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> ἀνδρῶν γὰρ ἐπιφανῶν πᾶσα γῆ τάφος, καὶ οὐ στηλῶν μόνον ἐν τῇ οἰκείᾳ σημαίνει ἐπιγραφή, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῇ μὴ προσηκούσῃ ἄγραφος μνήμη παρ' ἑκάστῳ τῆς γνώμης μᾶλλον ἢ τοῦ ἔργου ἐνδιαιτᾶται.
>
> The whole earth is the tomb of famous men, and not only an inscription on stelai in their own country marks it but even in foreign territory an unwritten memory, present not in monument but in mind, abides within each man.

While the preceding description of the δόξα enjoyed by the dead highlights its temporal durability, Pericles now focuses on the spatial extension (πᾶσα γῆ) of their τάφος.[85] He reiterates the contrast between tangible tomb and immaterial glory from a new angle when he says that the tomb is not only indicated by an "inscription on stelai" (στηλῶν [...] ἐπιγραφή), which is associated with a limited scope (ἐν τῇ οἰκείᾳ); rather, the dead are the object of an "unwritten memory" (ἄγραφος μνήμη). In spite of the inclusive expression with which the two parts of this sentence are linked (οὐ [...] μόνον [...], ἀλλὰ καί), the contrast in terms of the content of the two juxtaposed terms is stronger than in the preceding sentence. Whereas a physical tomb may serve as a metaphor for eternal commemoration, a funerary inscription set up at a specific place cannot stand for the transgression of spatial boundaries.[86]

Pericles does not deny that the stelai serve a certain function, namely the indication of the tomb, but the reference to this function (σημαίνει) recalls the previous description of the immaterial tomb as ἐπισημότατος. On the one hand, this echo contributes to the impression that the two forms of commemoration juxtaposed by Pericles have something in common. On the other, the 'semantic' power of the immaterial tomb (note the superlative ἐπισημότατος) is presented as being greater than that of the physical tomb.[87]

Like in the preceding juxtaposition of actual and metaphorical τάφος, a material basis of commemoration is juxtaposed with the sphere of the immaterial, here represented by ἄγραφος μνήμη.[88] When writing is mentioned in the second sentence, attention is drawn to a significant limitation: the commemorative potential of inscriptions is limited to a narrow scope. Nevertheless, the brief mention of writing on stelai may – just like the mention of the τάφος in the first sentence – evoke the positive notion of permanence. When Pericles explicitly claims such a permanence for ἄγραφος μνήμη, this is a surprising rhetorical move.

As has been noted above, Pericles claims that the effect of stelai is confined to a specific area. Such a claim can be associated with the Homeric notion of the fixity of the funerary

85 See Grethlein 2005, 52–53. On the question of the scope of πᾶσα γῆ (all the known world? the Greek world?), see Longo 1978, 537 and 553 n. 67.

86 See Grethlein 2005, 54.

87 See Longo 1978, 537.

88 See Steiner 1994, 141. Strictly speaking, the exclusion of writing is not equivalent to an exclusion of any kind of materiality. Nevertheless, in view of the contrast of the material and the immaterial in the preceding sentence, it seems natural to identify ἄγραφος μνήμη with the aforementioned δόξα.

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stele (*Il.* 17.434–435).[89] The limited potential of written commemoration apparently derives precisely from the fact that it is portrayed as inextricably linked with an immobile material basis. Pericles' words do not exclude that there are other uses of writing that do facilitate the diffusion of a message over long distances, but the focus is on a use of writing that is markedly local:

> While the grave marker is planted in one place, confined to the native land of the men who have died, *doxa* recognizes no such boundaries and makes the whole earth the burial place of the fallen.[90]

This limited commemorative potential of inscriptions is thus contrasted with the pervasiveness of δόξα, which, as Pericles insists, is effective even "in foreign territory" (ἐν τῇ μὴ προσηκούσῃ, 2.43.3).

The emphasis on the merely local effect of writing without the mention of any specific strength of writing (such as permanence or accuracy) does, it seems, seriously challenge the importance of writing.[91] At the same time, we have seen that the type of commemoration envisaged by Pericles is modelled, at least to a certain extent, on the practice of setting up inscribed funerary monuments. The epigraphically well-attested association of actual tombs with permanent commemoration, which facilitates the metaphorical use of τάφος in the first sentence, is not dismissed but rather used as a springboard for the description of the eternal δόξα enjoyed by the dead (2.43.2). In the second sentence, the focus on the wide diffusion of ἄγραφος μνήμη throws the narrow boundaries limiting the scope of the στηλῶν [...] ἐπιγραφή into relief; and yet, it is not denied that inscribed funerary monuments are part of commemorative culture (2.43.3). In fact, the inclusive juxtaposition οὐ [...] μόνον [...], ἀλλὰ καί indicates an acknowledgement that written memorials play a certain role. What is more, the notion of physical (and potentially inscribed) funerary monuments may be alluded to in the expression μνήμη [...] τοῦ ἔργου. It has been argued that there is (at least in epigrams up to the fifth century) a strict distinction between the neuter noun μνῆμα, which designates the physical monument, and the feminine noun μνήμη, which refers to intangible memory.[92] However, given the dynamics of Pericles' words with their repeated shifts between the spheres of the material and the immaterial, between the literal and the metaphorical, μνήμη may well encompass both the presence of the dead in the minds of men (γνώμη) and a physical monument (ἔργον).[93] If this final section of the second sentence does indeed refer to different media of commemoration, as has been suggested above, the juxtaposition is only gradual (μᾶλλον

89 For this notion, see Steiner 1994, 141.

90 Steiner 1994, 141–142; see also Longo 1978, 536–537.

91 See Longo 1978, 536. By contrast, Harris mentions our passage as a "milder" example in the context of his discussion of negative views of writing in Classical Athens (see 1989, 90); see also Smarczyk 2006, 504.

92 See Shefton 1950, 154–155.

93 For such an interpretation of the difficult terms γνώμη and ἔργον, see Grethlein 2005, 54–55. For a survey of other suggestions, see *HCT* II 138.

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ἤ). Once more, then, the implication would be that physical memorials have their place in commemorative culture.

In short, Pericles clearly extols a commemorative practice that does not rely on physical monuments and funerary inscriptions. In this respect, Pericles' reference to the epigraphic sphere is the converse of the only other instance of such a reference as part of a speech, namely the Plataeans' appeal to the Plataean tripod: while the Plataeans appeal to the epigraphic record in an attempt to capitalise on the authority of an inscription on a public memorial, Pericles mentions the practice of epigraphic commemoration of the war dead as a negative foil to a form of commemoration that does not depend on writing.

At the same time, the power of the immaterial commemoration Pericles describes is modelled (at least to a certain extent) on the practice of setting up inscribed funerary monuments for the war dead. What is more, Thucydides repeatedly draws attention to the malleability of memory and hence to the unreliability of what people remember and tell about the past; in view of this, an exclusive reliance on immaterial commemoration does not seem advisable.

Arguably the most striking pronouncement on the limitations of memory occurs in the final section of the account of the plague. Noting that people remember two different versions of an oracle, one referring to a plague (λοιμός) and the other to a famine (λιμός), Thucydides comments (2.54.3): ἐνίκησε δὲ ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος εἰκότως λοιμὸν εἰρῆσθαι· οἱ γὰρ ἄνθρωποι πρὸς ἃ ἔπασχον τὴν μνήμην ἐποιοῦντο ("But under the circumstances, the opinion naturally prevailed that 'plague' was the word used; men shaped their memories in accordance with what they experienced").[94]

Another problematic aspect of Pericles' endorsement of ἄγραφος μνήμη emerges when the beginning of his speech is considered (2.35.2):

> ὅ τε γὰρ ξυνειδὼς καὶ εὔνους ἀκροατὴς τάχ' ἄν τι ἐνδεεστέρως πρὸς ἃ βούλεταί τε καὶ ἐπίσταται νομίσειε δηλοῦσθαι, ὅ τε ἄπειρος ἔστιν ἃ καὶ πλεονάζεσθαι, διὰ φθόνον, εἴ τι ὑπὲρ τὴν αὑτοῦ φύσιν ἀκούοι.
>
> For the man listening with understanding and good will may well consider what is set forth in some way inferior, measured against both his wishes and his knowledge, yet the one listening in ignorance may consider some things exaggerated, out of envy when he hears anything going beyond his natural endowments.

While the desire to say nothing that contradicts what those who are familiar with certain events know (ξυνειδώς) need not be a bad thing, the pairing of knowledge with wishful thinking (βούλεταί τε καὶ ἐπίσταται) marks a significant contrast between Pericles' criteria for treating the past and the principles of Thucydides' work as they are expounded at 1.20–22.[95]

94 On Thucydides' mostly negative depiction of memory, see Edmunds 1993, 850–851.
95 See Grethlein 2010, 226.

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As we have seen, Pericles makes a rhetorically powerful case for a form of commemorating the war dead that does not rely on setting up inscribed funerary memorials. However, by emphasising the permanence of the commemoration he envisions, he draws attention to a quality that is often associated with (inscribed) tombs. Moreover, Pericles' willingness to cater to the (not necessarily justified) expectations and opinions of his audience may raise doubts about the assessments of different forms of commemoration that he ventures in the course of his speech.

6.4 Conclusion

When Thucydides narrates the last phase of Pausanias' life, he leaves the time frame of the Peloponnesian War. As we have seen, the very first inscription quoted in the *History*, Pausanias' epigram on the Plataean tripod, serves to underline the Spartan regent's boundless sense of self-importance. The use of inscriptions as a means of characterisation is familiar from Herodotus, though we have also seen that Thucydides gives this way of incorporating an inscription into an account of past actions of a character a new twist when he describes how the Spartans interpret the epigram in the light of their suspicions about their regent's autocratic inclinations. Pausanias' boastful inscription on the Plataean tripod is erased by the Spartans and replaced with an inscription honouring the Greek cities that contributed to the defeat of the Persians. In giving a concise account of the 'biography' of this artefact, Thucydides showcases the malleability of the epigraphic record and illustrates how inscriptions reflect the struggle between different parties for predominance in the commemorative field.

The Greek fight against the Persians plays a major role in the Plataean Debate. For the Plataeans, the presence of their city on the Plataean tripod testifies to the brave commitment of this city to the Greek cause and should discourage the Spartans from destroying it. Thucydides' presentation of the Plataeans' attempt to draw on the authority of this inscription in a difficult situation is an exploration of the potential of the rhetorical use of inscriptions.

In the Funeral Oration, Pericles juxtaposes inscribed memorials for the war dead with a form of commemoration that does not depend on (monumental) writing. On the one hand, Pericles emphasises the merely local effect of writing; on the other, the type of commemoration he envisages is modelled, at least to a certain extent, on the practice of setting up inscribed funerary memorials. Moreover, Pericles' introductory remarks about the challenges he faces as a speaker, which include a declaration to adapt his words to the wishes and opinions of the audience, raise doubts about the adequacy of his approach to matters of commemoration.

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7 The Inscriptions in the Pisistratid Excursus: Evident Traces of the Past?

Thucydides' account of the end of the tyranny in Athens in 514, the so-called Pisistratid excursus (6.54–59),[1] is notable – among other things – for featuring a striking clustering of inscriptions: in the space of only four OCT pages, Thucydides refers to no less than four inscribed objects.

The excursus is introduced by the following critical remark (6.54.1–2):

> Τὸ γὰρ Ἀριστογείτονος καὶ Ἁρμοδίου τόλμημα δι' ἐρωτικὴν ξυντυχίαν ἐπεχειρήθη, ἣν ἐγὼ ἐπὶ πλέον διηγησάμενος ἀποφανῶ οὔτε τοὺς ἄλλους οὔτε αὐτοὺς Ἀθηναίους περὶ τῶν σφετέρων τυράννων οὐδὲ περὶ τοῦ γενομένου ἀκριβὲς οὐδὲν λέγοντας. Πεισιστράτου γὰρ γηραιοῦ τελευτήσαντος ἐν τῇ τυραννίδι οὐχ Ἵππαρχος, ὥσπερ οἱ πολλοὶ οἴονται, ἀλλ' Ἱππίας πρεσβύτατος ὢν ἔσχε τὴν ἀρχήν.
>
> The daring deed of Aristogiton and Harmodius was undertaken in consequence of a love affair, and by relating this at some length I shall show that neither the others nor the Athenians themselves say anything accurate about their own tyrants or about what happened. For when Pisistratus died in his old age while holding the tyranny, it was not Hipparchus, as most people think, but Hippias, as eldest son, who succeeded to the sovereignty.

This polemical opening statement creates the impression that the subsequent account is opposed to some form of common view prevailing among the Athenians.[2] In what follows, I would like to investigate what the conspicuously clustered references to inscriptions contribute to the alternative account of the past that Thucydides offers in the Pisistratid excursus.

1 The literature on the Pisistratid excursus is vast (see, for instance, the numerous older contributions listed by Zizza 1999, 7–8 n. 18; see also the survey by Meyer 2008, 13–15). On the use of inscriptions in this section of the *History*, see esp. Lavelle 1993, 66–79; Shrimpton 1997, 131 and 147; Zizza 1999, 7–14; Smarczyk 2006, 507–510; Meyer 2008, 28–29; *CT* III 436 and 446–447; Grethlein 2010, 218; Spahn 2016, 68–73; Sheppard 2018, 27–29; Iriarte 2019, 85–92; Spielberg 2019, 57–61.

2 It has been suggested that the expression τοὺς ἄλλους refers to a specific literary predecessor (see Jacoby 1949, 159 [Hellanicus]; Tsakmakis 1995, 223 [Herodotus]), but it seems best not to narrow the focus of the noticeably general statement too much (see Grethlein 2010, 214; see also *CT* III 440).

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7.1 Epigraphic Reflections of Pisistratid Rule in Athens (6.54–55)

At the beginning of the Pisistratid excursus, Thucydides refers to three inscribed monuments (one of which is stated to have lost its inscription) that are located in Athens: the altar of the Twelve Gods in the Agora (6.54.6–7), the altar of Apollo in the Pythian sanctuary (6.54.6–7), and the stele about the tyrants' ἀδικία on the Acropolis (6.55.1).

Let us begin with the two altars. They are mentioned in the context of an introductory sketch of life under the Pisistratids, which is described in rather positive terms.[3] Thucydides notes, among other things, that the Pisistratids "adorned their city beautifully" (τήν τε πόλιν αὐτῶν καλῶς διεκόσμησαν, 6.54.5) and "provided sacrifices for the sanctuaries" (ἐς τὰ ἱερὰ ἔθυον, 6.54.5) and that in most respects, "the city observed without interference[4] the laws previously in force" (αὐτὴ ἡ πόλις τοῖς πρὶν κειμένοις νόμοις ἐχρῆτο, 6.54.6). Concerning the Pisistratids' exercise of political power, Thucydides states that "they took care that one of their own people always held office" (αἰεί τινα ἐπεμέλοντο σφῶν αὐτῶν ἐν ταῖς ἀρχαῖς εἶναι, 6.54.6). This strategy is then illustrated with one member of the Pisistratid clan, Pisistratus the Younger (6.54.6–7):

> καὶ ἄλλοι τε αὐτῶν ἦρξαν τὴν ἐνιαύσιον Ἀθηναίοις ἀρχὴν καὶ Πεισίστρατος ὁ Ἱππίου τοῦ τυραννεύσαντος υἱός, τοῦ πάππου ἔχων τοὔνομα, ὃς τῶν δώδεκα θεῶν βωμὸν τὸν ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ ἄρχων ἀνέθηκε καὶ τὸν τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος ἐν Πυθίου. καὶ τῷ μὲν ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ προσοικοδομήσας ὕστερον ὁ δῆμος Ἀθηναίων μεῖζον μῆκος [τοῦ βωμοῦ][5] ἠφάνισε τοὐπίγραμμα· τοῦ δ' ἐν Πυθίου ἔτι καὶ νῦν δῆλόν ἐστιν ἀμυδροῖς γράμμασι λέγον τάδε·
>
> μνῆμα τόδ' ἧς ἀρχῆς Πεισίστρατος Ἱππίου υἱός
> θῆκεν Ἀπόλλωνος Πυθίου ἐν τεμένει.
>
> Among those who held the annual archonship of Athens was Pisistratus, son of the Hippias who had been tyrant and bearing his grandfather's name, who during his term dedicated the altar of the Twelve Gods in the Agora and that of Apollo in the Pythian sanctuary. When the people of Athens later increased the length of the altar in the Agora, they obliterated the inscription, but even now the one on the altar in the Pythian sanctuary is still visible, saying the following, in faded letters:[6] "Pisistratus, son of Hippias, dedicated this memorial of his archonship in the precinct of Apollo Pythius."

3 On this positive depiction, see e.g. Rawlings 1981, 106; Barceló 1990, 408; Meyer 2008, 17; for some qualifications, see Dreher 2016, 93–96.

4 For this translation of αὐτή, see *HCT* IV 330.

5 Stuart Jones prints τοῦ βωμοῦ; for the deletion, see Classen/Steup 1905, 120.

6 The construction of the sentence is ambiguous. For δῆλόν ἐστιν in the sense of 'is visible', see Thuc. 1.93.5 (καὶ ᾠκοδόμησαν τῇ ἐκείνου γνώμῃ τὸ πάχος τοῦ τείχους ὅπερ νῦν ἔτι δῆλόν ἐστι περὶ τὸν Πειραιᾶ). Alternatively, δῆλόν ἐστιν could be construed with λέγον as a supplementary participle ('clearly says'); compare e.g. Thuc. 1.140.2 (Λακεδαιμόνιοι δὲ πρότερόν τε δῆλοι ἦσαν ἐπιβουλεύοντες ἡμῖν καὶ νῦν οὐχ ἥκιστα).

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As we can see, the series of epigraphic references in the Pisistratid excursus begins with a reference to an inscription that has vanished: having mentioned (without indicating the source for this specific piece of information) that the altar of the Twelve Gods in the Agora is a dedication by Pisistratus dating from his term as archon, Thucydides notes the obliteration of its inscription.[7]

What does the reference to this inscription and its disappearance contribute to Thucydides' account?[8] As opposed to the altar of Apollo, which will be discussed below, Thucydides does not explicitly adduce the altar of the Twelve Gods to demonstrate anything; he simply notes that it is a dedication by Pisistratus during his archonship. However, even in the absence of an explicit argumentative framing, the reference to the (originally inscribed) altar suggestively supports Thucydides' claim about the Pisistratids' attempt to control the archonship: Pisistratus is adduced as an example of this policy, and the dedication of the altar is presented as one of Pisistratus' activities as archon. As for the inscription itself, Thucydides merely notes that it is obliterated, but we may well take away the impression that this lost inscription would have provided direct evidence for Pisistratus' archonship – just like the dedicatory inscription on the altar of Apollo, which Thucydides goes on to quote.

While the immediate framing of the mention of the altar of the Twelve Gods draws attention primarily to the issue of Pisistratid control of the archonship, we may detect further ways in which this monument resonates with the foregoing outline of Pisistratid rule: as a monumental dedication to a god, it illustrates the Pisistratids' interest in adorning the city and their concern for the worship of the gods. Brief as it may be, the reference to the altar thus illustrates important aspects of Thucydides' sketch of the Pisistradids' activities.

Thucydides does not elaborate on the enlargement of the altar and the concomitant obliteration of the inscription. Should this obliteration be regarded as collateral damage? Or are we dealing with the wilful destruction of a written memorial to Pisistratus, i.e. with a memory sanction?[9] There can be no certainty, but for what it is worth, we may

7 Fragments of the altar have been excavated in the Agora (see Crosby 1949); on the archaeological evidence, see also Neer/Kurke 2014, 539–550; Di Cesare in Greco 2014, 1051–1055 (with further literature). On the basis of Hdt. 6.108.4 and Thuc. 3.68.5, it can be assumed that the original altar had been dedicated by 519, which would be consistent with the (not uncontested) evidence of the archon list that Pisistratus held the eponymous archonship in 522/521 (see Crosby 1949, 100–101; see also Arnush 1995, 136–137; Zerbinati 2017, 22–23). Zizza argues that in view of the enlargement and the concomitant obliteration of the inscription, Thucydides' mention of the latter must be indebted to oral sources (see 1999, 12; followed by Bearzot 2003, 294), but a dating of the enlargement to the late fifth century (see e.g. Crosby 1949, 99 and 103; Neer/Kurke 2014, 560; but contrast Greco 2010, 27) would allow for the possibility that Thucydides saw the inscription.

8 On Thucydides' presentation of the altar, see esp. Zizza 1999, 12–13; Neer/Kurke 2014, 545–546; Spielberg 2019, 59.

9 In this context, the term *damnatio memoriae* comes to mind. On the problems surrounding this term, see Omissi 2016, pointing out that "*damnatio memoriae*, for all its Latinity, is not an ancient but a modern term" and that it "is not actually a single process but an umbrella term that describes a number of overlapping but discrete activities" (170). The term 'memory sanction' has

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note that there is a passage in the *History* where a form of ἀφανίζω (i.e. the word used by Thucydides for the act of obliterating the epigram) occurs in the context of an attempt to impede the commemoration of a prominent individual: having adopted Brasidas as the founder of their colony, the Amphipolitans "pulled down the buildings associated with Hagnon and obliterated whatever was likely, if left standing, to be a reminder of his foundation" (καταβαλόντες τὰ Ἀγνώνεια οἰκοδομήματα καὶ ἀφανίσαντες εἴ τι μνημόσυνόν που ἔμελλεν αὐτοῦ τῆς οἰκίσεως περιέσεσθαι, 5.11.1). Here, the action referred to with ἀφανίζω is directed against a group of objects in their capacity as memorials of Hagnon's founding of the colony.

Both the account of the events at Amphipolis and the short 'biography' of the altar of the Twelve Gods in Athens attest to an interest in the politics of monumental commemoration. While it has to be admitted that the obliteration of the inscription on the altar of the Twelve Gods is not explicitly described as an anti-Pisistratid act,[10] it seems safe to say that the episode draws metahistorical attention to the potential impermanence of inscribed memorials. Thucydides does not evaluate the fact that Pisistratus' dedicatory inscription has disappeared as the result of the Athenians' activities, but we may note that by mentioning the transformation undergone by the altar, Thucydides undoes its effect – at least to the extent that he ascribes to the altar a status (i.e. being a dedication by Pisistratus) that is no longer indicated by an inscription.

The reference to the obliterated inscription on the altar of the Twelve Gods is immediately followed by a quotation of a – presumably similar – dedicatory inscription on the altar of Apollo in the Pythian sanctuary (6.54.7):[11]

> τοῦ δ' ἐν Πυθίου ἔτι καὶ νῦν δῆλόν ἐστιν ἀμυδροῖς γράμμασι λέγον τάδε·
> μνῆμα τόδ' ἧς ἀρχῆς Πεισίστρατος Ἱππίου υἱός
> θῆκεν Ἀπόλλωνος Πυθίου ἐν τεμένει.
>
> But even now the one on the altar in the Pythian sanctuary is still visible, saying the following, in faded letters: "Pisistratus, son of Hippias, dedicated this memorial of his archonship in the precinct of Apollo Pythius."

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been advocated by Flower, who offers the following definition: "Memory sanctions are deliberately designed strategies that aim to change the picture of the past, whether through erasure or redefinition, or by means of both" (2006, 2). On memory sanctions in the Greek world, see 17–41.

10 Crosby, for one, is positive that "[t]here is no implication in the text that the altar was enlarged and its inscription concealed as a deliberate anti-tyrannical act" (1949, 101); see also Keesling 1999, 514. By contrast, Spielberg argues that the linguistic parallel with the Hagnon episode invites us to assume a "desire to forget" (2019, 59) on the Athenians' part. Similarly, Mylonopoulos comments that "[t]he case of the Altar of the Twelve Gods clearly demonstrates the unwillingness of the Athenians to preserve a dedicatory inscription" (2019, 243).

11 On Thucydides' quotation of this epigram, see esp. *HCT* IV 331–333; Lavelle 1989; Zizza 1999, 12–13 and 15–16; Smarczyk 2006, 507–508; *CT* III 445–448; Spahn 2016, 71–72; Iriarte 2019, 87–88; Spielberg 2019, 58–60. On the altar and the Pythian sanctuary, see Marchiandi in Greco 2011, 430–434 (with further literature).

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The inscription survives (in fragmentary form) on stone (*IG* I³ 948);[12] the text as given by Thucydides corresponds to the epigraphically transmitted text.[13]

In that the text of this inscription features a reference to Pisistratus' archonship, the epigraphic reference supports the preceding claim about the Pisistratid policy of controlling the archonship. But this is not all. Thucydides goes on to adduce the inscription as evidence for another point (6.55.1):

> ὅτι δὲ πρεσβύτατος ὢν Ἱππίας ἦρξεν, εἰδὼς μὲν καὶ ἀκοῇ ἀκριβέστερον ἄλλων ἰσχυρίζομαι, γνοίη δ' ἄν τις καὶ αὐτῷ τούτῳ· παῖδες γὰρ αὐτῷ μόνῳ φαίνονται τῶν γνησίων ἀδελφῶν γενόμενοι, ὡς ὅ τε βωμὸς σημαίνει καὶ ἡ στήλη περὶ τῆς τῶν τυράννων ἀδικίας ἡ ἐν τῇ Ἀθηναίων ἀκροπόλει σταθεῖσα.
>
> That Hippias, as eldest son, succeeded to the sovereignty I assert with more accurate knowledge than others based on what I have been told, but one may also come to understand it from the following: in his case alone, among the legitimate brothers, do there appear to have been children, as the altar indicates and the stele about the injustice of the tyrants set up on the Athenian Acropolis.

On the one hand, this passage shows an appreciation of epigraphic evidence: the (inscribed) altar of Apollo is presented as evidence for a specific claim about Hippias, namely that he alone of the legitimate brothers had children.[14] On the other, Thucydides first claims the particular accuracy of his ἀκοή-based knowledge about the succession. Intriguingly, this mention of ἀκοή as a source of information recalls the description of the Athenians' knowledge about the end of the Pisistratid tyranny that precedes the Pisistratid excursus (6.53.3). Admittedly, this passage differs from Thucydides' comment on his knowledge about the position of Hippias in that different epistemic verbs are used: while Thucydides uses εἰδώς for himself, the statement about the Athenians' understanding of their Pisistratid past features ἐπίσταμαι – a form of a verb that does not imply the truth of a belief.[15] In the case of 6.53.3, however, the ἀκοή-based beliefs of the Athenians are,

12 In 1877, five fragments of the inscription, which had been carved on the crowning of the altar, were found by the Ilissus, next to the Olympieum; a further fragment of the inscription was found in 2009 (see *SEG* LXI 69). Editions and discussions of the epigram include Heydemann 1879, 317; Szanto 1881; *IGM* no. 71; *GE* no. 15; *HGE* no. 8; Lauffer 1937, 110; Löwy 1937, 12–14; Meritt 1939, 62–65; Welter 1939, 23–35; FH no. 100; Raubitschek 1949, 449–450; Dinsmoor 1969 [1942], 195–198; *EG* no. 26b; *FGE* no. 26b; *CEG* no. 305; Guarducci 1987, 45; ML no. 11; Immerwahr 1990, 18 and 76; *LSAG* p. 75; Hansen 1992; *Nomima* I no. 93; Arnush 1995, 144–150; Dillon 1995, 63–65; Angiolillo 1997, 78; Veneri 1997; Aloni 2000, esp. 84–87; Sancisi-Weerdenburg 2000b, 89–93; Petrovic 2007a, 260–266. For a recent discussion of the issue of dating, see Zerbinati 2017 (arguing, as a fair number of scholars before him, for 522/521); see also the survey of proposals provided by Arnush 1995, 146 n. 81.

13 See e.g. Guarducci 1987, 45; Veneri 1997, 344; Zizza 1999, 15.

14 The stele on the Acropolis will be discussed below.

15 See e.g. Hdt. 5.42.1 (with Hornblower 2013, 153).

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in fact, correct.[16] This parallel makes Thucydides' explicit mention of ἀκοή as the basis for his account at 6.55.1 – in itself an unusual statement for Thucydides[17] – all the more surprising: he declares that his account depends on the very type of source that has also shaped the Athenians' view of their past.

At 6.55.1, Thucydides clearly claims the superiority of his ἀκοή-based account (ἀκριβέστερον ἄλλων). However, at least for modern scholars attempting to assess Thucydides' work against the backdrop of the information available to him, this appeal to ἀκοή-based knowledge, explicit as it may be, is characteristically dissatisfying:

> [W]hat Thucydides himself says merely shows us that he had information from a source which he regarded, for reasons unknown to us, as peculiarly reliable [...]. This ἀκοή is mentioned explicitly only in connection with the seniority of Hippias; Thucydides gives no indication of the extent of his dependence upon it for the rest of his account, and we are left to infer that he is following it in so far as he is denying other views.[18]

Now, as has already been mentioned, Thucydides refers not only to ἀκοή but also to epigraphic evidence. However, he does not indicate the precise relationship between these two sources of information; rather, he points to two different ways of arriving at a certain conclusion. Remarkably, the second way, i.e. the consideration of inscriptions, is, at least on the face of it, presented with some circumspection: as opposed to the claim about the quality of the ἀκοή-based information at Thucydides' disposal, which is part of a sentence in the indicative mood (εἰδὼς μὲν καὶ ἀκοῇ ἀκριβέστερον ἄλλων ἰσχυρίζομαι), the statement announcing the exploitation of the evidence afforded by inscriptions is expressed in the potential optative (γνοίη δ' ἄν τις καὶ αὐτῷ τούτῳ, 6.55.1). This is not to say that the relevance of epigraphic evidence is seriously doubted: the statement in the optative can be understood as a confident declaration in disguise,[19] and Thucydides goes on to demonstrate how the altar of Apollo and the stele on the Acropolis can serve, in his view, to support his account of the succession. However, we may still note that this consideration of the contribution of epigraphic evidence is preceded by an apodictic appeal to ἀκοή-based information.

What is more, Thucydides does not refer to a particularly obvious piece of epigraphic evidence for the archonship of the Pisistratids, namely the Athenian archon list (*IG* I^3 1031).[20] On one fragment of this list – a piece of Pentelic marble that is broken on all sides,

16 This is also true of the other occurrence of a form of ἐπίσταμαι in combination with ἀκοή (the statement by Brasidas at 4.126.3; see *CT* III 432–433).

17 See *CT* III 446.

18 *HCT* IV 323.

19 On such a use of the optative, see KG § 396.3.

20 *IG* I^3 dates the inscription to "c.a. 423". Further editions and discussions include Meritt 1939; Roussel 1941, 209–213; Cadoux 1948, esp. 77–79; Bradeen 1963; ML no. 6; *Nomima* I no. 89.

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found in the Agora in 1936 –, the name Hippias can be restored with virtual certainty.[21] Moreover, the last name on this fragment may well be [Πεισί]στρατ[ος].[22] It has been argued that Thucydides regarded the information it contained as irrelevant to the case he was making,[23] but it appears that the archon list could have lent powerful support to his reconstruction of Pisistratid rule. As a result, the fact that it is not mentioned by Thucydides shows that even in the Pisistratid excursus with its conspicuously high number of epigraphic references, there are limits to the extent to which Thucydides presents his account as being indebted to epigraphically preserved information.[24]

Instead of dwelling on epigraphic evidence Thucydides does not adduce, however, it seems more profitable to focus on the occasions where he does explicitly refer to an inscription to substantiate a claim – such as the appeal to the inscribed altar of Apollo.

On the one hand, the mere fact that he refers to an inscription in this way has proved to be an efficient argumentative gambit.[25] On the other, the incorporation of the text of the inscription on the altar of Apollo provides us with a basis for a critical evaluation of Thucydides' argument, and it turns out that this epigraphic text can hardly be regarded as supporting the point for which it is explicitly adduced: it is hard to see how the altar shows that Hippias was the only one of Pisistratus the Elder's legitimate sons to have had children.[26] Admittedly, the claim about the childlessness of Hippias' legitimate brothers is not based on the altar alone,[27] but the fact that it is referred to at all in connection with this specific point is puzzling.

While the explicit argumentative exploitation of the inscription on the altar may not stand up to closer scrutiny, there is a strong sense that Thucydides puts this inscribed monument on centre stage (at least for a moment). In addition to mentioning the altar

21 For a picture of the fragment, see Meritt 1939, 60, who transcribes the name as [*h*]ιππία[ς]; in *IG* I^3, the sigma is dotted. Later, four additional fragments were identified as belonging to the same list (see Bradeen 1963). The precise form of the stone, the arrangement of the names on it, and its position in the Agora are a matter of conjecture; Bradeen suggests that the list consisted of four columns of names inscribed on a free-standing stele placed in the southwestern corner of the Agora (see 205).

22 Meritt discarded this restoration, mostly on the basis of his conviction that the inscription on the altar in the Pythian sanctuary referred to by Thucydides dates from the early fifth century (see 1939, 62–63). The restoration [Πεισί]στρατ[ος] is defended by Arnush 1995, esp. 135–138.

23 See Kinzl 1973, 504 n. 4.

24 To be sure, the lack of an explicit reference to the list does not exclude that Thucydides consulted it; Jacoby, for one, is positive that Thucydides used it (see 1949, 163). At the same time, the possibility remains that Thucydides was simply ignorant of the list (see Kinzl 1973, 504 n. 4). Hornblower tentatively suggests that "the reason he did not cite it was that it was not itself a relic, but a by-product of the researches in the 420s of his contemporary, the sophist Hippias of Elis" (1987, 90).

25 For (more or less explicitly) appreciative assessments of the probative use of the inscription on the altar of Apollo, see Stahl 1966, 4; Hornblower 1987, 89; Zizza 1999, esp. 12–13; Bearzot 2003, 294–295; Smarczyk 2006, 508; Meyer 2008, 29; *CT* III 446–448; Iriarte 2019, 86–88.

26 See *HCT* IV 333; see also Lang 1955, 401 n. 1. By contrast, Hornblower, though conceding that "the altar does not by itself prove that Hippias' brothers had no sons" (*CT* III 447), claims that this "oversight" does not compromise the "innovative character of the method of argumentation" (448).

27 At 6.55.1 (already cited above), the altar is mentioned side by side with the *στήλη περὶ τῆς τῶν τυράννων ἀδικίας*.

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and localising it in the Pythian sanctuary, Thucydides comments on the lettering of the inscription (ἀμυδροῖς γράμμασι, 6.54.7).[28] However, the meaning of ἀμυδρός in our passage turns out to be elusive.[29] In LSJ, "*dim*, *faint*, *obscure*"[30] are given as the basic glosses of the adjective; for the Thucydidean passage in question, "*scarce legible* letters"[31] is offered. The problem is that such a description of the lettering of the inscription on the altar of Apollo is at odds with the impression of many modern readers of the inscription as it has been fragmentarily preserved on stone; according to Dover, for instance, "its letters are by no means 'faint' to us, as Greek inscriptions go".[32]

This discrepancy has led to a wealth of suggestions for the precise meaning of ἀμυδρός – and to the proposal of sometimes convoluted scenarios according to which Thucydides' description straightforwardly reflects the actual state of the inscription in his day: Is Thucydides referring to the letter forms and stating that they are archaic?[33] Is he describing the letters as having been cut particularly narrowly and shallowly?[34] Or is the reference not to carved letters at all but to painted ones (which were faded by the time Thucydides saw them and only later cut into the stone)?[35] Another suggestion, which has won wide acceptance, is that ἀμυδρός refers to the vanishing of the original paint of carved letters.[36] In terms of legibility, there are considerable differences between these scenarios. Compared to the fading of letters consisting only of paint, for instance, the vanishing of paint from the recesses of carved letters arguably results in a less serious impairment of readability.

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28 Jacoby is convinced that "the remark ἀμυδροῖς γράμμασι shows that he did the copying himself" (1949, 163); see also Zizza 1999, 16; Petrovic 2007a, 265 (arguing that the occurrence of ἀμυδρός, i.e. of some form of reference to the visual appearance of the inscription, excludes the use of a written collection of epigrams).

29 Thucydides uses this adjective only here (see Bétant 1843, *s.v.*).

30 LSJ *s.v.*

31 LSJ *s.v.* 1.

32 *HCT* IV 331. For a photograph of the inscription, see Travlos 1971, 102 (Fig. 133). On the good legibility of the inscription, see also Lavelle 1989, 207; Zizza 1999, 15; Petrovic 2007a, 265. However, the following observation by Keesling may serve as a warning not to underestimate the challenge of assessing the legibility of an inscription: "Compared to the letters of most Archaic Athenian funerary and dedicatory inscriptions, those carved on the Pythian Apollo altar appear shallow and widely spaced. Today in the Epigraphical Museum track lights provide ideal illumination to view the inscription; when the lights are turned off, the lettering on the altar is difficult to make out from more than a few feet away" (1999, 514 n. 23).

33 See Szanto 1881, 156.

34 See Lauffer 1937, 110.

35 See Löwy 1937, 13; Immerwahr 1990, 18 and 76; Hansen 1992.

36 See e.g. Heydemann 1879, 317; *FGE* p. 240; *CEG* no. 305; ML no. 11; *CT* III 446. On the widespread use of (probably mostly red) paint to colour the letters of Greek inscriptions, see Woodhead 1981, 27; Porter 2010, 468–469. For surviving examples of monochrome inscriptions and of bicoloured inscriptions of alternating red and blue lines, see Robert 1955, 211 n. 1 and 2. The common view that Thucydides' use of ἀμυδρός is due to the fading of the paint has been challenged by Lavelle, who suggests that the Athenians "may have attempted to cover over the inscription with plaster, stucco, or some other inoffensive building material or substance" (1989, 212).

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What bears emphasising in the context of interpreting Thucydides' use of ἀμυδρός is that the adjective occurs as part of a sentence that also contains the adjective δῆλος: τοῦ δ' ἐν Πυθίου ἔτι καὶ νῦν δῆλόν ἐστιν ἀμυδροῖς γράμμασι λέγον τάδε (6.54.7). Whereas ἀμυδρός specifically characterises the inscribed letters, δῆλος refers to the epigram as a whole (τοὐπίγραμμα, the subject of the preceding sentence, is understood as the subject of this sentence as well). Whatever the condition of the letters may be, the epigram is presented as visible[37] – as opposed to the one on the altar of the Twelve Gods, which is stated to have disappeared. In view of this contrast, the continued existence of the epigram on the altar of Apollo may well be the main point.

Of course, we may still wonder what the description of the letters contributes to Thucydides' presentation of the inscription. Is Thucydides perhaps showcasing the effort he is prepared to go through in finding out the truth about the past? Irrespective of the actual condition of the inscription on the monument, ἀμυδρός might, in principle, serve to evoke the notion of a serious impairment of legibility.[38] However, rather than mentioning the process of deciphering, Thucydides notes the visibility of the inscription. As a (reasonably well-preserved) monument from the past, the altar may serve to throw the Athenians' carelessness in dealing with their own past into relief:[39] the inscription, which contains information about the way in which the Pisistratids ruled in Athens, is not only easily accessible but also particularly trustworthy precisely because it shows signs of age. Seen from this perspective, it is the combination of the terms δῆλος and ἀμυδρός that drives home the metahistorical point that the Athenians fail to avail themselves of a particularly significant piece of evidence concerning their Pisistratid past.

As has been mentioned above, Thucydides bases his claim that Hippias was the only one of the legitimate brothers who had children (6.55.1) not only on the evidence of the dedicatory inscription on the altar of Apollo but also on the evidence of a certain stele (6.55.1–2):[40]

37 One might be tempted to argue that the notion that the epigram is visible on the monument is implied by the simple fact that Thucydides goes on to quote it, but it should be noted that Thucydides elsewhere embeds a quotation of Pausanias' erased epigram (see Ch. 6.1).

38 As Dover points out, "allowance must perhaps be made for rhetorical exaggeration of the difference between old and recent inscriptions, for Thucydides is not above pride in the trouble he has taken" (*HCT* IV 331).

39 According to Grethlein, the strikingly numerous references to inscriptions in the Pisistratid excursus "demonstrate the Athenians' sloppiness – they do not bother to take into account even what is open to everybody (to say nothing about serious research)" (2010, 218). With respect to the altar of Apollo and the stele on the Acropolis, this is an intriguing idea, but it should be noted that the mention of these two inscribed objects is preceded by a reference to the obliterated inscription on the altar of the Twelve Gods. This latter reference may well serve to illustrate the Athenians' negligence (or possibly even deliberate destruction) of an important piece of evidence for the characteristics of Pisistratid rule, but in its altered form, the altar of the Twelve Gods can hardly be regarded as an obvious source of information about "the truth about the tyrannicide" (218).

40 For an extensive discussion of this stele, which is not extant, and the historical issues surrounding it, see Lavelle 1983, 81–120; see also Stahl 1891, 265–267 with n. 1; Swoboda 1893, 60–61; Beloch 1913, 295; 1920, 312–313; von Stern 1917, 359–361; Valeton 1917, 23–30; Scholte 1937, 71–72; Lang 1955,

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> παῖδες γὰρ αὐτῷ μόνῳ φαίνονται τῶν γνησίων ἀδελφῶν γενόμενοι, ὡς ὅ τε βωμὸς σημαίνει καὶ ἡ στήλη περὶ τῆς τῶν τυράννων ἀδικίας ἡ ἐν τῇ Ἀθηναίων ἀκροπόλει σταθεῖσα, ἐν ᾗ Θεσσαλοῦ μὲν οὐδ' Ἱππάρχου οὐδεὶς παῖς γέγραπται, Ἱππίου δὲ πέντε, οἱ αὐτῷ ἐκ Μυρρίνης τῆς Καλλίου τοῦ Ὑπεροχίδου θυγατρὸς ἐγένοντο· εἰκὸς γὰρ ἦν τὸν πρεσβύτατον πρῶτον γῆμαι. καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ στήλῃ πρῶτος γέγραπται μετὰ τὸν πατέρα, οὐδὲ τοῦτο ἀπεικότως διὰ τὸ πρεσβεύειν τε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ καὶ τυραννεῦσαι.
>
> In his case alone, among the legitimate brothers, do there appear to have been children, as the altar indicates and the stele about the injustice of the tyrants set up on the Athenian Acropolis, on which no child of either Thessalus or Hipparchus is inscribed, but five of Hippias, born to him by Myrrhine, daughter of Callias, son of Hyperochides; now it was natural for the eldest to marry first. And on this same stele he is inscribed first after the father, not improbably because of being the senior next to him as well as having been tyrant.

The stele (referred to as ἡ στήλη περὶ τῆς τῶν τυράννων ἀδικίας[41]) is clearly presented as a valuable piece of evidence for the past. It should be noted, however, that Thucydides does not give a neutral and comprehensive description of what the text on the stele actually says. What is more, on the basis of the details Thucydides chooses to include in his highly selective description of the stele, especially the conclusion regarding the childlessness of Hippias' brothers is far from evident.[42] Conversely, if the stele is understood as evidence for this point, the relevance of the statement that "it was natural for the eldest to marry first" (εἰκὸς γὰρ ἦν τὸν πρεσβύτατον πρῶτον γῆμαι, 6.55.1) becomes questionable.[43] Just like in the case of the claim that the altar of Apollo shows that Hippias' brothers had no children, the reasoning with respect to the stele is far from compelling.[44]

401; Ostwald 1955, 109; *HCT* IV 324–325; Kinzl 1973; Lavelle 1984; 1988, 23–25; 1993, 69–71; Zizza 1999, 9–11; Smarczyk 2006, 508–509; *CT* III 447–448; Dreher 2016, 95–96; Iriarte 2019, 88–90; Spielberg 2019, 60–61.

41 The transmitted reading ἀδικίας has been suspected (see e.g. van Herwerden 1880, 156, proposing the conjecture ἀτιμίας; for a list of scholars following van Herwerden, see Lavelle 1984, 17 n. 1). At first glance, the reference to a law against the establishment of a tyranny in the Aristotelian *Athenaion politeia* that mentions being ἄτιμος as a sanction (16.10) might seem to support the conjecture, but the provenance of this law and its interpretation in the *Athenaion politeia* are controversial, and it is not clear that there is a connection between this law and the stele referred to by Thucydides (see Wankel 1984, 43). As a result, it seems best to retain the transmitted reading. Lavelle suggests that the word ἀδικία is, in fact, a quotation from the stele (see 1983, 85–87; 1984, esp. 19), but the epigraphic parallels he adduces are problematic (see Wankel 1984, esp. 51).

42 See Beloch 1913, 295; von Stern 1917, 359–360; Scholte 1937, 71; Lavelle 1983, 118.

43 See Lang 1955, 401 n. 1.

44 Lang 1955, 401 n. 1, calls it "obscure". Lavelle suggests that "Thucydides was already convinced about the succession and was superimposing his conclusions onto evidence that was only partially accommodating to them" (1983, 118). I am not convinced by Kinzl's attempt to elucidate the logic of the passage (see 1973, 505 n. 6).

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7.2 Archedice's Modest Memorial (6.59)

At the end of the Pisistratid excursus, Thucydides describes Hippias' harsh rule after the death of his brother Hipparchus at the hands of Harmodius and Aristogiton (6.59.2–3):

> τοῖς δ' Ἀθηναίοις χαλεπωτέρα μετὰ τοῦτο ἡ τυραννὶς κατέστη, καὶ ὁ Ἱππίας διὰ φόβου ἤδη μᾶλλον ὢν τῶν τε πολιτῶν πολλοὺς ἔκτεινε καὶ πρὸς τὰ ἔξω ἅμα διεσκοπεῖτο, εἴ ποθεν ἀσφάλειάν τινα ὁρῴη μεταβολῆς γενομένης ὑπάρχουσάν οἱ. Ἱππόκλου γοῦν τοῦ Λαμψακηνοῦ τυράννου Αἰαντίδῃ τῷ παιδὶ θυγατέρα ἑαυτοῦ μετὰ ταῦτα Ἀρχεδίκην Ἀθηναῖος ὢν Λαμψακηνῷ ἔδωκεν, αἰσθανόμενος αὐτοὺς μέγα παρὰ βασιλεῖ Δαρείῳ δύνασθαι.
>
> After this, the tyranny took on a harsher form for the Athenians, and Hippias, now more under the influence of fear, put many citizens to death and at the same time looked around in foreign parts to see where he could find some place providing him with security if a revolution occurred. After all, he, an Athenian, gave his daughter Archedice to a Lampsacene, Aeantides, son of Hippoclus, the tyrant of Lampsacus, aware that they had great influence with King Darius.

This mention of Archedice's marriage is followed by a reference to her inscribed funerary monument at Lampsacus (6.59.3):[45]

> καὶ αὐτῆς σῆμα ἐν Λαμψάκῳ ἐστὶν ἐπίγραμμα ἔχον τόδε·
> ἀνδρὸς ἀριστεύσαντος ἐν Ἑλλάδι τῶν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ
> Ἱππίου Ἀρχεδίκην ἥδε κέκευθε κόνις,
> ἣ πατρός τε καὶ ἀνδρὸς ἀδελφῶν τ' οὖσα τυράννων
> παίδων τ' οὐκ ἤρθη νοῦν ἐς ἀτασθαλίην.
>
> Her tomb is at Lampsacus, and bears this inscription: "This dust covers Archedice, daughter of Hippias, the finest man of Hellas in his time; although father, husband, brothers, and sons were tyrants, presumption never stirred in her mind."

Although the connection between this account of Hippias' behaviour and the subsequent mention of the funerary monument of his daughter is left vague – the linking element is

45 On Thucydides' quotation of this epigram, which is not extant in epigraphic form, see esp. *HCT* IV 324; Zizza 1999, 13–14; Smarczyk 2006, 509–510; *CT* III 447 and 451–452; Sheppard 2018, 28–29; Iriarte 2019, 90–91. Editions and further discussions of the epigram include Bergk no. 111; *IGM* no. 31; Hauvette 1896, 48–49; *GE* no. 109; *HGE* no. 35; Diehl no. 85; FH no. 138; *GVI* no. 539; North 1966, 23; *EG* no. 16a; *I.Lampsakos* no. 24a; *FGE* no. 26a; Harvey 1985, 69–70; Lavelle 1986; Molyneux 1992, 74–76; Erbse 1998, 222; Sancisi-Weerdenburg 2000a, 14; Bravi 2006, 75–77; Petrovic 2007a, 250–259.

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καί –, the passage has been adduced as an example of Thucydides' use of epigraphic material to argue a point.[46]

On closer scrutiny, however, it turns out that the ties between the content of the inscription and the preceding account of Hippias' activities and plans after the assassination of his brother are not very close. While the quotation of the inscription serves well to lend support to the idea that Hippias successfully established a link with the tyrant of Lampsacus and thus indirectly with the Persian king, it does not show that the arrangement of Archedice's marriage fell in the period before Hippias' expulsion from Athens.[47] Since it is not least the relative chronology of the last phase of the Pisistratid tyranny that is the focus of the account preceding the embedded inscription, the probative value of Thucydides' uncommented quotation of Archedice's epitaph turns out to be limited.[48]

Whereas Archedice does not actually accomplish anything in the main narrative – the contrast to female Herodotean 'achievers' could hardly be greater –, Thucydides places her in the limelight by quoting her epigram. At the same time, it is her relationship to her family – in particular, her status as Hippias' daughter – that is the focus of the epigram.[49] Indeed, her name does not appear before the second line, while the entire first line and the beginning of the second line are devoted to a description of her father, Hippias, whose name immediately precedes hers. In the main clause, which makes up the first half of the epigram, Archedice is the object (Ἀρχεδίκην ἥδε κέκευθε κόνις); in the subsequent relative clause (ἣ [...] / οὐκ ἤρθη νοῦν, 6.59.3), she is the subject – but she is not praised for any (positive) achievement.[50]

On the other hand, it could be said that the focus on Hippias' power in the first half of Archedice's epigram serves to make her modesty all the more noteworthy – as does the mention of the fact that she was daughter, wife, sister, and mother to tyrants (πατρός τε καὶ ἀνδρὸς ἀδελφῶν τ' οὖσα τυράννων / παίδων τ', 6.59.3).[51] Moreover, while it is true that her 'achievement' is described in negative terms, this does not necessarily belittle it: when Archedice is declared to have been free from presumption (οὐκ ἤρθη νοῦν ἐς ἀτασθαλίην, 6.59.3), this amounts to a praise of her σωφροσύνη,[52] and the notion of her lasting blamelessness is set off against the inherent ephemerality of the Pisistratid tyranny that is suggested by the epigram.[53]

While the reference to Hippias' exalted position in the first line of the epitaph is reminiscent of Pausanias' self-presentation as Ἑλλήνων ἀρχηγός (1.132.2) in the epigram on the

46 See Zizza 1999, 13–14. A probative function of the quotation of the inscription is also asserted by Stahl (see 1966, 7).

47 See *HCT* IV 324.

48 On the lack of commentary, see Higbie 1999, 62.

49 See Lavelle 1986, 240.

50 Harvey speaks of a "strikingly negative" obituary and notes that Archedice "is praised for what she did *not* do" (1985, 83); see also Petrovic 2007a, 252.

51 See Lavelle 1986, 243; Petrovic 2007a, 253.

52 As North observes, the epigram "lacks the word sophrosyne but speaks eloquently of its spirit" (1966, 23).

53 See Lavelle 1986, 244.

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Plataean tripod,[54] there is a contrast between Pausanias' proud description of his role in the fight against the Persians and the mention of Archedice's self-restraint in the last line of her epitaph.[55] Intriguingly, whereas Pausanias' epigraphic intervention is shown to fail (at least in that the inscription is soon erased), the description of Archedice's funerary epigram suggests that it is still there (like the stelai indicating the place where Pausanias is buried).

As for the relationship between Archedice's epigram and the Pisistratid excursus, the praise of Hippias in the first line of the epigram can be paralleled (admittedly at a very general level) with the rather positive description of Pisistratid rule prior to Hipparchus' assassination that Thucydides gives at the outset of the Pisistratid excursus. What is more, the emphasis on Archedice's untaintedness by ἀτασθαλίη, which suggests a lack of self-restraint on the part of other members of her family, can be associated with the harshness and brutality of the last phase of Hippias' reign. Being quoted at the end of the Pisistratid excursus, the epigram thus echoes central themes of the preceding account.

7.3 Conclusion

At first glance, the epigraphic references in the Pisistratid excursus may seem to present us with Thucydides as a diligent user of epigraphic material to reconstruct the truth about the past. However, such an image of Thucydides as a critical epigraphist, attractive as it may be, is not without its problems.

First, some omissions (e.g. the complete lack of references to inscriptions in the *Pentekontaetia* or the lack of reference to the Athenian archon list) should make us wary of crediting Thucydides with a modern historian's acknowledgement of the value of inscriptions as sources. Secondly, descriptions of inscribed monuments that are suggestive of autopsy stand next to explicit references to lost inscriptions. The expectation that these passages illustrate the importance of autopsy for the reconstruction of the past is thus (at least in part) disappointed. Thirdly, in those passages where we can observe how Thucydides argues from certain details of specific inscriptions (e.g. in the case of the stele on the Acropolis), his reasoning is not as clear as is sometimes claimed.

This is not to deny that at least some of the inscriptions are explicitly adduced to support certain claims about the past. Once we focus not so much on the soundness of Thucydides' epigraphic reasoning from a present-day perspective but rather observe that he endows inscriptions with a probative value, however, we are not that far from Herodotus. Admittedly, the conclusions Thucydides draws from the stele about the tyrants' ἀδικία may seem, despite the obscurity of Thucydides' reasoning, decidedly more plausible than the conclusions drawn by Herodotus from the epigrams he quotes at 5.59–61. Nevertheless, there is a structural parallel between Herodotus' adducing of

54 On this inscription, see Ch. 6.1.
55 On this contrast, see *CT* III 447.

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the appearance of inscriptions to reconstruct the development of Greek writing and Thucydides' interpretation of the position of Hippias' name on the stele.

The hypothesis that the presence of inscriptions in the Pisistratid excursus serves to underline the Athenians' failure to consider even the most evident traces of the true nature of Pisistratid rule has turned out to work fairly well for the extant inscription on the altar in the Pythian sanctuary but to be undermined by the obliterated inscription on the altar in the Agora. Thucydides both reproachfully draws attention to what should be obvious but is nevertheless ignored and flaunts his willingness to integrate more indirect and recondite evidence. These are different strategies, but they may both be seen to contribute to the establishment of the authority of Thucydides' account.

On the one hand, inscriptions such as the dedicatory epigram on the altar in the Pythian sanctuary show that material objects may faithfully preserve valuable information about the past. On the other, there are two inscriptions that are explicitly stated not to exist any more (Pausanias' epigram and the inscription on the altar of the Twelve Gods). Our awareness is thus drawn to the potential impermanence of information that has been committed to writing on stone or other seemingly durable materials; read as a metahistorical foil, these impermanent inscriptions highlight the crucial role of Thucydides' work as a source of information. What is more, the stele about the tyrants' ἀδικία on the Acropolis illustrates the potential tendentiousness of inscriptions. While Thucydides states that Hippias reigns brutally after the assassination of his brother (6.59.2), he also notes, at the outset of the excursus, the Pisistratids' respect for the existing laws (6.54.6). There is thus a certain parallel between this epigraphic text and the anti-Pisistratid tendency of the (alleged) *communis opinio* about their rule that Thucydides opposes so polemically with his own account.

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8 Quoted Interstate Treaties: Set in Stone?

An episode taking place in the winter of 419/418 features a noteworthy epigraphic act that illustrates the role of inscriptions in interstate relations. When the Spartans send a naval force to Epidaurus, the Argives reproach the Athenians for not having prevented this voyage (5.56.2):[1]

> Ἀργεῖοι δ' ἐλθόντες παρ' Ἀθηναίους ἐπεκάλουν ὅτι γεγραμμένον ἐν ταῖς σπονδαῖς διὰ τῆς ἑαυτῶν ἑκάστους μὴ ἐᾶν πολεμίους διιέναι ἐάσειαν κατὰ θάλασσαν παραπλεῦσαι· καὶ εἰ μὴ κἀκεῖνοι ἐς Πύλον κομιοῦσιν ἐπὶ Λακεδαιμονίους τοὺς Μεσσηνίους καὶ Εἵλωτας, ἀδικήσεσθαι αὐτοί.
>
> The Argives went to the Athenians and blamed them for allowing a move by sea when it was written in the treaty that none of them was to let the enemy cross his territory; they would be suffering an injustice if the Athenians did not set the Messenians and the Helots against the Lacedaemonians at Pylos.

The treaty in question is the Quadruple Alliance between the Athenians, Argives, Mantineans, and Eleans of 420 (quoted earlier in the *History*), which does indeed contain the following clause (5.47.5):[2]

> ὅπλα δὲ μὴ ἐᾶν ἔχοντας διιέναι ἐπὶ πολέμῳ διὰ τῆς γῆς τῆς σφετέρας αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ξυμμάχων ὧν ἄρχουσιν ἕκαστοι, μηδὲ κατὰ θάλασσαν, ἢν μὴ ψηφισαμένων τῶν πόλεων ἁπασῶν τὴν δίοδον εἶναι, Ἀθηναίων καὶ Ἀργείων καὶ Μαντινέων καὶ Ἠλείων.
>
> No one under arms is to pass for warlike purpose through the territory of these parties or the allies they severally rule, nor by sea, unless all the cities – Athens, Argos, Mantinea, and Elis – vote that passage is allowed.

1 On the Argives' complaint, see e.g. Classen/Steup 1912, 141–142; *HCT* IV 77; Kagan 1981, 88–89; Lazenby 2004, 112–113.

2 See Classen/Steup 1912, 141; *HCT* IV 77; *CT* III 147. According to Classen/Steup 1912, 142, the passage of the Spartan force through Athenian waters can be regarded as a violation of the Peace of Nicias, the terms of which include a statement to the effect that the peace is to be observed both by land and by sea (5.18.3), but Hornblower points out that the charge of not respecting the oaths encompasses the breaches mentioned at 5.46.2 (see *CT* III 148).

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How do the Athenians react to the Argives' complaint? In addition to complying with the request to bring the Helots back to Pylos to harass the Spartans (5.56.3), the Athenians perform an epigraphic act (5.56.3):[3] Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ Ἀλκιβιάδου πείσαντος τῇ μὲν Λακωνικῇ στήλῃ ὑπέγραψαν ὅτι οὐκ ἐνέμειναν οἱ Λακεδαιμόνιοι τοῖς ὅρκοις ("On Alcibiades' persuasion, the Athenians inscribed at the bottom of the Laconian stele that the Lacedaemonians had not kept to their oaths").

This "Laconian stele" is probably to be understood to refer to the Athenian copy of the Peace of Nicias.[4] However, when Thucydides earlier quotes the terms of this peace treaty (at 5.18–19; to be discussed below) there is no reference to a durable object acting as carrier medium for the treaty text – at least as far as the immediate framing of the quotation is concerned (5.17.2):

> ποιοῦνται τὴν ξύμβασιν καὶ ἐσπείσαντο πρὸς τοὺς Ἀθηναίους καὶ ὤμοσαν, ἐκεῖνοί τε πρὸς τοὺς Λακεδαιμονίους, τάδε.
>
> They [i.e. the Lacedaemonians] made the agreement and ratified the treaty with the Athenians and swore the oaths, and the Athenians likewise with the Lacedaemonians, as follows.

The quotation of the Peace of Nicias at 5.18–19 is one of several instances of an incorporation of a diplomatic document into the text of the *History* (the other passages are 4.118–119.2; 5.23–24.1; 5.47; 5.77; 5.79; 8.18; 8.37; 8.58).[5] As opposed to the quotations of metrical inscriptions in Books 1 and 6, these embedded texts are not explicitly introduced as inscriptions.[6] However, the terms of the Peace of Nicias as quoted by Thucydides contain a provision to publish it in epigraphic form in Olympia, Pytho (i.e. Delphi), the Isthmus, on the Athenian Acropolis, and in the Spartan Amyclaeum (στήλας δὲ στῆσαι Ὀλυμπίασι καὶ Πυθοῖ καὶ Ἰσθμοῖ καὶ Ἀθήνησιν ἐν πόλει καὶ ἐν Λακεδαίμονι ἐν Ἀμυκλαίῳ, 5.18.10). Similar publication clauses occur in two further Thucydidean treaties. The alliance

3 The Athenians' reaction will be discussed below.

4 For this identification, see e.g. the decided statement by Classen/Steup 1912, 142; see also Meyer 1970, 25; Smarczyk 2006, 505; Culasso Gastaldi 2010, 150–151. By contrast, Bolmarcich points out that it could also refer to the Athenian copy of the subsequent Spartan-Athenian alliance (see 2007b, 481; followed by Kozak in Sommerstein/Bayliss 2013, 265). On the terms of the Peace of Nicias (*StV* II no. 188), see esp. Baltrusch 1994, 169–185 (with further literature at 170 n. 430); for a concise description of the erosion of the peace, see Rhodes 2008, 9–12.

5 For a survey of these passages, see Bearzot 2003, 273–278. A comprehensive treatment of these nine passages, the textual status of which has been much debated (see p. 139 n. 19), is beyond the scope of this study (see also the next note).

6 Hornblower points out that these treaties "are not cited *as inscriptions*" (*CT* III 448; for a contrary statement, see Higbie 1999, 59). Consequently, these passages are not the focus of the present study, which is primarily concerned with inscriptions that are introduced as such by Herodotus or Thucydides. As we shall see, however, the epigraphic sphere is clearly evoked, in three cases, in the embedded text itself; the remainder of this chapter will be concerned with these three documents (especially the Peace of Nicias).

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between Athens and Sparta of 421[7] contains the provision that a stele is to be erected both in Sparta in the Amyclaeum and in Athens on the Acropolis (στήλην δὲ ἑκατέρους στῆσαι, τὴν μὲν ἐν Λακεδαίμονι παρ' Ἀπόλλωνι ἐν Ἀμυκλαίῳ, τὴν δὲ ἐν Ἀθήναις ἐν πόλει παρ' Ἀθηνᾷ, 5.23.5), and the Quadruple Alliance between Athens, Argos, Mantinea, and Elis of 420[8] features the following stipulation (5.47.11):

> τὰς δὲ ξυνθήκας τὰς περὶ τῶν σπονδῶν καὶ τῶν ὅρκων καὶ τῆς ξυμμαχίας ἀναγράψαι ἐν στήλῃ λιθίνῃ Ἀθηναίους μὲν ἐν πόλει, Ἀργείους δὲ ἐν ἀγορᾷ ἐν τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος τῷ ἱερῷ, Μαντινέας δὲ ἐν τοῦ Διὸς τῷ ἱερῷ ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ· καταθέντων δὲ καὶ Ὀλυμπίασι στήλην χαλκῆν κοινῇ Ὀλυμπίοις τοῖς νυνί.
>
> The Athenians are to inscribe the provisions of the treaty, the oaths, and the alliance on a stone stele on the Acropolis; the Argives, in the sanctuary of Apollo in the agora; the Mantineans, in the sanctuary of Zeus in the agora; let them also jointly set up a bronze stele at Olympia during the approaching Olympic festival.

In the passages just quoted, the epigraphic publication of the terms of the treaties is presented as something that is to be carried out in the future. Whether this provision will be carried out is a different question; at least as far as the immediate framing of the embedded texts is concerned, it is left open.[9] Still, in the texts as they are given by Thucydides, the epigraphic existence of the treaty terms is clearly envisaged.[10]

The well-attested practice of publishing treaties in epigraphic form can be seen as a strategy to enhance their effectiveness, especially in connection with the tendency to set them up in sacred spaces – and thus, as it were, directly under the eyes of the gods.[11] Consider, for instance, the detail that a copy of the Peace of Nicias is to be erected, among other places, on the Acropolis. As the "sacred heart of the city",[12] the Acropolis constituted a space that was closely connected to the divine sphere and could be conceived of as being under the gods' protection.[13]

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7 On the terms of this treaty (*StV* II no. 189), see esp. Baltrusch 1994, 73–76.

8 On the terms of this treaty (*StV* II no. 193), see esp. Baltrusch 1994, 76–82.

9 In the case of the Quadruple Alliance, for instance, Kirchhoff doubts that two of the stelai mentioned in the treaty text (the one in Olympia and the one at the Isthmus) were actually set up, observing that these places were under the influence of states refusing to take the oath, namely Elis and Corinth (see 1895, 65). Gomme thinks that the stelai may have been erected nevertheless (see *HCT* III 677).

10 On these references to writing, see Crane 1996, 14–18.

11 On this common practice and its implications, see e.g. Steiner 1994, 66; Davies 2003, 337; Liddel 2003, 83; Culasso Gastaldi 2010, 149; Drauschke 2016.

12 Lambert 2018a [2011], 81.

13 See Osborne 1999, 346–347; Lambert 2018b, 26. For a different assessment of the relevance of the aspect of divine protection, see Meyer 2013, esp. 462 and 472. In the end, it seems best to assume that the expectation of divine protection was one among several factors that made the Acropolis an appropriate location for the publication of inscriptions (see Lambert 2018b, 21–30).

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The Peace of Nicias is a special case in that its existence in epigraphic form in Athens is arguably evoked when Thucydides refers to the Laconian stele later in Book 5. For the other two treaty texts featuring publication clauses, it does not emerge from the *History* that these provisions are carried out.[14] However, in the case of one of these treaties, namely the Quadruple Alliance between the Athenians, Argives, Mantineans, and Eleans, one of the inscribed copies mentioned in Thucydides' quotation still exists in fragmentary form (*IG* I³ 83).[15] Certain discrepancies between the epigraphically preserved text and the version that has been transmitted in the manuscripts of the *History* notwithstanding, there is a close match.[16] However, this does not necessarily imply that Thucydides' quotation is directly based on this specific *inscription*.[17]

Just like the ultimate sources of information for the treaty texts that are part of the *History* as it has been transmitted to us remain elusive, the textual status of these passages is difficult to assess: are these quotations to be regarded as integral to Thucydides'

14 To be precise, even the mention of the Laconian stele at 5.56.3 is not entirely straightforward in this respect (see p. 136 n. 4).

15 On the relationship between the inscription and the text quoted in the *History*, see e.g. Kirchhoff 1877, 381; Herbst 1890, esp. 388–389; Cohen 1956; *StV* II no. 193; Lewis 1980 (see also the next note).

16 The accuracy of Thucydides' quotation is emphasised e.g. by Pouilloux 1987, 311; Canfora 1990, 202; Davies 1996, 30; Hornblower 2000, 649; *CT* III 109.

17 One theory that has been advanced in order to explain the discrepancies between *IG* I³ 83 and the text as transmitted in manuscripts of the *History* stipulates that Thucydides did not get to see the (still extant) Athenian copy but the Olympian one mentioned at 5.47.11 (see Clark 1999). This is a possible scenario, but it is not without its problems. The treaty as quoted by Thucydides is in Attic. Clark supposes that the Olympian copy was in Attic as well (see 123; see also *HCT* IV 55), but this is not certain (Kirchhoff 1895, 99–100, for instance, argues that it was in Elean). Another possible scenario is that the Olympian copy was in Elean and translated into Attic by Thucydides. However, Thucydides presents two treaties in Doric (5.77 and 79), so the hypothesised translation of a putative Elean text into Attic would be quite exceptional. On these two scenarios and the problems they entail, see *CT* III 110–111. Fox acknowledges the possibility that Thucydides "may have taken time to copy down the text from the stele on the site" (i.e. in Olympia), but he goes on to suggest that Thucydides may have "received from the stonemason, or a responsible person, the papyrus copy from which the cutter had had to work" (2010, 23). In the case of most of the other treaties quoted in the *History* (4.118–119.2; 5.77; 5.79; 8.18; 8.37; 8.58), Fox in fact argues that Thucydides derived his knowledge from papyrus copies. Fox' reconstruction of the circumstances under which Thucydides may have received papyrus copies of the treaties remains highly speculative, but it can serve to make us aware of the fact that Thucydides' practice of quoting treaty texts does not necessarily reflect the importance of their existence *qua* inscriptions for the composition of the *History*. On the possibility that Thucydides' quotation of the text of the Quadruple Alliance is based on an archive copy of the epigraphically preserved text, see e.g. Cohen 1956, 294; *CT* III 111. On the general problem of determining the source of information for Thucydides' quotations of treaties, see e.g. Bearzot 2003, 291–292; 2017, 156; *CT* III 447.

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– unfinished[18] – work or as extraneous material that could not have been part of a final version?[19]

If one subscribes to the notion that ancient historiography in general and the *History* in particular did not admit of stylistic variation,[20] the full quotations of diplomatic documents in Books 4, 5, and 8 must indeed appear highly suspect, and it has accordingly been argued that the passages in question would have been replaced by shorter summaries in the final version.[21] However, while it is hard to deny that some aspects remain problematic,[22] it seems worthwhile to approach them as potentially significant parts of the *History* as it has come down to us – not least because the argument from unity of style has proved to be problematic.[23]

18 That the *History*, which covers events down to 411, was not finished is strongly implied by 5.26: the use of the perfect form γέγραφε with reference to the fighting that was resumed in 421 anticipates the completion of Thucydides' work down to 404 (see *CT* III 45; for a different view, see Konishi 1987).

19 On the controversial issue of the textual status of this material, see (in addition to the comments on the passages in question offered by *HCT* and *CT*) Steup 1881; Kirchhoff 1895; Meyer 1899, 269–296; Schwartz 1919; von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff 1969 [1885], 81–82; 1969 [1915]; 1969 [1919]; Meyer 1970; Weil 1974; Erbse 1975; 1989, 42 and 96; Luschnat 1978, 1122–1132; Connor 1984, 144–147 and 217–219; Canfora 1990; *CT* II 113–119; F. L. Müller 1997; Shrimpton 1997, 128–131; Rood 1998, 91–93; 1999; Bearzot 2003, 273–278; 2017, 156; Porciani 2003; Will 2003, 354–356; Heitsch 2006; Smarczyk 2006, 504–507; Rhodes 2007, 58–59; Liotsakis 2017, 39–42 and 166–167.

20 See von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff 1969 [1885], 81–82; see also 1877, 338 n. 21; Nipperdey 1877, esp. 418. That von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff (and Schwartz 1919, 20–31) treated Nipperdey's observations about the stylistic transformation of speeches and letters in Latin historiography as a law that applied to the presentation of public documents in Thucydides' work has rightly been criticised by Meyer 1970, 7–8. In a later article, von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff questioned the applicability of the (alleged) law to Thucydides (see 1969 [1915], 378). However, he still claimed that *qua* raw material for research, documents had no place in a work of ancient historiography such as the *History* (i.e. a work with stylistic pretensions) (see 378). That quotations of treaties are incompatible with the rest of Thucydides' work has been claimed with particular emphasis by Schwartz 1919, 28; see also Syme 1962, 46 (arguing that the documents quoted in Book 5 are "stop-gaps"); *HCT* V 383.

21 Schwartz regards the following passages as examples of such "Urkunden-Regesten": 2.24.1; 3.28.1; 3.114.2; 4.16; 4.21.3; 4.105.2; 4.106.2; 5.27.2; 5.28.1 (see 1919, 30 n. 1; see also Luschnat 1978, 1124). However, it has been debated whether these passages really imply the consultation of written texts (see, for instance, the opposing interpretations of 4.105.2 by Meyer 1970, 10, and F. L. Müller 1997, 163–164).

22 At the end of his consideration of "iv–v. 24 as a work of art" (*CT* II 107), Hornblower promotes a view of this part of the *History* as "innovatory and exciting and late, though never wholly revised and at some points less than wholly satisfactory" (122).

23 See e.g. Hornblower 1987, 138. The quotations of treaties are not the only evidence of stylistic variety in the text of the *History* as we have it today (for a survey of different types of embedded texts, see Bearzot 2003). We find, for instance, quotations of various types of poetic texts: in addition to the epigrams quoted at 1.132.2, 6.54.7, and 6.59.3, there are quotations from the *Iliad* (1.9.4) and the Homeric hymns (3.104.4–5) as well as quotations of oracular responses in verse at 2.17.1 and 2.54.2. As for prose passages, the *History* contains quotations of several letters (1.128.7; 1.129.3; 1.137.4; 7.11–15) and, of course, numerous speeches (on the formal variety of the latter, see Luschnat 1978,

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In the context of an attempt to work out how embedded documents might contribute to Thucydides' account, a feature of these texts that deserves attention is the prominence of oaths.[24] Consider, for instance, the following extract from the Peace of Nicias (5.18.9–10):[25]

> ὅρκους δὲ ποιήσασθαι Ἀθηναίους πρὸς Λακεδαιμονίους καὶ τοὺς ξυμμάχους κατὰ πόλεις. ὀμνύντων δὲ τὸν ἐπιχώριον ὅρκον ἑκάτεροι τὸν μέγιστον ἑπτὰ καὶ δέκα ἑκάστης πόλεως. ὁ δ' ὅρκος ἔστω ὅδε· "ἐμμενῶ ταῖς ξυνθήκαις καὶ ταῖς σπονδαῖς ταῖσδε δικαίως καὶ ἀδόλως." ἔστω δὲ Λακεδαιμονίοις καὶ τοῖς ξυμμάχοις κατὰ ταὐτὰ ὅρκος πρὸς Ἀθηναίους, τὸν δὲ ὅρκον ἀνανεοῦσθαι κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν ἀμφοτέρους.
>
> The Athenians are to swear an oath to the Lacedaemonians and their allies, city by city. Let each party swear the strongest local oath, seventeen men from each city. Let this be the oath: "I will abide by this agreement and treaty with justice and without deceit." For the Lacedaemonians and their allies, let their oath to the Athenians be in the same fashion. Both parties are to renew the oath every year.

In the alliance between Athens and Sparta, the swearing of oaths is mentioned in the following passage (5.23.4):[26]

> ὀμοῦνται δὲ ταῦτα οἵπερ καὶ τὰς ἄλλας σπονδὰς ὤμνυον ἑκατέρων. ἀνανεοῦσθαι δὲ <τὸν ὅρκον> κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν Λακεδαιμονίους μὲν ἰόντας ἐς Ἀθήνας πρὸς τὰ Διονύσια, Ἀθηναίους δὲ ἰόντας ἐς Λακεδαίμονα πρὸς τὰ Ὑακίνθια.
>
> On each side, those who swore to the other treaty shall swear this. It is to be renewed annually by the Lacedaemonians going to Athens at the Dionysia and by the Athenians going to Lacedaemon at the Hyacinthia.

The Quadruple Alliance features the following declaration (5.47.8):[27]

> ὀμόσαι δὲ τὰς σπονδὰς Ἀθηναίους μὲν ὑπέρ τε σφῶν αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ξυμμάχων, Ἀργεῖοι δὲ καὶ Μαντινῆς καὶ Ἠλεῖοι καὶ οἱ ξύμμαχοι τούτων κατὰ πόλεις ὀμνύντων. ὀμνύντων

1162; for a survey of the debate about their character and relationship to the surrounding narrative, see Scardino 2007, 453–464).

24 On the role of oaths in Greek interstate agreements, see e.g. Bolmarcich 2007a; Giovannini 2007, 232–235; Sommerstein/Bayliss 2013, 145–325; Scharff 2016. On oaths in Thucydides, see Lateiner 2012, 169–178.

25 The swearing of oaths is also mentioned at the end of the embedded treaty text, where we find a long list of names of those who swore the oath (5.19.2). On the oaths in the Peace of Nicias, see esp. Kozak in Sommerstein/Bayliss 2013, 255–266.

26 Again, the text ends with a list of those who swore the oath (5.24.1).

27 There follows a list of the types of magistrates who are to swear the oath (5.47.9) and the provision that the oaths shall be renewed (5.47.10).

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> δὲ τὸν ἐπιχώριον ὅρκον ἕκαστοι τὸν μέγιστον κατὰ ἱερῶν τελείων. ὁ δὲ ὅρκος ἔστω ὅδε· "ἐμμενῶ τῇ ξυμμαχίᾳ κατὰ τὰ ξυγκείμενα δικαίως καὶ ἀβλαβῶς καὶ ἀδόλως, καὶ οὐ παραβήσομαι τέχνῃ οὐδὲ μηχανῇ οὐδεμιᾷ."
>
> The Athenians are to swear to the treaty on their own behalf and that of their allies; let the Argives, Mantineans, Eleans, and their allies swear by each city separately. Let each swear the strongest local oath over full-grown victims. And let this be the oath: "I will abide by the alliance in accordance with its provisions with justice and without harm and without deceit, and I will not transgress it by any contrivance or device."

This emphasis on the swearing of oaths conveys a strong sense of the bindingness of the terms, but there is, as the *History* shows time and again, no guarantee that the terms of a treaty will be respected.[28] Consider, for instance, the Peace of Nicias. According to the clause quoted at 5.18.3, this peace treaty (concluded in 421) is supposed to last for fifty years, but it is as early as 419/418 that Alcibiades persuades the Athenians to record on the Laconian stele that "the Lacedaemonians had not kept to their oaths" (οὐκ ἐνέμειναν οἱ Λακεδαιμόνιοι τοῖς ὅρκοις, 5.56.3).

What are the implications of the Athenians' epigraphic intervention? On the one hand, the modification of the Laconian stele is a far less drastic measure than, say, the resumption of open warfare.[29] In fact, the Athenians even refrain from tearing down the stele, which would have amounted to an outright annulment of the treaty.[30] At the same time, the significance of the inscribed claim that the Spartans have broken their oaths, which appears to be unprecedented, should not be underestimated: the reproach is a serious one,[31] and when Alcibiades persuades the Athenians to record it on the stele,[32] he fuels the tensions between Athens and Sparta.[33]

If Thucydides' account of the developments during this period of time is read against the backdrop of the text of the embedded treaties, a striking discrepancy between the aspirations for stability expressed in these treaties and the actual development of the

28 On the breaches of the Peace of Nicias, the subsequent alliance between Athens and Sparta, and the Quadruple Alliance, see Rhodes 2008, 9–10.

29 The Athenians' restraint is stressed by Seager, who observes that "there was no aggressive sequel to this sabre-rattling", adding that "there was still at Athens a general hesitation to become more involved than was necessary" (1976, 265).

30 Holladay comments that the Athenians "contented themselves with adding a footnote to the stele of the Peace with Sparta" and "did not throw down the stele as if the Peace had been broken" (1977, 56 n. 16; see also Classen/Steup 1912, 142–143; *HCT* IV 78).

31 As Hornblower points out, "[t]he charge amounts to one of perjury, a serious matter", though he goes on to add that "such charges might be little more than point-scoring" (*CT* III 148; see also Hornblower 2007, 139).

32 According to Bolmarcich, it is to be assumed that Alcibiades convinced the Assembly to pass a decree to amend the stele (see 2007b, 481).

33 See Smarczyk 2006, 506, also noting that it "represented a gain in prestige for Alcibiades at the expense of his opponent Nicias".

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relationship between Athens and Sparta can be observed.[34] In the case of the Peace of Nicias, the discrepancy between the political situation as it is defined in the treaty and the actual developments finds a reflection in the epigraphic sphere (at least to a certain extent): the fact that the provisions of the treaty, which are supposed to promote stable and peaceful interstate relations for the following fifty years, are soon overtaken by the political reality is reflected in the modification of the Athenian monument inscribed with these provisions. In other cases, the fact that the provisions of a treaty may quickly turn out to become obsolete is illustrated by the juxtaposition of (at times extensive) quotations of treaty texts and an account of how events actually unfold. At first glance, the limited validity of the provisions laid down in treaties may nourish the suspicion that the passages where they are quoted should not be regarded as integral parts of the *History*: what is the point of recording the terms of a treaty that fails to shape the political reality in the way it is intended to? However, the inclusion of quotations of treaties conveys a concrete and immediate impression of the "hard nuggets of diplomacy",[35] and the very discrepancy between diplomatic efforts and the course of events can be seen as an important aspect of Thucydides' account.[36]

As opposed to attempts to justify the inclusion of documents in terms of their content,[37] the approach just outlined has the advantage of taking account of the specific

34 The importance of this contrast has been underlined by Connor, who suggests that the incorporation of these documents serves to "emphasize the discrepancy between professions of enduring stability and the rapidly shifting reality of events" (1984, 146). Connor states that this is only one aspect of the "dual role" of documents, the other being that they "help mark out the stages in an otherwise complex and amorphous diplomatic narrative" (146), but when he explains the fact that the alliance between Argos and Athens of 417 only receives a brief mention at 5.82.5 by the consideration that "[i]f the documents are cited largely for their ironic effect, nothing would be gained by quoting this document" (147), this arguably comes close to elevating the argument from irony to a general principle. Hornblower rightly warns against such a generalisation (see *CT* III 211); this does not mean, however, that this argument cannot help elucidate the way in which quotations of documents contribute to the *History* (see *CT* III 211). As for the other aspect envisaged by Connor, i.e. the role of embedded documents as "stopping points in the often perplexing progression of events" (1984, 146), it appears to me that the incorporation of diplomatic minutiae actually adds to the overall complexity of Thucydides' text: the conclusion of a treaty may well be regarded as marking a new stage in the course of events, but if it contains proclamations that do not, in many respects, correspond to the subsequent developments, this enhances the complexity of the overall picture. However, this difficulty may well be regarded as a positive feature of Thucydides' account: as Erbse argues, the embedded documents challenge the recipients to assess political measures by comparing contractual statements and actual outcomes (see 1975, 64–67; see also Meyer 1970, 97–99; Rood 1998, 91–93).

35 *CT* II 359.

36 For such a take on the function of the quotations of treaties in Book 5, see esp. Connor 1984, 146–147; Rood 1998, 91–93; Smarczyk 2006, 505–507.

37 With reference to the truce of 423 (quoted at 4.118–119.2), Hornblower remarks that Thucydides "may have decided that, for instance, by not giving the terms of the Thirty Years Peace in book i, some big issues were left obscure (as they certainly were)" (*CT* II 359); regarding the resolution of the Spartan assembly to come to an agreement with the Argives (quoted at 5.77), Hornblower points out that it ties up a narrative loose end (the problematic relationship between Argos and Epidaurus)

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form of the embedded texts. At the same time, the explanatory power of such an approach has its limits. There is, for instance, no consistent concern for the quotation of (in the eyes of modern scholars) relevant treaties after the innovatory inclusion of the truce between Athens and Sparta at 4.118–119.2,[38] and while the incorporation of diplomatic documents in general may be explained, at least in part, by their role as a foil to the course of events, it is very difficult to determine the circumstances under which a specific document is quoted rather than paraphrased.[39] Nevertheless, where we do find such quotations, they can be seen as performing an important role in Thucydides' exploration of the political complications of the Peloponnesian War.

and that it explores the important overarching theme of autonomy (see *CT* III 211). For the notion that quotations of treaties contribute to the clarity and comprehensiveness of Thucydides' account, see also Bearzot 2003, 278; 2017, 156. However, the insertion of extensive quotations of treaty texts is arguably not the only way to remedy such a lack of clarity; if it were only a matter of giving some background information regarding the political developments, a detailed paraphrase of the terms of an agreement (such as we find it at 4.16) would seem sufficient.

38 According to Andrewes, this passage, giving "the full text of the truce of 423 with the decree of the Athenian assembly and the full list of oath-takers, marks a new departure" (*HCT* V 365), though he also notes that this innovation is at least in part anticipated by the description of the truce the Spartans and Athenians make in Pylos in 425 (4.16), which includes detailed information about the rations allowed to the Spartans on Sphacteria (see also *CT* II 358). That the quotation of the truce of 423 at 4.118–119.2 does not mark a consistent change in method is underlined by Bearzot 2003, 277.

39 See Luschnat 1978, 1125–1126.

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Summary of Part II

Like Herodotus, Thucydides occasionally embeds specific inscriptions. This may seem to be a superficial observation, but for the reconstruction of the epigraphic culture of fifth-century Greece, the glimpses offered by Herodotus' *Histories* and Thucydides' *History* on the ancient reception of inscriptions are of considerable interest. The extent to which Herodotus and Thucydides, who are usually regarded as the founding fathers of the Western historiographical tradition, can be demonstrated to have drawn on epigraphic evidence may be limited. At the very least, though, the Herodotean and Thucydidean practice of making occasional reference to inscriptions suggests that this body of material was in some way relevant to their narrative projects.

As opposed to many Herodotean inscriptions, those we encounter in Thucydides' *History* seem to be plausible in epigraphic terms. Moreover, the correspondence of Thucydides' quotation of Pisistratus' dedicatory epigram on the altar in the Pythian sanctuary with the text preserved on extant fragments of the altar is often adduced as a spectacular proof of his accuracy and conscientiousness in dealing with the epigraphic record. However, we have also seen that the impression of autopsy that Thucydides' references to inscriptions may elicit should not make us overlook the fact that these references hardly minimise the characteristic lack of transparency of Thucydides' account. Considering his tendency to omit any reference to his sources of information for specific parts of the narrative, the way in which certain pieces of information about the Pisistratid past of Athens are presented as being derivable from the epigraphic record is certainly remarkable. However, the epigraphic material is usually not presented in such a way as to invite us to check Thucydides' claims, and where it is (as in the case of Pisistratus' altar in the Pythian sanctuary), the relationship between this material and the conclusions drawn from it is not as clear as one might expect.

Some of the inscriptions Thucydides refers to are explicitly linked to a certain individual or group responsible for their erection; where such an ascription is missing, it can usually be deduced from the context. In the case of Pausanias' inscribed funerary stelai, for instance, it is probably to be understood that they are set up by the Spartans, who are mentioned in the immediate context as the receivers of an oracular command to transfer the dead regent's body to the place where he died.

While Thucydides does not explicitly comment on the epigraphic acts he narrates,[1] the inscribed texts he quotes or paraphrases contribute to the characterisation of the individuals or groups linked to them. Complementarily, the presentation of inscriptions as

1 However, Pausanias' epigram is embedded in an account of the Spartans' critical assessment of his earlier activities, which include the epigraphic appropriation of the Plataean tripod.

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artefacts produced by certain characters in certain situations arguably invites us to reflect on the potential tendentiousness of the epigraphic record.[2]

To take an example, Pausanias' epigram on the Plataean tripod illustrates the regent's assertiveness. His use of an inscription to broadcast his self-image is reminiscent of the epigraphic acts of the Herodotean Darius (especially the setting-up of the stele at the River Tearus). There is, however, a remarkable difference. While Herodotus mentions only the act of production, Thucydides focuses on the act of reception. After all, it is in the context of an account of how the Spartans review the past behaviour of their regent that Thucydides embeds a quotation of the latter's epigram; Thucydides narrates that the Spartans consider Pausanias' epigram against the backdrop of their assessment of Pausanias' current attitude.

A case in point for this focus on the reception of inscribed monuments is the second passage in which the Plataean tripod is referred to in the *History*, namely the Plataeans' speech in the Plataean Debate. In their desperate attempt to ward off the impending destruction of their city, the Plataeans invoke the presence of their city on the Plataean tripod. As we have seen, the implications of Thucydides' staging of the Plataeans' attempt to strengthen their case by adducing this inscription are difficult to pin down. On the one hand, the Plataeans' appeal turns out to be futile, which may invite reflection on the limitations of a rhetorical use of inscriptions. On the other, it should be noted that the Plataean speakers are faced with a virtually impossible task.

Readers of the *History* have tended to be impressed by the 'scientific' way in which Thucydides argues from epigraphic evidence in the Pisistratid excursus, but we have seen that it is not clear how the conclusions Thucydides draws flow from the epigraphic texts he adduces. Rather than foreshadowing positivistic ideals of objectivity and accuracy, the quotations (and, in other cases, highly selective paraphrases) of certain inscriptions can be regarded as one facet of Thucydides' construction of narratorial authority. At least to a certain extent, this authority is strengthened by an implicit contrast between the Athenians' neglect of evident epigraphic traces of their Pisistratid past and Thucydides' readiness to adduce them. Once more, then, the focus is on the way in which people (fail to) interact with texts inscribed in the past.

In the Funeral Oration, inscribed memorials for the war dead are juxtaposed with a form of commemoration that does not depend on (monumental) writing (ἄγραφος μνήμη). As opposed to immaterial δόξα, the effect of inscriptions is – according to Pericles – confined to a small region. Such an image of inscriptions as a commemorative medium of limited efficiency may be interpreted as a negative foil to Thucydides' project of recording the events of the war in non-epigraphic form. On closer scrutiny, however, the implications of Pericles' evocation of the practice of commemorating the war dead with epigraphic casualty lists have turned out to be more ambiguous. On the one hand, Pericles emphasises the merely local effect of writing; on the other, the type of commemoration he envisages is modelled, at least to a certain extent, on the practice of setting up

2 The awareness of such a tendentiousness may seem typically Thucydidean, but it should be noted that the very first inscription featuring in Herodotus' *Histories* (1.51.3–4) is presented as a forgery.

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inscribed funerary memorials. Moreover, Pericles' introductory remarks about the challenges he faces as a speaker, which include a declaration to adapt his words to the wishes and opinions of the audience, raise doubts about the adequacy of his approach to matters of commemoration.

As opposed to the inscriptions quoted in Books 1 and 6, the treaties embedded in Books 4, 5, and 8 are not introduced as texts inscribed on specific material objects. At least in some cases, however, the quoted texts contain provisions concerning their epigraphic publication. While some scholars have argued that quoted treaty documents breach the stylistic unity of Thucydides' work and could therefore not have been included in a final version of the *History*, I have approached them as integral parts of Thucydides' presentation of diplomatic developments in the course of the Peloponnesian War. When Thucydides narrates how the various parties involved in the war do not tire of drawing up treaties that are breached soon afterwards, this attests both to the potential symbolic power of the use of inscriptions in diplomatic contexts and to their limited efficiency in shaping the course of events.

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9 Epilogue

As the two earliest works of the Greek historiographical tradition that have come down to us in complete form, Herodotus' *Histories* and Thucydides' *History* are of key importance for the investigation of the epigraphic dimension of (Classical) Greek historiography. Consequently, they have been the focus of the present study. In this Epilogue, I would like to complement my discussion of these two works by discussing the absence of inscriptions from Xenophon's *Hellenica* (i.e. the only other fully transmitted historiographical text of the Classical period) and the presence of inscriptions in Lucian's *True Stories* (i.e. a text from the Imperial period engaging, as I shall argue, with the Herodotean and Thucydidean practice of embedding inscriptions).

When Xenophon famously begins his *Hellenica* with Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ("And after this", 1.1.1),[1] he flags his narrative of the events between 411 and 362 as a continuation of Thucydides' *History*, which breaks off in 411.[2] Paradoxically, though, this first sentence also marks a notable departure from a conspicuous characteristic of Thucydides' *History*, which begins with a proem in the tradition of Hecataeus and Herodotus. And this is not the only respect in which Xenophon strays from the precedent set by his historiographical model(s):[3] in the context of the present study, the most striking characteristic of the *Hellenica* is the total absence of any explicit references to the epigraphic sphere.[4]

In order to account for this absence of inscriptions, it has been pointed out that "Xenophon writes contemporary history and as a consequence is able to have recourse to eyewitnesses".[5] However, the decision to write *Zeitgeschichte* is a clear example of the way in which Thucydides' *History* shaped the later historiographical tradition[6] – and Thucydides' work shows that a focus on contemporary events need not coincide with

1 Here and in what follows, the Greek text of the *Hellenica* is cited from Marchant 1900; translations are taken from or based on Marincola 2009.

2 It has been argued that these words do not actually represent the beginning of the *Hellenica*, which must then be assumed to have been lost (see Defosse 1968). For arguments against the assumption of a lacuna, see e.g. Maclaren 1979. On the *Hellenica* as a continuation of Thucydides' *History*, see e.g. Rood 2004b; Marincola 2017, 103–104; by contrast, Grayson, while acknowledging the possibility that "Xenophon wrote with some idea of continuing Thucydides" (1975, 34), emphasises the differences and goes so far as to deny that the *Hellenica* "was written as history" (37 and *passim*). For a recent discussion of the *Hellenica* as a historiographical text, see Flower 2017.

3 As Marincola notes, Xenophon's *Hellenica* (and his *Anabasis*) "manipulate, challenge, and extend conventions (not 'rules') employed by Herodotus and Thucydides" (2017, 106).

4 On this absence, see Bearzot 2014, 109. The informational basis of the *Hellenica* is, in general, obscure (see Krentz 1995, 5; Rhodes 2007, 60).

5 Bearzot 2014, 110–111.

6 See Marincola 2001, 106.

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a complete neglect of epigraphic material. Seen against the backdrop of Thucydides' approach, then, the lack of references to inscriptions in the *Hellenica* remains remarkable.

There is, however, one aspect of the epigraphic dimension of Thucydides' *History* that is paralleled in the *Hellenica*. Like Thucydides, Xenophon paraphrases and (more rarely) quotes interstate treaties. The *Hellenica* include two treaties also referred to by Thucydides.[7] At 3.2.21, Xenophon mentions the alliance between Athens, Argos, Mantinea, and Elis of the year 420; in Thucydides' *History*, we can read a full quotation of the terms of this alliance (5.47). At 5.2.2, Xenophon states the expiry of the thirty-year truce concluded between the Spartans and Mantineans after the battle of Mantinea in 418; the expiry of this truce is also mentioned by Thucydides (5.81.1). Thucydides quotes treaties, as we have seen, without explicitly stating in the framing text that they exist in epigraphic form. At least in some cases, however, the embedded quotations contain publication clauses.

Xenophon includes a full quotation of the King's Peace, though it should be noted that the text is actually presented as a letter containing the terms of the peace treaty (5.1.30–31):

> ἐπεὶ δὲ συνῆλθον, ἐπιδείξας ὁ Τιρίβαζος τὰ βασιλέως σημεῖα ἀνεγίγνωσκε τὰ γεγραμμένα. εἶχε δὲ ὧδε. Ἀρταξέρξης βασιλεὺς νομίζει δίκαιον τὰς μὲν ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ πόλεις ἑαυτοῦ εἶναι καὶ τῶν νήσων Κλαζομενὰς καὶ Κύπρον, τὰς δὲ ἄλλας Ἑλληνίδας πόλεις καὶ μικρὰς καὶ μεγάλας αὐτονόμους ἀφεῖναι πλὴν Λήμνου καὶ Ἴμβρου καὶ Σκύρου· ταύτας δὲ ὥσπερ τὸ ἀρχαῖον εἶναι Ἀθηναίων. ὁπότεροι δὲ ταύτην τὴν εἰρήνην μὴ δέχονται, τούτοις ἐγὼ πολεμήσω μετὰ τῶν ταῦτα βουλομένων καὶ πεζῇ καὶ κατὰ θάλατταν καὶ ναυσὶ καὶ χρήμασιν.
>
> When they had come together, Tiribazus showed them the king's seal and then read out what was written, which was as follows: "King Artaxerxes believes it to be just that the cities in Asia should be his, as also the islands Clazomenae and Cyprus, but that the rest of the Greek cities, both small and large, should be autonomous, except for Lemnos, Imbros, and Scyros, which should, as of old, belong to the Athenians. Whichever of the two parties does not accept this peace, I will wage war against them by land and by sea, with ships and money, taking with me those who accept my views."

As it happens, there is evidence to suggest that the terms of the King's Peace were published in epigraphic form.[8] In the *Hellenica*, however, the epigraphic publication of the treaty is not mentioned. As opposed to Thucydides, then, Xenophon does not

7 On treaties in the *Hellenica*, see Bearzot 2014, esp. 91–97.

8 The publication of the treaty is mentioned at Isoc. 4.180; 12.107; *IG* II² 34.20–22 (an alliance of Athens and Chios from 384/383). On the likely differences between the text of the Royal Rescript recorded by Xenophon and the King's Peace as it was published in epigraphic form, see Cawkwell 1973, 52.

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seem to be interested in showing the use (and limited efficiency) of the Greek practice of publishing interstate treaties by inscribing them on stelai.

While explicit references to the epigraphic sphere are missing from the *Hellenica*, they are not unattested in Xenophon's diverse work as a whole. Arguably the most famous Xenophontic inscription can be found in the *Anabasis*,[9] at the end of the account of Xenophon's foundation of a sanctuary for Artemis in Scillus near Olympia (5.3.13):[10]

> καὶ στήλη ἕστηκε παρὰ τὸν ναὸν γράμματα ἔχουσα· ΙΕΡΟΣ Ο ΧΩΡΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΡΤΕΜΙΔΟΣ. ΤΟΝ ΕΧΟΝΤΑ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΡΠΟΥΜΕΝΟΝ ΤΗΝ ΜΕΝ ΔΕΚΑΤΗΝ ΚΑΤΑΘΥΕΙΝ ΕΚΑΣΤΟΥ ΕΤΟΥΣ. ΕΚ ΔΕ ΤΟΥ ΠΕΡΙΤΤΟΥ ΤΟΝ ΝΑΟΝ ΕΠΙΣΚΕΥΑΖΕΙΝ. ΑΝ ΔΕ ΤΙΣ ΜΗ ΠΟΙΗΙ ΤΑΥΤΑ ΤΗΙ ΘΕΩΙ ΜΕΛΗΣΕΙ.
>
> Beside the temple stands a stele with an inscription: "THIS PLACE IS SACRED TO ARTEMIS. HE WHO OWNS IT AND HARVESTS ITS FRUITS MUST EVERY YEAR OFFER A TENTH OF THE PRODUCE TO THE GODDESS, AND MUST USE SOME OF THE REMAINDER TO KEEP THE TEMPLE IN GOOD REPAIR. NEGLECT OF THESE DUTIES WILL NOT GO UNNOTICED BY THE GODDESS."

According to Rood, this embedded inscription,

> read in the light of the glowing account of the goddess' festival that precedes it, conveys a sense of the ample resources of the goddess' sanctuary and the human dedication required to perpetuate the rich local identity that Xenophon has created through the foundation of the festival.[11]

While I would not say that the inscription itself contributes much to the impression of the "ample resources of the goddess' sanctuary" as it clearly arises from the preceding description (5.3.8–12), it certainly bespeaks a concern for ensuring that the goddess will continue to be honoured. By means of the exhortatory inscription, Xenophon tries to make sure that the sanctuary will not be neglected in the future. To a certain extent, then, the inscription has a practical communicative function within the world Xenophon describes. For recipients of the *Anabasis*, however, there is a further aspect: the inscription highlights Xenophon's foresight and sense of responsibility.[12] To be sure, the concern for

9 On inscriptions in the *Anabasis*, see Zizza 2012.

10 The Greek text is from Marchant 1904; the translation is adapted from Waterfield 2005. As Rood shows, this passage was key for the promotion of the "once popular image of Xenophon as a (quasi-English) country gentleman" (2012, 90).

11 Rood 2013, 208.

12 Rood suggests that "Xenophon here parades his concern for the goddess' sanctuary for a future audience – perhaps because he was writing at a time when he had himself been cast out of Scillus in the aftermath of the Spartan defeat at Leuctra" and that he "could well have been writing to defend

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the future of the sanctuary can also be perceived by a hypothetical visitor to Scillus who reads the inscription *in situ*.[13] It should be noted, however, that the text of the inscription as it is given in the *Anabasis* does not name Xenophon.[14] It is thanks to the framing of the quoted inscription in the *Anabasis* that it can be read as evidence of Xenophon's piety and foresight.

The Scillus inscription is not only of interest in the context of the construction of Xenophon's character in the work in which it is embedded, i.e. the *Anabasis*. Intriguingly, the prediction about Artemis' future concern for the fulfilment of the duties involved in the maintenance of the sanctuary (ΑΝ ΔΕ ΤΙΣ ΜΗ ΠΟΙΗΙ ΤΑΥΤΑ ΤΗΙ ΘΕΩΙ ΜΕΛΗΣΕΙ, 5.3.13) is paralleled in the final sentence of the *Hellenica* (7.5.27): τὰ δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα ἴσως ἄλλῳ μελήσει ("Perhaps someone else will be concerned with what happened after this").[15] This sentence, in turn, picks up the expression introducing the *Hellenica* (1.1.1): Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ("And after this"). Taken together, the three passages shed light on Xenophon's concern for the phenomenon of reception:

> If that opening sets Xenophon up as a continuator of Thucydides, then the closing sentence of the *Hellenica* gestures towards the future, expressing the hope that Xenophon himself will have continuators. If we read the end of the *Hellenica* alongside the end of the Scillus inscription, then we can see Xenophon as setting up an opposition between the human contingency of history and the realm of the divine, untouched by uncertainty. In other words, we can view Xenophon (like Herodotus and Thucydides before him) as a reception theorist.[16]

Tempting as such an interpretation is, the epigraphic dimension of the *Hellenica* remains elusive. Xenophon may well have been a reception theorist *avant la lettre*, but the epigraphic aspect of the closing remarks of the *Hellenica* rests on the observation that μελήσει, i.e. a fairly common word, also occurs in the Scillus inscription in the *Anabasis*. Moreover, Rood's suggestion is based less on the Scillus inscription *qua* inscription than on the fact that it happens to contain a reference to the divine sphere. At least as far as the *Hellenica* are concerned, then, the treatment of inscriptions is a way in which

himself from charges of deriving personal advantage from his obligations to the goddess" (2013, 208). On the apologetic function of the inclusion of the inscription, see also Zizza 2007, 226–227 n. 45; 2012, esp. 204.

13 A copy of the inscription set up by Xenophon was found on the island of Ithaca (*IG* IX.1 654). On the discovery of the small plaque bearing the text of Xenophon's Scillus inscription in the eighteenth century and different interpretations of the stone (as a second-century imitation and as a Renaissance forgery), see Rood 2013, 205–207.

14 Ma has described it as "curiously impersonal and periphrastic" (2004, 341); see also Zizza 2012, 199.

15 On the implications of this open ending, see e.g. Dillery 1995, 27 (suggesting that it expresses the insight that "disorder was the typical condition of Greece"); Grethlein 2013, 53 (suggesting that it is an attempt "to eschew the teleological view that tends to come with the retrospect from which we approach the past").

16 Rood 2013, 208.

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Xenophon departs from the precedent set by Herodotus and Thucydides. More specifically, Xenophon's *Hellenica* show that an implicit self-presentation as a continuator of Thucydides need not include an adoption of Thucydides' interest in the setting-up and reception of inscriptions.

In accordance with the decision to focus on texts that have been transmitted in their entirety,[17] I shall not embark on a discussion of those fourth-century continuators of Thucydides whose works (as opposed to Xenophon's *Hellenica*) are known to us only through papyrus fragments or later authors.[18] Instead, I will complement my focus on the epigraphic dimension of the works of Herodotus and Thucydides by venturing into the Imperial period and turning to Lucian's *True Stories*. While Xenophon's *Hellenica* may serve to remind us that a text usually perceived as belonging to the Greek historiographical tradition need not feature epigraphic references, the Herodotean and Thucydidean practice of embedding inscriptions provides, as I hope to show, a fruitful backdrop for an appreciation of the staging of inscriptions in Lucian's *True Stories*.[19]

The extent to which the *True Stories* engage with previous literature – both explicitly and implicitly – is astounding.[20] Consequently, the following consideration of the epigraphic dimension of the *True Stories* against the backdrop of Herodotean and Thucydidean inscriptions concerns just one (potential) aspect of Lucian's literary game.

The first place where Lucian and his crew drop anchor after setting out from the Pillars of Heracles is the island of the vine-women. Exploring this island, Lucian and some other crew members make the following discovery (1.7):[21]

> προελθόντες δὲ ὅσον σταδίους τρεῖς ἀπὸ τῆς θαλάττης δι᾽ ὕλης ὁρῶμέν τινα στήλην χαλκοῦ πεποιημένην, Ἑλληνικοῖς γράμμασιν καταγεγραμμένην, ἀμυδροῖς δὲ καὶ ἐκτετριμμένοις, λέγουσαν Ἄχρι τούτων Ἡρακλῆς καὶ Διόνυσος ἀφίκοντο. ἦν δὲ καὶ ἴχνη δύο πλησίον ἐπὶ πέτρας, τὸ μὲν πλεθριαῖον, τὸ δὲ ἔλαττον – ἐμοὶ δοκεῖν, τὸ μὲν τοῦ Διονύσου, τὸ μικρότερον, θάτερον δὲ Ἡρακλέους.

17 See Ch. 1.1, pp. 3–5.

18 On these continuators, see Luschnat 1978, 1267–1276; Schepens 1993, 173–176.

19 Inscriptions also occur in other works by Lucian (e.g. *Dipsades* 6; *Scytha* 2); in fact, Lucian has been described as being "addicted to bogus inscriptions" (Anderson 1976, 35; on inscriptions in Lucian, see also Saïd 1994, 161–162). The *True Stories* include – apart from the inscribed stele mentioned at 1.7, on which I shall focus in this Epilogue – a peace treaty (featuring a clause stipulating epigraphic publication [1.20]), two inscriptions identifying certain temples (1.32; 2.3), and an epigram inscribed on a stele of beryl (2.28). Especially the latter has attracted scholarly attention (see e.g. von Möllendorff 2000, 422–423; Zeitlin 2001, 247; Goldhill 2002b, 65; ní Mheallaigh 2014, 254–258). For surveys of inscriptions in Greco-Roman novels, see Sironen 2003; Slater 2009.

20 For a book-length attempt to reconstruct the *Anspielungshorizont* of this work as comprehensively as possible, see von Möllendorff 2000. On the allusive richness of the *True Stories*, see also Bompaire 1958, 658; Bartley 2003, 223. On the relationship between the *True Stories* and the historiographical tradition, see Georgiadou/Larmour 1998, 28–40.

21 Here and in what follows, the Greek text of the *True Stories* is cited from Macleod 1972; translations are taken from or based on Harmon 1913.

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> When we had gone forward through the wood about three stades from the sea, we saw a stele made of bronze, inscribed in Greek letters, faded and worn away, that said: "To this point came Heracles and Dionysus." There were also two footprints in the rock close by, one of which was one plethron long, the other less – to my thinking, the smaller one was left by Dionysus, the other by Heracles.

The discovery of the bronze stele marks an important stage within the narrative as a whole, for Lucian and his companions will venture beyond the place to which their predecessors came: προσκυνήσαντες δ' οὖν προῇμεν ("We did obeisance and went on", 1.7). In other words, the stele "determines the point from which Lucian's travels will outstrip those who went before him" – and hence draws attention to "Lucian's unique achievement of going farther than any of his predecessors in the realm of fiction".[22] In the context of the present study, the most interesting feature of this important passage is that it contains a reference to an inscription.

By virtue of this feature, the episode has been read as an example of "pseudo-documentarism": an "obviously specious" inscription is used as an "authenticating device within the avowed fantasy of the *Verae Historiae*".[23] In her investigation of this narrative strategy of pseudo-documentarism, which can be found in other texts from the Imperial period as well,[24] ní Mheallaigh has argued that it "reflects concerns and preoccupations of these texts' contemporary literary culture" – such as the fact that "people in the real world [e.g. Strabo and Pausanias] were engaging with the real physical remnants of the past".[25] In fact, the preoccupation with epigraphic traces of the past shaped even the contemporary production of actual inscriptions, which were sometimes executed in an archaising style.[26]

All this suggests that the notion of old inscriptions occupied a prominent place in the cultural imagination of the Imperial era. Nevertheless, the interest in old inscriptions is not without precedents. When Lucian quotes an inscription such as the one allegedly set up by Dionysus and Heracles, this can also be seen as an engagement with Classical literature. It is this Classical foundation of Lucian's practice of embedding inscriptions in the *True Stories* on which I would like to focus in this second part of the Epilogue.

Let us return to the passage from the *True Stories* quoted above. The identification of one of the footprints as belonging to Heracles evokes, as many scholars agree, Herodotus'

22 Ní Mheallaigh 2014, 255.

23 Ní Mheallaigh 2008, 420 and 421.

24 Apart from Lucian's *True Stories*, ní Mheallaigh 2008 discusses Dictys' *Journal of the Trojan War* and Antonius Diogenes' *The Wonders beyond Thule*.

25 Ní Mheallaigh 2008, 423.

26 Guarducci speaks of a typical phenomenon of the Imperial era (see 1967, 388) and notes that it is especially prominent in Athens (see 389). For a survey of archaising inscriptions from Attica, see Aleshire 1997.

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account of Heracles' enormous footprint in Scythia (4.82).[27] Admittedly, Herodotus does not mention any inscriptions by Heracles or Dionysus. Nevertheless, by quoting an inscription in his prose narrative, Lucian employs a narrative strategy familiar from Herodotus' *Histories*. What is more, two features of the Lucianic inscription can also be found in the *Histories* (though not in this combination). First, Herodotus quotes some epigrams from heroic times, including a dedicatory epigram by none other than Heracles' (apparent) father Amphitryo (5.59). Secondly, he refers to several inscribed objects recording that a powerful individual has reached a certain place (e.g. Darius' stele at the Tearus [4.91]). Of course, these are general similarities. Moreover, it would be difficult to claim that the inscription on the island of the vine-women evokes exclusively (or even primarily) certain Herodotean inscriptions.[28] On the other hand, given that the quotation of the text on stele in the *True Stories* is linked with a mention of Heracles' and Dionysus' footprints, i.e. a fairly strong Herodotean echo, it may well remind us that quotations of inscriptions are a feature of the *Histories* as well.

While Lucian does not explicitly argue from the inscription quoted at 1.7, his identification of the two footprints as being those of Heracles and Dionysus comes across as being based on the epigraphic information. In other words, the information on the stele is apparently accepted as credible within the world of the *True Stories*. Interestingly, though, Lucian goes on to acknowledge (at least implicitly) that the credibility of the epigraphic information need not be taken for granted. He narrates that, venturing further inland, he and his companions come upon a large river of wine – a discovery that makes them see the inscription in a new light (1.7): ἐπήει οὖν ἡμῖν πολὺ μᾶλλον πιστεύειν τῷ ἐπὶ τῆς στήλης ἐπιγράμματι, ὁρῶσι τὰ σημεῖα τῆς Διονύσου ἐπιδημίας ("Thus we could not help having much greater faith in the inscription on the stele, seeing the evidence of Dionysus' visit"). Here, it is the observation of a natural feature of the island that is adduced as enhancing the credibility of the inscription[29] – which, by implication, turns out to be of questionable reliability if considered in isolation. At *Ver. hist.* 1.7, then, the evidentiary value of an ancient inscription is first taken for granted and then staged as needing corroboration.[30]

Lucian not only gives a quotation of the text on the stele but also remarks on its script and visual appearance: the message is "inscribed in Greek letters, faded and worn away" (Ἑλληνικοῖς γράμμασιν καταγεγραμμένην, ἀμυδροῖς δὲ καὶ ἐκτετριμμένοις, 1.7). The former detail can be paralleled with Herodotus' mention of the "Greek letters"

27 See e.g. Stengel 1911, 15; Ollier 1962, 14; Futre Pinheiro 2009, 29; Tamiolaki 2013, 152. Stengel also adduces the mention of Perseus' enormous sandal in Chemmis (Hdt. 2.91.3), but see von Möllendorff 2000, 79 n. 67. On Lucian's engagement with Herodotus in the *True Stories*, see Tamiolaki 2013.

28 See Giorgiadou/Larmour 1998, 70; von Möllendorff 2000, 77–80.

29 According to ní Mheallaigh, "[t]he divine footprints and an adjacent river of wine are *adduced as proof* of the inscription's claim, verifying the gods' earlier presence on the island" (2009, 14; my italics). However, while both the footprints and the river certainly enhance the credibility of the inscribed message, only the latter is explicitly presented as influencing the assessment of the inscription on the part of Lucian and his companions.

30 Georgiadou/Larmour only take account of the former aspect when they claim that the citation of the inscription at 1.7 is "evidence of a reliable historical method" (1994, 1495).

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(γράμματα [...] Ἑλληνικά, 4.87.1) inscribed on one of the two stelai set up by Darius at the Bosporus. In both instances, the reference to the script can be accounted for by the place in which the respective inscription is erected (and, in the case of the Herodotean passage, by the provenance of the person responsible for it): while it arguably goes without saying that, say, the list of cities on the Plataean tripod is inscribed in Greek (Hdt. 8.82.1), the setting-up of a Greek inscription by the Persian king is more remarkable. Similarly, we would not necessarily expect that Lucian and his companions would not be the first speakers of Greek to explore the island of the vine-women.

For the comment on the visual appearance of the inscription (i.e. that the letters are "faded and worn away"), there is no Herodotean precedent. It is tempting, however, to think of Thucydides' description of the letters of the inscription on one of the altars dedicated by Pisistratus the Younger as ἀμυδρά (6.54.7). Admittedly, the expression ἀμυδρά γράμματα can probably not be regarded as characteristically Thucydidean.[31] On the other hand, the *True Stories* feature at least one fairly clear allusion to a noteworthy facet of the epigraphic dimension of Thucydides' work, namely his practice of embedding quotations of interstate treaties, some of which include a statement to the effect that the text is to be published in epigraphic form. Having narrated the battle between the Sunites and the Moonites, Lucian quotes a peace treaty featuring a provision that the treaty is to be inscribed on a stele of electrum and set up in mid-air on the common confines (ἐγγράψαι δὲ τὰς συνθήκας στήλῃ ἠλεκτρίνῃ καὶ ἀναστῆσαι ἐν μέσῳ τῷ ἀέρι ἐπὶ τοῖς μεθορίοις, 1.20). This embedded treaty text is arguably modelled on the peace conditions between Athens and Sparta quoted by Thucydides at 5.18–19.[32] While a Thucydidean echo at *Ver. hist.* 1.20 does not prove that the epigraphic episode at 1.7 is inspired by Thucydides' practice of quoting inscriptions as well, it may at least encourage us to consider the possibility of an engagement with Thucydides in the former passage.[33]

When Thucydides describes the letters of Pisistratus' inscription as ἀμυδρά, he may be drawing attention to the status of the inscribed altar as a monument from the past.[34] Lucian's description of the visual appearance of the lettering on the stele on the island of the vine-women can be seen as emulating the interest in such details that Thucydides displays at 6.54.7. After all, Lucian characterises the letters of the inscription, which

31 Lavelle adduces [Dem.] 59.76 and Plut. *Rom*. 7.8 as parallels (see 1989, 208–209). It has been suggested that Apollodorus' use of ἀμυδροῖς γράμμασιν at [Dem.] 59.76 may have been influenced by Thuc. 6.54.7 (see Trevett 1990, 419; followed by Carey 1992, 124). However, Kapparis points out that "the orator did not need to read Thucydides before he could use these words" (1999, 337); in fact, Trevett himself acknowledges that "there is no compelling reason to believe that Apollodoros was using Thucydides" (1990, 419).

32 See e.g. Householder 1941, 39; Bartley 2003, 229; Futre Pinheiro 2009, 31–32; Scheibelreiter 2009; for a dissenting view, see Bompaire 1958, 640 (followed by Ollier 1962, 26).

33 On Lucian's engagement with Thucydides in the *True Stories*, see e.g. Rütten 1997, 51–52; Bartley 2003; Billault 2010.

34 See Ch. 7.1, p. 129.

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is stated to have been inscribed on a stele of bronze,[35] not only as ἀμυδρά but also as ἐκτετριμμένα. This would not be the only time Lucian trumps a Classical model in the context of the stele episode: just consider, for instance, the information about the size of Heracles' footprint. Whereas the footprint left by Heracles in Scythia is, according to Herodotus, two cubits long (4.82), Lucian claims that the footprint on the island has a size of one plethron (1.7). We seem to be dealing, then, with "a literary imitation which is, in a gesture of aggressive emulation, even bigger and more wondrous than its predecessor".[36]

According to Hartmann, this inclusion of details about the state of the lettering is a satirical allusion to an important historiographical strategy of authentication.[37] The first example he adduces is none other than Thucydides' description of the lettering of the dedicatory inscription quoted at 6.54.7.[38] Does this mean that Lucian implicitly questions the reliability of Thucydides' account of the inscription on Pisistratus' altar? This is a possibility, though it seems more likely that the authentication strategy Thucydides employs here – and, we may note, only here – was later 'abused' by other writers.

For what it is worth, we may note that in Lucian's *Quomodo historia conscribenda sit*,[39] which begins with "a mock-historical account of a plague in the vein of Thuc[ydides]", the latter is presented as "the historian *par excellence*".[40] What Lucian repeatedly takes issue with in the course of his treatise is the servile imitation of a Thucydidean precedent on the part of his successors (such as the account of the plague).[41] I submit that there are similar dynamics at work in our passage from the *True Stories*. When Lucian employs a radicalised version of the authentication strategy Thucydides uses at 6.54.7, this can be seen both as a nod to an example of good historiographical practice and as a dig at the bad historiographical practice of the writers chided at *Ver. hist.* 1.2.

To conclude, Lucian's "bogus inscriptions"[42] can be seen as an irreverent engagement with the historiographic practice of embedding inscriptions as we can grasp it in the works of Herodotus and Thucydides.

35 On bronze as a metal that evokes antiquity, see Higbie 1999, 56; ní Mheallaigh 2008, 420. On the one hand, the information that the stele is made of bronze, i.e. a durable material, explains why it is still there to be seen by Lucian and his companions. On the other, the detailed description of the condition of the inscription it bears draws attention to the fact that not even an inscription on bronze is completely immune to the compromising effects of time; on this latter point, see ní Mheallaigh 2014, 255.

36 Ní Mheallaigh 2014, 210. On Lucian's description of Heracles' footprint as an extreme amplification of a Herodotean model, see also Morgan 1985, 477; Tamiolaki 2013, 152.

37 See Hartmann 2010, 472.

38 See Hartmann 2010, 472.

39 On the relationship between *Hist. conscr.* and *Ver. hist.*, see e.g. Georgiadou/Larmour 1994, esp. 1478–1482; Free 2015, 160–168; Brodersen 2018, 61–73.

40 Macleod 1991, 287.

41 At *Hist. conscr.* 15, Lucian mocks an emulator of Thucydides whose work not only begins with a proem modelled on Thucydides' work but also contains, among other things, an account of a plague that is very similar to Thucydides' description of the plague that hits Athens.

42 Anderson 1976, 35.

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Appendix: Explicit References to Inscriptions in Herodotus' *Histories* and Thucydides' *History*

1 Herodotean Inscriptions

1.51.3–4	forged Spartan inscription on a vessel for lustral water in Delphi
1.93.3	inscribed pillars on the tomb of the Lydian king Alyattes
1.187	inscriptions on and within the tomb of the Babylonian queen Nitocris
2.102.4–5 (and 2.103.1; 2.106.1)	inscribed stelai of the Egyptian king Sesostris
2.106.2–5	inscribed reliefs of Sesostris in Ionia
2.125.6	inscription on the pyramid of the Egyptian king Cheops
2.136.3–4	inscription on the pyramid of the Egyptian king Asychis
2.141.6	inscribed statue of the Egyptian king Sethos
3.88.3	inscribed relief of the Persian king Darius
4.87	inscribed stelai set up by Darius at the Bosporus
4.88	picture with a dedicatory epigram by Mandrocles in the sanctuary of Hera on Samos
4.91	inscribed stele set up by Darius at the River Tearus in Thrace
5.59–61	epigrams on three tripods in the sanctuary of Apollo Ismenius in Thebes
5.77.4	epigram on a victory monument on the Acropolis
6.14.3	inscribed stele honouring patriotic Samian trierarchs
7.30.2	inscribed stele of the Lydian king Croesus at the Lydian-Phrygian border
7.228	three epigrams honouring the Greeks who fought and died at Thermopylae
8.22	Themistocles' inscriptional message to the Ionians
8.82.1 (and 9.81.1)	list of Greek cities inscribed on the Plataean tripod in Delphi

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2 Thucydidean Inscriptions

1.132.2	Pausanias' epigram on the Plataean tripod in Delphi
1.132.3 (and 3.57.2)	list of Greek cities inscribed on the Plataean tripod in Delphi
1.134.4	inscribed stelai indicating the place where Pausanias is buried in Sparta
5.56.3	modified inscription on the Laconian stele in Athens
6.54.7	obliterated epigram of Pisistratus the Younger on the altar of the Twelve Gods in the Agora
6.54.7	epigram of Pisistratus the Younger on the altar of Apollo in the Pythian sanctuary in Athens
6.55.1–2	stele about the tyrants' ἀδικία on the Acropolis
6.59.3	epigram on the tomb of Archedice in Lampsacus

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Note on Editions, Translations, and Abbreviations

The Greek text of Herodotus is cited from Wilson 2015a; unless otherwise noted, translations are taken from or based on Cary 1848, Waterfield 1998, Purvis 2007, and Mensch 2014. The Greek text of Thucydides is cited from Stuart Jones 1942; translations are taken from or based on Smith 1919–1923, Rhodes 1988, 1994, 1998, and 2014, Lattimore 1998, and Hammond 2009.

Ancient authors and works are abbreviated according to the fourth edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Abbreviations of journals follow the *Année philologique*. Collections of texts and works of reference are abbreviated as follows:

ANRW	Temporini, H./Haase, W. (eds.) (1972–): *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*. Berlin.
ATL III	Meritt, B. D./Wade-Gery, H. T./McGregor, M. F. (1950): *The Athenian Tribute Lists*. Vol. III. Princeton.
Bergk	Bergk, T. (1882): *Poetae lyrici Graeci*. Vol. III. 4th ed. Leipzig. [References are to the Simonidean corpus.]
BNJ	Worthington, I. (ed.) (2006–): *Brill's New Jacoby*.
CAH IV	Boardman, J. et al. (eds.) (1988): *The Cambridge Ancient History*. Vol. IV. 2nd ed. Cambridge.
CEG	Hansen, P. A. (1983–1989): *Carmina epigraphica Graeca*. 2 vols. Berlin.
CH	Asheri, D./Lloyd, A./Corcella, A. (2007): *A Commentary on Herodotus: Books I–IV*. Oxford.
CT	Hornblower, S. (1991–2008): *A Commentary on Thucydides*. 3 vols. Oxford.
Diehl	Diehl, E. (1942): *Anthologia lyrica Graeca*. Vol. II. 2nd ed. Leipzig. [References are to the Simonidean corpus.]
EG	Page, D. L. (1975): *Epigrammata Graeca*. Oxford. [References are to the Simonidean corpus.]
EGM	Fowler, R. L. (2000–2013): *Early Greek Mythography*. 2 vols. Oxford.
Enc. Ir.	Yarshater, E. (ed.) (1985–): *Encyclopædia Iranica*. New York.
FGE	Page, D. (1981): *Further Greek Epigrams: Epigrams before A.D. 50 from the Greek Anthology and Other Sources, Not Included in 'Hellenistic Epigrams' or 'The Garland of Philip'*. Cambridge. [References are to the Simonidean corpus.]
FGrH	Jacoby, F. (1923–): *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Berlin.
FH	Friedländer, P./Hoffleit, H. P. (1948): *Epigrammata: Greek Inscriptions in Verse; From the Beginnings to the Persian Wars*. Berkeley.
GE	Geffcken, J. (1916): *Griechische Epigramme*. Heidelberg.
GVI	Peek, W. (1955): *Griechische Vers-Inschriften*. Vol. I. Berlin.

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HCT	Gomme, A. W./Andrewes, A./Dover, K. J. (1945–1981): *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*. 5 vols. Oxford.
HGE	Hiller v. Gaertringen, F. (1926): *Historische griechische Epigramme*. Bonn.
HW	How, W. W./Wells, J. (1928): *A Commentary on Herodotus: With Introduction and Appendixes*. 2 vols. Repr. (with corr.). Oxford.
IG	Kirchhoff, A. et al. (1873–): *Inscriptiones Graecae*. Berlin.
IGM	Preger, T. (1891): *Inscriptiones Graecae metricae ex scriptoribus praeter Anthologiam collectae*. Leipzig.
I.Lampsakos	Frisch, P. (1978): *Die Inschriften von Lampsakos*. Bonn.
KG	Kühner, R./Gerth, B. (1898–1904): *Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache: Zweiter Teil: Satzlehre*. 2 vols. 3rd ed. Hanover.
Lloyd	Lloyd, A. B. (1975–1988): *Herodotus: Book II*. 3 vols. Leiden.
LSAG	Jeffery, L. H. (1990): *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece: A Study of the Origin of the Greek Alphabet and Its Development from the Eighth to the Fifth Centuries B.C.* Rev. ed. Oxford.
LSCG	Sokolowsi, F. (1969): *Lois sacrées des cités grecques*. Paris.
LSJ	Liddell, H. G./Scott, R./Jones, H. S. (1996): *A Greek-English Lexicon: With a Revised Supplement*. 9th ed. Oxford.
ML	Meiggs, R./Lewis, D. (1988): *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century BC*. Rev. ed. Oxford.
Nomima I	van Effenterre, H./Ruzé, F. (1994): *Nomima: Recueil d'inscriptions politiques et juridiques de l'archaïsme grec*. Vol. I. Rome.
RE	Wissowa, G. et al. (eds.) (1893–1978): *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*. Stuttgart.
SEG	Hondius, J. J. E. et al. (eds.) (1923–): *Supplementum epigraphicum Graecum*.
StV II	Bengtson, H. (1975): *Die Staatsverträge des Altertums*. Vol. II. Munich.

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